What is an Anglican?

An Anglican is a Christian who is part of the world wide family of the Anglican Church which uses the Book of Common Prayer as it's standard. Today there are 70 million Anglicans in 163 countries. We are a tiny part of a great multi racial, multi lingual, family.

Anglicans are bound together by:

- our belief that Holy Scripture (the Bible) contains the core of all Christian faith and thought
- a common loyalty to a family way of worship and life that was first set out in the Book of Common Prayer
- a shared joy that Jesus comes to us in Baptism and in the Lord's Supper (often called the Eucharist or Holy Communion)
- a system of Church order that stems from the most ancient times and is focused in the ordained ministry of Bishop, Priest and Deacon
- a firm commitment to the ministry of the whole people of God, lay and ordained together.
- a way of Christian thinking that involves Scripture, Tradition and Reason held together in creative tension.

We live out this Christian way of life in

- worship and parish life
- reaching out to the whole community
- sharing our story with others
- seeking God's love and wisdom in prayer and study together
- using our gifts, money, time and talents for God's work.

Creeds – beliefs

Anglicans share the one common Christian faith that has been handed down through the centuries from the days of the first Christians. This is what we mean when we say that Anglicans are part of the "one , holy, catholic and apostolic Church". ("catholic" means :everywhere, always and for all)

We believe there is one God who created all the cosmos, who forgives sin, who has defeated death and who sends the Holy Spirit to renew us as the children of God. We seek to follow Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

Our mission as the people of God (the Church) is to enable all people to have the opportunity to share in God's healing, God's love and God's forgiveness and new life given to us in Jesus. We celebrate our faith in the three great catholic creeds: the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed.

The Nicene Creed (dating from 325AD) is the Creed we use in Sunday Eucharist.

The Mission of the World-Wide Anglican Communion

"We" believe

Not every Anglican believes every word of the Creeds or of Scripture!

Relationship with God is a personal adventure and a matter of constant growth and discovery. That's why we say "we" believe. We share in the Anglican method of listening to God together in Scripture, in tradition and in reason. It can help to think of the Scriptures and Creeds as clothes into which we can grow – and it might take a lifetime!

A whole way of life

The Anglican Way of life is very exciting and very demanding and great fun. Over the centuries its a way of life that has brought many different types of people to God through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Thanks be to God.

- to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom
- to teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- to respond to human need by loving service
- to seek to transform the unjust structures of society
- to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the earth.

Our Worship

We come together Sunday by Sunday and often in the week to worship God's holiness, to hear God's Word, to offer our prayer and to rejoice in God's presence among us.

We worship as a parish. Every person who lives in the parish is welcome, as of right, to join us in worship.

Scripture is the foundation of all our worship. Over two-thirds of the words we use every Sunday come directly from Scripture. In every service we read Holy Scripture. Many of our hymns and songs are based on scripture. We are glad to use set forms of worship because we believe this is the best way of allowing everyone to be able to join in and play their part.

Today we are also learning to use more flexible forms of prayer still within a framework, so that we can be free in the Spirit and also free to feel safe because we know where we are in our worship.

Daily Prayer for all

Since Cranmer wrote the first Book of Common Prayer in 1549 the intention has been to provide forms of daily prayer and weekly worship that are common to the whole people of God.

So there are forms of daily morning and evening prayer that all can share in Church or at home.

Today we as Anglicans are rediscovering ways of praying that are appropriate for people who live busy and demanding lives.

The Sacraments

The life of an Anglican starts in Holy Baptism. Baptism is one of the two great sacraments. the other is Holy Eucharist. There are five lesser sacraments: Confirmation, ordination, holy matrimony, reconciliation of a penitent and unction. The word sacrament means “promise”. God promises to be with us as we come together to use his gifts as a means of his love and healing. All sacraments have two “parts”: something we can see and an inner reception of God’s power and love.

Holy Baptism

In Holy Baptism we take water as the outward sign of God’s gift to us of the Holy Spirit.. In Holy Baptism we become members of the community of believers, which the New Testament calls the Body of Christ. The person to be baptised (or their Godparents for them) makes a commitment to Jesus, to live for Him and to live in His way. The priest then pours water on them (or sometimes dips them right into the water) and signs them with the sign of Jesus’ cross. The water is a sign both that God washes away our dark side (our sin) and pours out the love of the Holy Spirit upon us to help us follow Jesus and to live in his way. Anglicans believe that we can be baptised only once because once baptised God will not fail to strengthen us with the Holy Spirit when we ask.

Holy Eucharist

Around the world Anglicans come together on Sunday to share the Eucharist. the word Eucharist means Thanksgiving. We give thanks for God’s love shown to us in Jesus.

Other names for the Eucharist are : Holy Communion, the Lord’s Supper and the Mass. Jesus comes to us in bread and wine to equip us to serve him in our daily discipleship at home or at work. Through Holy Communion we become one with Jesus and one with each other. We share Jesus’ body and blood given for us on the Cross. We know we are forgiven and have a share in the Risen Life of our Lord Jesus. All Christians of whatever church are welcomed at our altar table to share the bread and wine.

Confirmation

Confirmation is when a baptised person makes a mature commitment to God and receives a special blessing from the Bishop. The Holy Spirit, given once for all in our Baptism, strengthens us again (confirms us) in our commitment to Jesus. Normally Anglicans can only receive Holy communion after confirmation.

Holy Matrimony

When Anglicans are married they come to church to be blessed by God and to make a public commitment to each other in the sight of the whole community. This is Holy Matrimony. The couple are blessed by God and may be certain that the people of God will support them throughout their life together.

Reconciliation of Penitents

Sometimes people need a personal assurance that God has forgiven them . Jesus Christ died on the Cross for us all. A priest can offer that assurance formally or informally in the reconciliation of penitents.

Unction

When someone is very ill the priest will anoint them with oil as a sign of God's love and healing. This is called unction. Ordination All the people of God share in Jesus' mission and ministry. Anglicans believe that the ordained ministry is a gift to the whole Church to focus our ministry and to enable everyone to know and fulfil their gifts in God's service. When God calls someone to this special ministry they are trained and then the bishop ordains them by laying hands on their head and praying.

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