



# THE RESTORATION PROJECT: The Basics 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM, Fireside Room

## The Basics of Anglicanism Part Two: *The Episcopal Way*

*From the Suffrages for Evening Prayer (or, as we pray them at St. John's, the Suffrages for "Evensong")*

- V. Show us your mercy, O Lord;  
R. **And grant us your salvation.**  
V. Clothe your ministers with righteousness;  
R. **Let your people sing with joy.**  
V. Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;  
R. **For only in you can we live in safety.**  
V. Lord, keep this nation under your care;  
R. **And guide us in the way of justice and truth.**  
V. Let your way be known upon earth;  
R. **Your saving health among all nations.**  
V. Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;  
R. **Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.**  
V. Create in us clean hearts, O God;  
R. **And sustain us by your Holy Spirit.**

### **Via Media: the "middle way" (From Henry the VIII to the Elizabethan Compromise)**

A comprehensive path able to incorporate the wisdom and learning of diverse points of view – easily articulated as the "both/and" approach (as opposed to the "either/or" approach).

- Catholic and Protestant
- Ancient and Modern
- Progressive and Traditional
- Democratic and Hierarchical
- Local and Global

### **The Three-legged Stool - Scripture, Tradition, and Reason**

#### *Scripture*

- "the record of the original revelations of God's relationship with humanity especially through the ancient Israelites and Jesus." (The Episcopal Way, Stephanie Spellers & Eric Law) *More on this in 'Basics of Scripture' next week*
- Scriptures are "the word of God and contain all things necessary for salvation" (BCP)
- The principle authority for life and guidance in seeking the will of God.

### *Tradition*

- “the continuing revelation of God through the guidance of the Holy Spirit” (Spellers & Law).
- Tradition includes the stories, doctrines, liturgies, prayers, theologies, and structures developed over time by the church as another source for authority.
- Traditions like these are rooted both in the communities that created them, as they listened for the call of the Living God in their midst in their day and in the scriptures and traditions that informed communities now long past.

### *Reason*

- “thoughtful engagement with the present reality, both local and global” (Spellers & Law).
- God gave us minds to think and to reason – multiple intelligences and our own experience – and the Episcopal way (as with many other Christian traditions) argues that not only should we use these faculties, but that given of God, they constitute a third source of authority.
- Standing with the learnings of scripture (what God revealed to those earliest communities), and with the long heritage of Christian teaching and tradition, we still must determine what is the truth God has spoken to us, and answer the call God has placed on our own lives in this day and at this time.

## **A Mixed Legacy - Elitism, Power & Privilege, and Idolatry (reason, buildings/beauty, & traditions)**

As a church long connected to the privileged and powerful, as a church inclined toward specific and particular ways of being church, toward reason and beauty and liturgy, we have at times emphasized one part of our tradition or misused our own power and privilege to the detriment of the world we were called to serve.

## **Incarnational**

- *Biblical precedent* - “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us”.
- *God in the flesh* - The Episcopal Way is patterned on the example of Jesus - the wisdom and love and very substance of God come among us. God translated God’s-self into our flesh.
- *Vernacular* - As such, we are also, like many others that emerged in the wake of the Reformation, a faith that tries to speak to people in the language (vernacular) they best understand. We take very seriously the legacy we hold of translating our faith into the midst of the people.
- *Contextual* - How we express our faith to others, how we worship and pray, must make sense to the lived experiences of the people our churches are called to serve. Being an incarnational and vernacular church is as much about language as it is about culture and context.

## **Liturgical**

- *Praying Shapes Believing* - the principle of “lex orandi, lex credendi”, which loosely translates to “the way of praying shapes the way of believing” is at the heart of the Episcopal Way.
- *Practice* - We hold that the repetition and form, the ancient prayers and liturgies that make up a large part of our life together, are what form our belief and shape us into faithful people who seek justice in the world. You could say, based on this premise, that you become an Episcopalian by practicing the Episcopal faith.
- *Becoming Episcopalian* - The most direct route into the Episcopal Church is through living, praying, and practicing the Episcopal Way with other Episcopalians. In particular, you can dig

into the liturgies of the church - Eucharist, Baptism, Morning, Noonday, and Evening Prayer, and the service for Blessing a Marriage.

- *Expressing our Theology* - Liturgy expresses our belief - as a part of our inherited tradition, that second leg of the Anglican three-legged stool, liturgy both shapes how we believe and simultaneously articulates our belief to the world in a way far more beautiful and mysterious than doctrines or formulas ever could.
- *Incarnate theology* - Ultimately, returning to the idea of incarnation, liturgy is where we become the Body of Christ in visible ways.