

Christ Church, Epsom Common



Our Worship

We are delighted that you have come to a service of worship at Christ Church. To worship simply means something is important or 'worthy' to you. In a Christian context this refers to God as revealed to us through Jesus Christ – we show our reverence and adoration to God.

This leaflet, explaining some of the features of worship here, is written mainly for those at an early stage of exploring the Christian life – or perhaps even just beginning to do so. We appreciate what a big step that can be. But please be aware that you are with a body of people at many different stages – some perhaps at very early ones – of what are individual and life-long Christian journeys. Our church fellowship helps nourish and inspire us as we deepen our faith and its practice. You will doubtless have many questions, and the clergy team will be glad to help you explore the answers.

But, as Churches can do things slightly differently, this little guide may also be useful to those from other churches who are at Christ Church for the first time.

Parish Communion

Our main Sunday service is the 10 am **Parish Communion**. It is called “parish” because it’s for everyone who lives here. We aim to be welcoming and inclusive of all. Families are especially welcome and there are age-specific groups for children and young people. (However, on the third Sunday of the month, the 10 am service is non-Communion **All Age Worship** where we all stay together, worshipping and learning in a more informal and interactive way.)

Holy Communion is the service of Christian worship at which bread and wine are consecrated (blessed) and shared. It follows a set liturgy (order) which we customise to match the season and any particular theme for the day. The service booklets are fairly self-explanatory. All join in the words in bold. Hymn books and Bibles are in the chair pockets. Any supplementary material will be put on the overhead screen, which may also display images to help us understand the service more fully.

The liturgy generally includes four main parts.

- *Gathering* – we seek to get into the right frame of mind for worship through music and prayers. More specifically, this involves penitence (acknowledging where “we have done those things which we ought not to do and not done those things we ought to have done”) and praise.
- *Ministry of the Word* – we listen to a couple of passages from the Bible and, through a talk or sermon, explore what we feel God is saying to us through them. We offer Intercessions (prayers on behalf of others) for the world and our local community, the church and those we love. We reaffirm what we believe in the Creed (a statement of the elements of our Christian faith).

- *Ministry of the Sacrament* – this central section is where the bread and wine is blessed, broken and shared. We begin by sharing the Peace as a symbol that we are in fellowship with one another. An offertory is collected, enabling us to help extend God's Kingdom on earth. (Many longer-standing members make their offerings by direct bank transfers.) This money supports the work of the church and many other worthy organisations. The Eucharistic (Thanksgiving) Prayer recalls the saving acts of God through history culminating in the work of Christ on the cross. In particular, it recalls the Last Supper or meal Jesus had with his friends, when he asked them to remember him through the sharing of bread and wine. All are then invited to gather round the modern altar on the dais: those either Confirmed in the Church of England or from another church where they receive Communion, are given the bread and wine; others (including our youngsters) are given a personal blessing.
- *Dismissal* – the brief closing part of the service sends us back out into the world to live our lives renewed and strengthened by our worship.

On practical matters, we usually stand to sing, as it's easier and can help breathing; and sit for most readings, the talk and prayers. We generally stand in respect for the Gospel reading and also for the Creed as that is like an oath. Most people kneel at the altar to receive the bread and wine (or a blessing) as a sign of submission to and respect for God. Please be guided by the worship leader but also take account of your own physical needs.

Other Sunday Services

At 8.30 am there is a service of **Holy Communion** in traditional language. This non-musical service is held in the Chancel and uses the original high altar.

Twice a month, we meet at 6.30 pm for evening worship which is much more free-form.

- **Revive**, on the first Sunday of the month, is lively – with a band, teaching and prayer ministry.
- **Embrace**, on the third Sunday of the month, is worship in a more contemplative style – often with choral music or utilising the resources of the world church such as Iona or Taizé.

Other services

Our various other services during the week – and for the life events of Baptism, Weddings and Funerals – are beyond the scope of this introductory leaflet. Details are, of course, readily available on request.

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We hope that worship at Christ Church will be uplifting and inspiring – that you will find peace here and experience God's healing and love. And if you have any questions or comments, please do speak to a member of the clergy team.

For more information, please see www.christchurcheppsom.org.uk

or www.churchofengland.org