

WELCOME TO ST PAUL'S

It is always a pleasure for us to welcome visitors to St Paul's, and if you are from another religious tradition, to the Episcopal (Anglican) Church.

The Episcopal Church is an independent branch of the historic Catholic Church which was rooted in this country by the Church of England.

Because we are one of the Catholic Churches, the seven sacraments are at the center of our life, and the Holy Eucharist or Mass is at the center of our worship. This often raises the question with visitors about who may receive Holy Communion.

The Episcopal Church believes that two things are necessary for receiving Holy Communion: first, that the person be properly Baptised; and second, that the person be spiritually prepared.

The Episcopal Church teaches, without trying to explain how it happens, that in the Sacrament of the Eucharist the bread and wine truly become the Body and Blood of Our Lord. Because it is Christ's actual Real and Living Presence – not merely a symbol – we take seriously the Bible's teaching (I Corinthians 11) that we must always be prepared when receiving the Blessed Sacrament.

This preparation involves three things:

- being in a loving relationship with God and our neighbor
- abstaining from food and drink for at least one hour before receiving Communion (water and medicine excepted)
- understanding and believing in the Sacrament as the Body and Blood of Christ – “discerning the Lord's Body” as St Paul said.

The sacred Host may be received either on the outstretched palm or directly on the tongue. The communicant guides the base of the Chalice with the thumb and forefinger of one hand. (Intinction – the Host being dipped into the Chalice – is not authorized as a normal or regular practice in this diocese, but Communion may always be received under one Species only.)

There is also the opportunity for those who are not receiving Holy Communion to receive a blessing. Persons wishing to be blessed fold their arms across their chest as they approach the priest.

Again we say welcome. It is a genuine pleasure for us to have you share in our worship of Almighty God.

