

FOR VISITORS

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

Welcome! We are so pleased to have you join us for services at St. Mark's. We gather for Worship and Fellowship every Sunday at both 8am and 10am. Here are a few points that may help you feel more at home with us.

Comfortable and Casual

We have no dress code at St. Mark's. Wear what is comfortable, and be yourself. Also feel free to call us by our first names. Most of us wear name tags to help you out with this. Priests respond best to first names. If you must use a title, "Father" works fine. Father Keith Yamamoto is our priest at St. Mark's.

At the Font


Our Baptismal Font is located inside the center doors to the church. Each time we pass the Font we remember how we entered the community—the body of Jesus Christ—through Baptism. You may dip your fingers or hand in the water and sprinkle it on yourself or make the sign of the cross as a remembrance of community, forgiveness, and your new life in Christ.

Many are One

Our services at St. Mark's represent the best efforts of a diverse community to collectively enter the presence of Jesus Christ. We try to reflect the varied worship practices of our members by including something meaningful to all. We speak and listen, sing, and pray. And we give everyone a role—not just the priest, but also lay ministers, families and individuals, elders and the young. Most of the images and phrases we use come from the Holy Bible. The prayers, lessons, and order of service we share with others around the world who use *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Worship Freely

During today's service you may see people cross themselves, nod their heads, or do other things that have not been announced by the priest or explained



in the Bulletin. Though you may not be familiar with some observances, there is no need to feel awkward. We encourage all to joyfully practice the rituals and customs that are most meaningful to them—those learned from other churches or traditions. Some people make the sign of the cross as they enter or exit the church or a pew. Others do this at the mention of Christ’s death or resurrection. You may cross yourself during the blessing or at any moment you feel moved. Be curious, adventurous. Try something new and see if it works for you. The variety of personal rituals we perform can enrich the collective worship experience for us all.

Full Body Experience

You will notice that during the service, we change position and posture a number of times. We do not simply sit. We also stand, walk, turn, nod, kneel, and shake hands or hug. An ancient bit of wisdom states: Where the body goes, the mind will follow. We use this concept in worship to help us have a full and focused experience. For example, when the priest walks into the center of the congregation to read the gospel lesson, we stand and turn toward the gospel book, priest, and cross to concentrate on the Word of God, and we nod our heads when we say together “Glory to You, Lord Christ.” Although there are exceptions, in general the tradition is that we sit to listen, we stand to sing, and we kneel to pray. The Bulletin includes these directions. Please join us as we put our whole selves—hearts, minds, and bodies—into our expression of worship.

Anonymity, History, Beauty

You may wonder why our priest wears a special robe instead of a suit or everyday clothes. These robes that the priest and other ministers wear are essentially uniforms. Notice that many are plain white. This keeps our focus on God rather than the priest’s wardrobe. The designs and colors of the other vestments vary throughout the seasons of the Church Year to reflect the history and traditions of the Early Church. And their beauty reminds us of God’s presence in the world.

Beyond Words

As we all know, colors can affect us in many ways, brightening a dark mood or intensifying a memory. The colors of our church decorations—hangings and altar coverings—have been chosen to highlight the seasonal themes of the Church Year, which follows the life of Jesus Christ. In Advent, for example, as we await His birth, we choose blue or purple as the colors of Preparation. White or red are used for Celebration, as on the days of his birth (Christmas) and resurrection (Easter). For a good part of each year green decorations signify Growth.

Bread and the Common Cup

Perhaps the church's most powerful symbols are the bread and wine of communion. They remind us that God is present in our world and in our lives—through Jesus Christ and the gathered community. At St. Mark's, we all drink from one cup. This binds our community and recalls the last meal Jesus shared with his friends. But no one is required to drink from the common cup. Some people choose to have the bread or wafer dipped into the wine. (Leave the bread in your hand, and the minister will do this for you.) Others abstain from the wine altogether. There is no one right way to partake. All are invited to the table.

It's Free

Just as we charge no entrance fee at St. Mark's, no one is required to leave money in the offering plate. Giving to the church is always optional. It is an individual act of thanksgiving for God's presence in our lives, and it honors the work we do to sustain ourselves, our families, and our community.

Join Us for Fellowship

After Worship we gather for Fellowship in the Parish Hall. Follow the others through the doors at each side of the stained-glass windows in the Entry Hall. Stay for a while to enjoy a simple snack, a cup of coffee or tea, and some friendly conversation. Remember, we are also sometimes shy, so help us get to know you by wearing a name tag, asking questions, or commenting on the service.

Be Careful and Courteous

Space is limited in the north lot between the street and the church; we try to leave those places for the handicapped and elderly. The south lot behind the church and school buildings has a one-way traffic pattern. Pay close attention to the signs and markings. On Sundays you may ignore the green time limits and reserved signs.

Your Children Are Safe with Us

We offer Sunday School and Child Care every week during both the 8am and 10am services. You may keep your children with you, but we invite you to have your older children take part in Sunday School in the classroom just off the Parish Hall. And your little ones can be looked after in our Preschool—the building with a walled-in play area adjacent to the south parking lot. Our volunteers and paid staff have been fingerprinted and had Justice Department background checks.

Just Show Up

It's easy to become a member of St. Mark's. Simply join us for Worship and Fellowship. By completing some simple paperwork, you can make it easier for us to inform you about upcoming events. We will also make a name tag for you and post your photo. Beyond that, your membership is what you make of it. Do and be as much as you want or need on your personal journey with Christ.

Learn More about St. Mark's

A number of leaflets are displayed in the Entry Hall or Narthex. These contain a lot more information about St. Mark's. Take home any that interest you. Feel free to ask questions. Father Keith is available during the Fellowship time, and any of us would be happy to tell you more about the Episcopal faith in general or St. Mark's in particular. Also, please visit our website at the address below.

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