



HARBOR Anglican Church

Frequently Asked Questions

Please note this is a growing document. The following FAQ's aims to serve you by highlighting some of the frequently asked ecclesiological and theological questions posed to the leadership at our church.

Do I have to be Anglican to participate in the life of this church?

No, the beauty of Anglicanism recognizes that its own tradition is a secondary affection and that Jesus Christ is always to be our primary affection. We recognize Christians of all traditions who have been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit and who desire to be followers of Jesus. If this is you we welcome you into our community. You can come to the Lord's Table and participate in our community's liturgical and sacramental life. As well, we gladly welcome those who are curious and skeptical about the faith and invite you to ask questions and participate in ways that are consistent with where you are in your journey.

Are Anglicans Catholic or Protestant?

Classic Anglicanism understands itself to be Reformed Catholicism, which means we cherish our ancient mothers and fathers of the faith while recognizing the prophetic voices of church history, which includes the voices of the Protestant Reformation who helped reform the church by bringing Holy Scripture and the biblical gospel back to the center of the church's life.

Why do you have another book besides the Bible?

We do use another book called the Book of Common Prayer, but it holds no absolute or final authority like the Bible. The Book of Common Prayer is simply the Bible arranged for worship and provides for us a liturgy (the work of the people) that is deeply biblical and participatory. All Christians have to decide how to worship (i.e., how to order their Sunday worship on what to say, sing, pray, etc.) and our prayer book just aims to ensure that how we worship is in alignment with God's Word and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Why is the pastor called a priest and why do some people call him father?

Priest, as used by Anglicans, is the Anglicized (English) word for the Greek word *presbyter* which just means elder and is not to be confused with the Old Testament concept of priest. Father is a common designation for priests based on Paul's usage in I Cor. 4:15, "For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel."

What is membership?

It is a modern name for an ancient practice. The ancient church framed membership as a "rule of life" which consisted of individuals making vows to a community whereby they committed themselves to others to live together in a certain way. As moderns we call this membership and it's no different. It is a mutual relationship of accountability and submission between a particular people who are committed to a particular vision and values. At Harbor we are committed to a particular vision and set of values that point us in a specific direction on how to faithfully follow Christ and serve the world together in a context specific way.

What do I have to believe to be a member of this church?

In short, the essentials of the historic Christian faith. A helpful statement that has been passed down to us through church history states, "In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In everything, love." The essentials are the anchors that hold us together in Christ with one heart and one mind by the Spirit. At Harbor the essentials are the historic Christian faith that derive from Holy Scripture and are faithfully expressed in the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. As a church that is connected to the Global Anglican Church, we also embrace the 39 Articles of Religion and the Jerusalem Declaration as essential beliefs for Anglicans today that address matters of orthodoxy and Christianity's relationship to culture. As for the non-essentials we believe these, too, are extremely important, but the most dignifying way to hold these teachings in Christ's church is with liberty. And as the above statement says, in everything, we are to pursue love. The right position, expressed with the wrong posture, is not love, and the wrong position, permitted freely, is also not love. The right position, championed by the posture of love, is what Jesus embodied in his life and ministry.

What does it mean to be a member of this church?

First off, we recognize that membership in your previous church may have undermined your faith and not supported it. Often this is the result of leadership having authority and power with no accountability. Be it spiritual abuse or spiritual neglect, we recognize that leaders have tragically failed their people and brought shame on Christ's name and church. For this we lament and recognize the wrongs committed by the church and confess this to be a real issue that needs to be addressed. While recognizing that the NT does not explicitly teach membership as a requirement, something akin to membership is implied when it speaks of people being in submission to leaders, and leaders having to give an account to God for those they shepherd (Heb. 13:17). This highlights that the church is an organized body with structure and assumes that leaders and parishioners are both to be accountable. But as well, the NT speaks of the church as being organic when it highlights that we are living members one of another when we belong to the body of Christ. Some of us are more inclined to the organized dimension of the church, while others of us are more inclined to the organic dimension of the church. The truth is, we need both. Orthodox Anglicanism requires its leaders to be held to highest standard of accountability (submission to a Bishop/Diocese, who are submitted to a College of Bishop, who are submitted to Christ) and so congregants are being invited into something leaders are never exempt from themselves. We believe membership in a local church is important because we all need care and accountability. We all need to experience true freedom not without boundaries but within boundaries. As one of the church's ancient prayers says, "in your service is perfect freedom." We believe membership is primarily about discipleship which includes teaching, encouraging, equipping, exhorting, warning, building up, releasing, and ultimately presenting everyone mature in Christ.

What is Harbor's position on women in ministry?

Our church upholds the biblical teaching that both men and women are created in God's image and called to full service in his Kingdom. For this reason, our church is committed to promoting the ministry of women alongside men, both within and outside the church. Within the Anglican Communion there is a diversity of opinion regarding the ordination of women. While our church, in submission to our Bishop and Diocese, does not ordain women as presbyters (i.e., priests), we do ordain gifted and called women as vocational deacons and rejoice in their gifts, calling, and voice in the body of Christ.

What is Harbor's position on human sexuality and its posture towards the LGBTQ+ community?

At Harbor we believe *our posture* matters as much as *our position*. Our position is the historic, orthodox understanding of biological sex and sexual practice, which we believe is rooted in nature and confirmed by the authority of Holy Scripture; namely God's creation of humankind as male and female and the unchangeable standard of marriage as a lifelong one-flesh covenant union between two sexually different persons — male and female — from different families, and that all sexual relationships and expressions that deviate from this are sinful. While our position may be counter-cultural, we do not believe this precludes love for the LGBTQ+ community, but in fact demands it. Because we hold Scripture as authoritative, we must love LGBTQ+ individuals. As any parent can tell you, you can love somebody without affirming their choices. Our posture to LGBTQ+ individuals starts with the same foundation as ministry to any person, a key aspect of which is recognizing the mystery that each person has been fearfully and wonderfully created by God. The image of God is present in each person in our community, including those who identify as LGBTQ+. But likewise, so are the effects of sin are present in each person in our community. For us all the ground is level at the foot of the cross. As those who have been reconciled to God through Christ, we are given the ministry of reconciliation, which begins with being made new creations through being in Christ and continues with having our identities, loves, and desires shaped by the Father's love as revealed in Christ Jesus. We believe God's will for all people is to experience freedom from the penalty and power of sin through faith in Christ and to know that his patience never runs out even as humans struggle with the indwelling presence of sin.