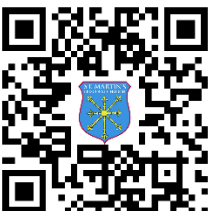




## **A Guide to Sunday Worship for Visitors**



**YOU ARE WELCOME HERE**



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to visit our website.*

## General Information

Welcome to St. Martin's! We are honored to have you worshipping with us, and we want you to know that whoever you are, and wherever you are on your faith journey, ***YOU are welcome here!*** This guide is meant to help you know a little more about how we worship. Please reach out to the parish priest if you would like to know more information about our parish ministries.

St. Martin's is a liturgical church. That means we worship using the prayers and rituals that are prescribed in the *Book of Common Prayer* (the red books in the pews). We are also a sacramental church. That means that we believe that God uses material things (like water, bread, and wine) as conduits through which we receive grace, when these objects are blessed and consecrated using the rites, prayers, and ceremonies that we believe were instituted by Christ. The two principal sacraments are Baptism and the Holy Eucharist- sometimes called Holy Communion.

Our weekend worship is always a celebration of the Holy Eucharist because we believe Jesus Christ is truly present with us in this holy Sacrament, and because Jesus asked us to celebrate the Holy Eucharist often in order to remember his death and resurrection.

There are three celebrations of the Holy Eucharist on weekends from September to the end of May: On Sundays at 8:15 am and 10:30 am, and on Saturdays at 5:30 pm. There is Christian formation for children using the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* during the 10:30 Mass. During the summer, from June through the end of August, there is only one Mass at 10 am on Sundays.

Saturday Mass at 5:30 pm and Sunday Mass at 8:15 a.m. are both intimate and contemplative. There is no singing, nor do we use incense. Sunday Mass at 10:30 a.m. is a Sung Mass with incense.

During penitential seasons we use Rite One, which is based on the first Eucharistic liturgy written in English. It uses Elizabethan English. During other times, our prayers use contemporary English, most often using the *1979 Book of Common Prayer*, but sometimes we use other approved rites.

## **Entering the Church**

When you enter through the red doors of the church, you come into a small room called the *Narthex*. You will be greeted by an usher who will give you a worship leaflet. There is a guest book on the table that you may sign if you like. If you have children, you may wish to take them to Church School. Go through the door next to the Crucifix and you will find the rooms down the hallway to the right. Of course children are welcome to worship with you if you prefer. There is also a restroom down that hallway to the left.

You may notice that when some people approach their pew, they bow or genuflect (bend the knee) in order to give reverence to Jesus present in the tabernacle. Then, they will say a prayer to prepare themselves for worship. Some people kneel to pray - others stay seated. Some will light a candle and say a prayer at the icon of the Virgin Mary and the Child Jesus. Please prepare yourself in whatever way makes you feel most connected to God.

## **The Church Building**

The altar stands in the center of the holiest space in the church, called the *Sanctuary*. This is where the priest presides during the Mass. It is also the place where the Eucharistic Presence of Jesus is reserved in the tabernacle behind the altar. A candle always burns before the tabernacle as a sign of Jesus' presence.

Above the altar there are three stained glass windows. The center one shows Jesus as the Sovereign of the Universe. The left window shows the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus, crowned in Glory. The right window shows St. John the Baptist, the great prophet who baptized Jesus.

In the back of the church there is a stained glass window which portrays our patron saint, St. Martin of Tours, a fourth century soldier who became a bishop in France. He was known for his compassion and care for the poor.

## **The Beginning of the Mass: The Procession**

The Mass begins with a procession. Everyone stands (if able), as the organ begins to play the introduction to the opening hymn. This hymn is sung while the priest and others who will be involved in the Mass enter. The hymn is found in the blue *Hymnal*.

Incense is used during the procession as a symbol of the presence of God. A crucifix follows as a reminder of Jesus' death on the cross. Many people will bow to reverence the Crucifix as it passes by. A golden Gospel Book is carried in by a Eucharistic Minister.

## **The First Half of the Mass: The Liturgy of the Word**

After the hymn, the Mass begins with a greeting, followed by a Song of Praise. On most Sundays we sing the *Gloria (Glory to God)*. During penitential seasons, we sing the *Kyrie (Lord, have mercy)*. The priest then prays a *Collect* (a prayer which summarizes the theme for the day).

Throughout the Mass you may see people bowing or making the sign of the cross. This practice is used as a form of prayer, or as a way to bless oneself. Many will bow their head at the mention of the name of Jesus and Mary as signs of respect.

After the Collect, we sit to hear *readings from the Bible*. The first reading is from the Hebrew Scriptures. This is followed by a Psalm - also from the Hebrew Scriptures. A second reading is read from a portion of the Christian Scriptures called the *Epistles* - which were written by some of the first Apostles to the earliest Christians.

At the conclusion of the Epistle reading, we stand and sing *Alleluia* as the Gospel Book is brought into the midst of the people. There the priest reads from one of the four *Gospels*- that portion of the Christian Scriptures which tell us about the life and teachings of Jesus. Please remain standing, facing the Gospel Book, as this reading is read.

Remain standing as the procession takes the Gospel Book back to the Sanctuary. The preacher, usually the priest, will go to the

lectern, and invoke the blessing of the Most Holy Trinity. The preacher will then ask everyone to be seated to listen to the *homily* - which is a brief teaching or meditation on the readings.

After the homily, we stand to profess the faith of the Church using the words of the *Nicene Creed*, which is an ancient statement of belief that Christians have been reciting since the fourth century.

The creed is followed by the *Prayers of the People*. Following ancient custom and the teachings of Jesus, we pray for the needs of the Church and the World. You may stand or kneel for these prayers. A lay leader will lead the prayers from the lectern, and we respond with the responses in the prayerbook.

The Prayers of the People are usually followed by the *Confession of Sin*, unless this has taken place at the beginning of the Mass. This is a general confession of sin done kneeling.

After we have made peace with God by confessing our sins, we make peace with one another, by exchanging a handshake, bow or some other loving gesture as we share Christ's Peace with each other. After the priest greets the people, everyone stands and then turns to their neighbors and says "Peace be with you," or simply, "Peace". Following the sharing of peace, we sit for *announcements*.



## The Second Half of the Mass: The Holy Communion

The Mass continues with the *Offertory* where money is offered to God as a symbol of our lives. These offerings will be used for the church's mission and ministries. Giving money is entirely optional. If you wish to contribute money, simply wait for the ushers to pass the plate to you and place your money in it. An Offertory Anthem is sometimes sung by the choir during this time.

After the gifts of money are received, they are presented to God with the bread and wine that will be consecrated during the Eucharist. Please stand as the organist plays the introduction to the hymn that we will sing as the gifts are being presented and as the altar is being prepared for the prayer of consecration. Check the worship leaflet for the hymn number.

Once the altar is prepared, and while the hymn is still being sung, the priest incenses the bread and wine and the altar. This is an ancient gesture by which honor and reverence is given to Christ who will become present in the bread and wine on the altar. The rising smoke also represents our prayers ascending to God. After the altar is incensed, the thurifer incenses the priest, and then the people. This is a ritual way of purifying ourselves as we present ourselves to God as a living sacrifice. In this way we remind ourselves that the presence of Christ is also present in us. When the thurifer incenses the people with incense, they will first bow to the congregation. It is appropriate to bow back to them.

The Prayer of Consecration begins once the hymn is concluded. The priest may announce a special intention of the Mass, or may begin at once with the *Sursum Corda* - an ancient greeting in which we are invited to lift our hearts to God. At the conclusion of this greeting, we sing an ancient hymn called the *Sanctus - Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of Power and Might*. When the *Sanctus* is completed, most people will kneel- but you may remain standing if you prefer.

During the prayer of consecration, the priest offers thanks to God and then recalls the last supper that Jesus enjoyed with his friends, at which he instituted the Sacrament of Holy Communion. The priest repeats the words that Jesus spoke on that night, and asks the Holy Spirit to make Jesus present in the bread and the wine. This is the most sacred moment of the Mass. To reverence the presence of Jesus, bells are rung and the priests genuflects. Many will make the sign of the Cross as the body and blood of Christ are elevated. The prayer of consecration concludes with a sung *Amen*, after which we pray the *Our Father*, also known as the *Lord's Prayer*.

After the consecration, the priest invites everyone to come to the altar and receive *Communion*. After the invitation:

1. You may receive Communion if you feel drawn to Jesus Christ and wish to receive the love and grace offered by God in this Sacrament. *No one who seeks union with God through Jesus Christ will be turned away.* To receive Communion, simply kneel or stand by the altar rail and hold your hands out, palms up, one on top of the other. First the priest will give you the Body of Christ, which you should eat right away, and then a Eucharistic Minister will come and offer you the Blood of Christ in a common cup. Take the cup by the base and guide it to your lips so that you can take a sip. After you receive communion, please walk back to your seat, along the outside aisles. You will notice that many people make the sign of the cross before they receive the Body of Christ, and after they receive the Blood of Christ. This is optional, but please feel free to sign yourself if it helps you enter more deeply into the mystery of Christ's loving presence with us
2. You may go forward to the altar and receive a blessing if you do not wish to receive Communion. You do this by kneeling or standing at the rail with your arms folded across your chest (with your hands by your shoulders). The priest will then say a blessing over you.
3. If you do not want to receive communion, nor a blessing, please remain seated in a posture of reverence.

We believe that Jesus is fully present in both the bread and the wine, so it is fine if you prefer to receive only the Body of Christ in the form of bread, without drinking from the cup.

## **The End of the Mass**

After Communion either sit or kneel until everyone has received Communion. It is common to see some singing the communion hymns or saying silent prayers during this time.

When all have received Communion, the priest will clear the altar, after which we will say a prayer of Thanksgiving. The priest will then bless the people and dismiss them with the words, “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.” Nourished by the grace of God, we go into the world to love our neighbor and meet the needs of the poor and the needy.

But first, the priest and the altar servers process out as we all sing a hymn. Once the hymn ends, you may see some people kneeling once more to say a private prayer. Others will go back to the narthex and greet the priest. *You are invited to come downstairs after the Mass and have coffee and refreshments in the Undercroft (go down the stairs to the right of the main doors).*

We thank you for joining us this morning! If you have any questions, please contact us:

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