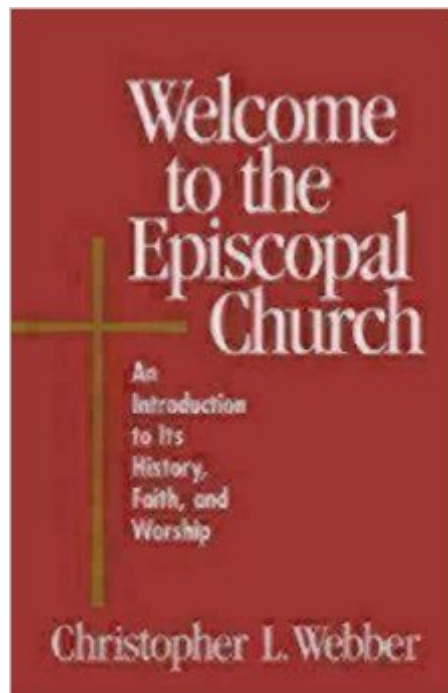


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# Welcome To The Episcopal Church: An Introduction To Its History, Faith, And Worship



## Synopsis

The perfect book for inquirers and new members, as well as current Church members who may be unfamiliar with some of the Church's history, beliefs, and practices. This new introduction to the history, polity, spirituality, worship, and outreach of the Episcopal Church is written in an easy-to-read conversational tone, and includes study questions at the end of each chapter, making it an excellent resource for adult parish study and inquirers' classes."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is really quite a good little introduction to the Episcopal Church. Webber begins, quite naturally, with the early church and then goes on to talk briefly about the Medieval period before getting to the Reformation, which is when the Anglican church (which the Episcopal church is a part of) began. Webber's insights into the crisis of the Reformation are helpful. He expresses far more succinctly - yet no less compellingly - some of the main problems with the Reformation view of the Bible and church authority, mainly that people turned away from a centralized authority that prescribed Christian life in black and white terms to a textual authority written thousands of years ago that usually didn't prescribe such simple rules to follow. The Anglican - and therefore Episcopal - way of overcoming this was by using three things in determining its doctrine: scripture, tradition and reason. Although the latter of the three is far more subjective than the other two, this is what gives Anglicanism its double-edged sword: a larger community that is open to discussion about many

issues yet remains a community nonetheless (well, at least in theory). Webber's short take on Episcopal - Anglicanism in the United States - history is equally fascinating. It is interesting to read how much American isolationism/independence played into the views that people had of the Church in America; despite all of this, however, the Episcopal church grew. The other sections of the book deal with other areas of history as well as more basic, overarching principles such as the use of the Book of Common Prayer and the structure of the Episcopal church as itself and as a part of the larger Anglican communion.

Christopher Webber's book, 'Welcome to the Episcopal Church', is a very good, brief introduction to the Episcopal Church in history, worship and overall faith. Often used as a study guide or textbook during confirmation and new member classes, this book provides a clear, basic, accessible and interesting narrative that is easy to follow and easy to learn. The Episcopal Church is the official version of the Anglican Church (Church of England) in the United States. For historical reasons, after the American Revolution the Church of England in America could no longer remain the Church of England -- the tendency toward national autonomy among Anglican church structures generally holds true as a pattern today. Webber's book does not go into the complexities of general church history -- the history of the church prior to the Reformation is a shared history, and can be learned elsewhere. The Church of England proper grew out of the Reformation, and the American pattern of the church derives from this. Webber continues his history by looking at colonial period, the revolutionary period, the growth period in the early nineteenth century, and the continuing developments in the church up to the present. Webber's chapter on worship looks not just at the traditional liturgy (often considered the centre of the worship life), but also the architecture, music, and various other aspects. The Episcopal church is one of sacramental life with a Eucharistic centre (although this has not always been true in performance), and the Book of Common Prayer is more formative of the community than any set of dogmas or doctrines. Webber makes a claim for the Episcopal church which is generally true for most churches -- worship defines community, it defines the church.

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