

# Can I?

## *Can I Make Up My Own Prayers?*

The Book of Common Prayer is meant to complement daily individual prayer, not replace it. Every service in the book includes time for personal prayer, either silent or aloud.

The Book of Common Prayer has been a source of comfort, joy, inspiration, and a unique treasure in Christian worship for over 400 years.

Join us this Sunday and experience for yourself the love and presence of God at St. James Episcopal Church.



*Dear Lord, you govern and make holy all your people: receive our prayers for all those who seek a closer relationship with you, that alone and together we may experience your love and guidance in all that we do in your name. Amen.*

May the peace of the Lord be always with you.

## Resources

The Book of Common Prayer is widely available at booksellers and libraries, as well as through our church office. You can also find online versions, as the text has been put in the public domain. Visit our web site to read this brochure and for links to online sources in web, PDF or as smart-phone apps.



Please view our other brochures introducing the Episcopal Church:

- Episcopalians
- The Sacraments
- Scripture, Tradition & Reason
- The Creeds

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# Book of THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER Common Prayer



BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA  
[www.stjamesbr.org](http://www.stjamesbr.org)

*We proclaim Christ crucified and risen,  
and invite you to join with us in ministry  
together in his name.*

## *Introduction*

May the Lord be with you.

The Book of Common Prayer holds the prayers and services for occasions when the community comes together, and for individual use.

First produced by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer in 1549, the current revision of 1979 is used at St. James and in most Episcopal churches in the United States. However, there are more than 70 million Anglicans (Episcopalians) in 163 countries around the world, each using a Book of Common Prayer in their own language and reflecting their experience in the world.

Worship in the Episcopal Church is liturgical — literally, “work of the people.” By following the service in the Book of Common Prayer, all can participate, fortifying and reminding us that each person is important to the life of the community and the church.

It is also a book for daily living. Many of the prayers are appropriate for use in daily devotions or at meal time, or when praying for our own needs, or those of others.

## *How?*

### *How Does it Relate to the Bible?*

Two-thirds of the material in the Book of Common Prayer comes directly from the Bible, and our worship is founded in Scripture.

## *Why?*

### *Why “Common” Prayer?*

The Episcopal worship service is of the community, and these are the words and prayers we say together, “in common.”

This means that on any given Sunday, someone familiar with the Book of Common Prayer can walk into any Episcopal church in the land (and with small local variations, any Anglican church in the world) and take part in the service.

## *What?*

### *What’s Included?*

The primary service is the Holy Eucharist — the presentation of the Last Supper with Christ and his disciples. Visitors often first experience it at baptisms, weddings, or funerals in the Episcopal Church.

## *How?*

### *How Can I Use it Personally?*

Even if you don’t come from a liturgical tradition, you’ll find that the Book of Common Prayer is a well of inspiration. The influence of the Book of Common Prayer has permeated into many worship traditions and ceremonies, as well as society in general. “Till death us do part,” “Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust,” and many more from the Book of Common Prayer are familiar phrases.

There are prayers for private or family use throughout the day, special prayers for our own needs and those of others and our world, praise and thanksgiving, and for special occasions.

All 150 Psalms or poems from the Old Testament are in the Book of Common Prayer to be ready at any time.

There is also a calendar for reading through the entire Bible every two years. An outline of the Episcopal faith, formulas for finding the dates of church holy days, and historical church documents are also included.