

Part 3: A Local Anglican Church

Marks of a Local Anglican Church

If God is our father, the church is our mother. - John Calvin. It is as impossible, unnecessary and undesirable to be a Christian all by yourself as it is to be a newborn baby all by yourself. The church is first and foremost a community, a collection of people who belong to one another because they belong to God, the God we know in and through Jesus.¹

The following are the bare minimum requirements for belief and practice as an Anglican Church.

The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral

1. The Holy Scriptures of Old & New Testament as the revealed Word of God.
2. The Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith.
3. Two Sacraments: Baptism & the Lord's Supper.
4. The Historic Episcopate form of church government - locally adapted.

Word & Sacrament

The two primary marks of a *local* congregation are:

- 1) The preached Word
- 2) The partaking of the Sacraments

Preaching God's Word: What is a Sermon?

What a Sermon is NOT

- A word by word, verse by verse exegesis of scripture that only aims to interpret what the words in the Bible mean - without helping people live faithfully in their current cultural context.
- A Christian self-help TED Talk designed to inspire and encourage people to live more fulfilled lives.
- An intellectual lecture on a particular doctrine or bit of theology.
- The pastor's personal views on _____.

¹ *Simply Christian*. NT Wright.

So What is a Sermon?²

- **Biblical & Contemporary:** an exposition of scripture that helps the congregation to see God's world as it actually is and to live faithfully and obediently. A good sermon flows from scripture directly into our present context.
- **Authoritative & Humble:** God's Word is authoritative, but it is read and communicated through broken and inadequate people. A good sermon is 100% confident in the truth of scripture, but cautious in our own interpretation of God's mysteries. He has made some things plain to us, but not all things. A good sermon shows the difference.
- **Prophetic & Pastoral:** Prophetic = preaching God's Truth with boldness and courage. Pastoral = applying a healing balm to wounds. A good sermon is firm but gentle. It brings discipline with compassion. A good sermon, "*Disturbs the comfortable and comforts the disturbed.*"
- **Thoughtful & Passionate:** Both mind and emotions are fully engaged. Deep thinking and deep feeling. Lets the heart burn as Christ opens us to His Word.

The Sacraments

What are Sacraments?

The Christian church has historically worshipped with the use of two Sacraments: Baptism and Communion (also called the Eucharist or Lord's Supper). Confusion abounds as to their meaning, how they are to be received, and what effect (if any) they actually have on us. Before we jump into the details of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, we need to re-orient ourselves to the nature of reality as God defines it. Only from the proper perspective do the Sacraments come alive and reveal their efficacy.

Secular or Sacred: What is the Nature of Reality?

What is secularism? Common to popular misconception, this word is not synonymous with atheism. One can believe in the existence of God, Jesus, the Bible, heaven, hell, discipleship, and loving one's neighbor and still be very much a secular person. Secularism has little problem with propositional statements or rational discourse. An argument between two people, a Christian and an atheist, about whether God exists or does not exist is, by nature, a secular conversation - it assumes a point of neutrality from which to make rational judgments about reality.

So if secularism is not atheism, what is it? And more importantly, what is its opposite? Secularism is the necessary democratic response to pluralism - "*the pluralism of society*"

² *The Living Church*. John Stott.

*requires there to be some kind of neutrality or 'principled distance.'"*³ Any aspect of life that assumes a vantage point of neutrality or 'principled distance' from which to judge, evaluate, and decide up reality is, by nature, a secular posture. Therefore, the opposite of secularism (for the sake of this conversation) is an entirely different vantage point - one which sees the world through a particular lens and accepts what is seen as reality. We will use the language of "enchantment" to describe this vantage point - a posture of seeing the world as infused with meaning of its own, over which one has no control and no place of judgement - merely acceptance.

The question then, for us, is "what is the nature of reality?" (This is, of course, a secular question as well as a complex philosophical conundrum - but we've got to start somewhere!) Is reality secular - where we select our beliefs to give it meaning - or do we live in an enchanted world - possessed with meaning of its own? This class has neither the time nor the ability in which to make a full historical and philosophical case for the re-enchantment of the world. Rather, it will simply be asserted and the excellent works in the "For Further Reading" section are recommended to the inquisitive or skeptical reader.

Learning to See, Think & Exist Sacramentally

The Bible teaches, and historic Christianity has believed, that the world is an enchanted place. The theological word for this is "Sacrament." The idea here is that God made the world,⁴ blessed it and called it good,⁵ and all of creation points to Him.⁶ Now here is a crucial distinction between seeing the world sacramentally and believing right Biblical theology. One can certainly believe that all this is true and still not see it or experience it as such. The call to every human being is not only to recognize God as creator, but to see and experience His truth, beauty and goodness in His own creation. We, because we are broken and corrupted by Sin, do not see God in creation - except in fleeting glimpses. One of the wonderful gifts of the Sacraments of Baptism and Communion is that they are the sharp end of the spear that pierces our foggy secularism and opens our eyes and hearts to the wonders of seeing God in the material world. "*The Eucharist and Baptism are not an escape from the world, rather they are the arrival at a vantage point from which we see more deeply into the reality of the world.*"⁷

³ Charles Taylor. *The Meaning of Secularism*. (Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture: The Hedgehog Review, Fall 2010). 1.

⁴ Genesis 1.

⁵ Genesis 1:31.

⁶ Romans 1:20.

⁷ Schmemmann. *For the Life of the World*. 27.

*Clarification: This is not pantheism. Creation is not God. Creation *points* to God and reveals aspects of God's nature and person to us so that we might more closely know Him and worship Him. This is a crucial distinction!

"The world... is not something 'material' and limited to material functions, thus different from, and opposed to, specifically 'spiritual' functions by which man is related to God. All that exists is God's gift to man, and it all exists to make God known to man, to make man's life communion with God. It is divine love made food, made life for man. God blesses everything He creates, and, in Biblical language, this means that He makes all creation the sign and means of His presence and wisdom, love and revelation: 'O taste and see that the Lord is good!'"⁸

The Sacraments Point to Christ

It is no coincidence that both sacraments of the Church center on the person of Jesus Christ. *"He is the true and full sacrament because He is the fulfillment of the world's essential 'sacramentality.'"* In other words, the story goes something like this:

1. **Creation:** The world was designed by God to reveal Himself to humans (so that they might know Him) and to sustain their life (by feeding them).
2. **Fall:** But humans have rejected God and His world by electing to feed themselves apart from Him.
3. **Redemption:** Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God and, through His life, death and resurrection, He becomes our sustainer.
4. **New Creation/Restoration:** The sacraments of the church (commanded by Jesus Himself) are now the means by which we are united with Christ (to know Him again) and sustained by Him (feeding on Jesus Himself). The sacraments, through Jesus, connect us back to God's original design for relationship and sustaining life.

Sacraments as a Remedy to Doubt

One of the most wonderful gifts of the Sacraments is that they are tangible - you can touch them! So much of the Christian life and faith is unseen - which, in a secular culture, easily leads to doubt. So how do Sacraments counter doubt? Four ways: Sacraments convey grace, strengthen faith, enhance unity and reassure us of God's promises.⁹ The mystery here is that Sacraments do not merely signify grace, but actually convey it as well. In Baptism we are *graced* by God through Jesus' death and resurrection. In

⁸ Alexander Schmemmann. *For the Life of the World*. (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1965).14.

⁹ Alister E. McGrath. *Christian Theology*. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011). 407-411

Communion we are *graced* by God through the body and blood of Jesus. Sacraments strengthen our faith by giving us something to touch, feel, taste and remember in moments of doubt. Protestant reformer Martin Luther used to pace in his stone room and shout “I am baptized!” whenever feelings of doubt arose. He was looking backwards at the Sacrament as a source of strength for His present faith. Sacraments also enhance unity. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, wrote, “In no religion, whether true or false, can people be held together in association, unless they are gathered together with some common share in some visible signs or sacraments.”¹⁰ We all enter through the same door (Baptism) to dine at the same table (Communion) because we are one, unified people. Finally, Sacraments reassure us of God’s promise towards us by reminding us: what the promises are, for whom the promises were made and what sort of guarantee we have that the promises will come to fruition. In both the Anglican Baptismal and Eucharistic liturgies, these three elements come through loud and clear → God has promised to show grace and forgiveness, to us and it is guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus.

Questions Regarding The Sacraments¹¹

102. What is a sacrament?

A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. God gives us the sign as a means whereby we receive that grace, and as a tangible assurance that we do in fact receive it. (1662 Catechism)

103. How should you receive the sacraments?

I should receive the sacraments by faith in Christ, with repentance and thanksgiving. Faith in Christ is necessary to receive grace, and obedience to Christ is necessary for the benefits of the sacraments to bear fruit in my life. (1662 Catechism; Articles of Religion, 28)

104. What are the sacraments of the Gospel?

The two sacraments ordained by Christ, which are generally necessary for our salvation, are Baptism and Holy Communion, which is also known as the Lord’s Supper or the Holy

¹⁰ St. Augustine - derived from Alister E. McGrath. *Christian Theology*. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011). 409.

¹¹ Questions 102-115 are taken from *To Be a Christian: An Anglican Catechism* p.59-62 - the official catechism of the ACNA.

Eucharist. (Articles of Religion, 25)

105. What is the outward and visible sign in Baptism?

The outward and visible sign is water, in which candidates are baptized “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” – the name of the Triune God to whom the candidate is being committed. (1662 Catechism, 1 Peter 3:21; Matthew 28:19)

106. What is the inward and spiritual grace set forth in Baptism?

The inward and spiritual grace set forth is a death to sin and a new birth to righteousness, through union with Christ in his death and resurrection. I am born a sinner by nature, separated from God, but in baptism, rightly received, I am made God’s child by grace through faith in Christ. (John 3:3-5; Romans 6:1-11; Ephesians 2:12; Galatians 3:27-29)

107. What is required of you when you come to be baptized?

Repentance, in which I turn away from sin; and faith, in which I turn to Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord and embrace the promises that God makes to me in this sacrament. (Acts 2:38)

108. Why is it appropriate to baptize infants?

Because it is a sign of God’s promise that they are embraced in the covenant community of Christ’s Church. Those who in faith and repentance present infants to be baptized vow to raise them in the knowledge and fear of the Lord, with the expectation that they will one day profess full Christian faith as their own. (Acts 2:39)

109. What signs of the Holy Spirit’s work do you hope and pray to see as a result of your baptism?

I hope and pray that the Holy Spirit who indwells me will help me to be an active member of my Christian community, participate in worship, continually repent and return to God, proclaim the faith, love and serve my neighbor, and strive for justice and peace. (Hebrews 10:25; 12:14; 1 Peter 3:15; 1 John 1:9; 2:1)

110. Why did Christ institute the sacrament of Holy Communion?

He instituted it for the continued remembrance of the sacrifice of his atoning death, and to convey the benefits the faithful receive through that sacrifice. (Luke 22:17-20; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17)

111. What is the outward and visible sign in Holy Communion?

The visible sign is bread and wine, which Christ commands us to receive. (1 Corinthians 11:23)

112. What is the inward and spiritual thing signified?

The spiritual thing signified is the body and blood of Christ, which are truly taken and received in the Lord's Supper by faith. (1 Corinthians 10:16-18; 11:27; John 6:52-56)

113. What benefits do you receive through partaking of this sacrament?

As my body is nourished by the bread and wine, I receive the strengthening and refreshing of my soul by the body and blood of Christ; and I receive the strengthening and refreshing of the love and unity I share with fellow Christians, with whom I am united in the one Body of Christ. (1662 Catechism)

114. What is required of you when you come to receive Holy Communion?

I am to examine myself as to whether I truly repent of my sins and intend to lead the new life in Christ; whether I have a living faith in God's mercy through Christ and remember his atoning death with a thankful heart; and whether I have shown love and forgiveness to all people. (1 Corinthians 11:27-32)

115. What is expected of you when you have shared in Holy Communion?

Having been renewed in my union with Christ and his people through sharing in the Supper, I should continue to live in holiness, avoiding sin, showing love and forgiveness to all, and serving others in gratitude.

Consistency Regarding Children - A Philosophical Defence of Infant Baptism

“Can infants really have faith? “Faith is the human response of trust towards God, a response of allegiance, in a personal relationship... Do infants have personal relationships? Of course! Infants quickly (even in utero) learn to respond to mother’s voice... If infants can

trust and distrust human persons, why can't they trust in God? Behind the denial of infant faith is, apparently, an assumption that God is less available to an infant than older humans... Parents, moreover, establish relationships with their infants through symbols. We talk to infants, and we show our love through gestures such as hugs and kisses... Infant baptism is neither more nor less odd and miraculous than talking to a newborn. In fact, that is just what infant baptism is: God speaking in water to a newborn child.”¹²

Regarding Sprinkling vs. Full Immersion Baptism

“Do Anglicans do justice to the radical nature of baptism when we only sprinkle water on a wiggly infant and quickly wipe it off? Not really. It is too polite, too pretty, too clean. On the other hand, those who practice full immersion do not do baptism justice either because even full immersion is equally polite, quick and tidy. While it is true that the image of immersion is more in keeping with the symbol of baptism, it still falls far short of the heart-stopping reality of what baptism really signifies: a voluntary death to self and a submission, in faith, to the hope of resurrection. Unless we are willing to hold candidates under water kicking and struggling, until he or she almost drowns only to be rescued at the last instant and brought, sputtering and coughing, to desperately inhale a life-giving breath, any liturgical act will only hint at the reality... It is the very struggle of life being rescued from the jaws of death.”¹³

Organizing & Leading an Anglican Church

Geography

- **Parish:** a local congregation that worships, serves, and makes disciples together under the leadership of a Rector.
- **Diocese:** a network of parishes that support each other under the leadership of a Bishop.
- **Province:** A collection of diocese over a large geographic area under the leadership of a college of Bishops - represented by an Archbishop or Primate.

Authority

- **Laity:** A baptized and confirmed Christians are members of the laity. A lay person is not a “normal” person, but a person who is, in a sense, “ordained to live as a Christian be a member of the church.”
- **Deacons & Priests:** Ordained people who lead and serve a local parish.
- **Bishops:** Priests who are ordained to be “Pastors of Pastors” in order to serve and lead a diocese.

¹² Peter J. Leithart. *The Baptized Body*. (Moscow: Canon Press, 2007). 10.

¹³ John W. Howe & Sam Pascoe. *Our Anglican Heritage*. (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2010). 70.

Parish Governance

- **Rector:** A priest who is installed by the Bishop of the diocese to lead a local parish.
- **Parish Council:** An elected board of lay people who serve a 3 year term during which they assist the Rector in overseeing the resources of the parish.

Confirmation

What is Confirmation?

So what is confirmation anyway? If you're saved through God's grace in Jesus and your union with Him has been marked in baptism, then what on earth do we need confirmation for?

1. Confirmation is public – it lets the whole family know that you are a new member.
2. Confirmation plants a stake in the ground and marks a time when the hopes and dreams of parents, godparents, disciplers, pastors, etc. are realized as you embrace faith for yourself. At confirmation you are signing on for the Christian race, you are offering yourself for service to Jesus Christ.¹⁴

So how does this happen?

The Bishop comes and will ask every a question, and that question essentially is, “have you put your faith in Jesus? The same Jesus into whom you were baptized? Are you ratifying and confirming that you are indeed a Christian? And you will respond with two of the most important words in your whole life, “I do.” Then the bishop will lay his hands upon your head – this is the central act of the service. What is going on here? Well, laying on of hands has a long history through the Bible, here are just a few examples:

1. It's a sign of general blessing – Jacob, shortly before his death, laid his hands on his two grandsons and prayed that God would bless them. Jesus, in the same way, took children into his arms and blessed them.
2. It's a sign of commissioning somebody for a special task – the people of Israel laid their hands on the Levites to dedicate them to God's special service in worship. Moses laid his hands on Joshua to symbolize the commissioning of a new leader. The apostles laid their hands on the seven men who had been chosen to help them in the practical work of the church. Paul laid his hands on Timothy and told Timothy to do the same to others.
3. Jesus laid his hands on people for healing.

¹⁴ Stott, John. *Your Confirmation*. 7.

4. Confirmation – when the first Samaritans believed, the Jerusalem apostles sent Peter and John to investigate. They asked them some questions, and then they laid their hands on them and prayed for them - confirming them as Christians. This is not a prescriptive passage – the Bible doesn't tell us that this is what we are supposed to do for everyone.¹⁵

So what does the laying on of hands signify?

The laying on of hands is a sign/pledge certifying God's favor and gracious goodness to the Christians being confirmed. Has the person accepted Christ, then Christ accepts him or her. Has the person confirmed the promises/hopes/dreams of his or her parents, godparents, pastors, etc? Then God confirms that person – declaring that it is true that this person really is a Christian. Has the person spoken with his or her mouth that he or she is a Christian? Then the Bishop's hand has bourn testimony that the person is indeed a child of God. The Bishop's hand is an earthly symbol of the fatherly hand of God which will always guide and hold his children.[3]

Ordination to the Laity

Did you know that, in a sense, every single Christian is ordained? This is what is meant when Christians say that they believe in “the priesthood of all believers.” We believe that every single Christian is called into a special place of service and when the Bishop lays hands on you, you are ordained – not as a deacon, not as a priest – but as a lay person in the Church – a simple Christian. Even when people get made deacons, priests, bishops, etc. – they never stop being lay people – they never stop being simple Christians.

Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Which is better, having Jesus with you physically or having the Holy Spirit dwell within you? Jesus' answer may surprise you! (read Jn. 16:7)

The Holy Spirit universalizes the presence of Jesus.
The Holy Spirit internalizes the presence of Jesus.

Romans 8:9 “if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.” – this what we mean when we say that evangelicalism is heart religion. The Spirit's indwelling in us marks us, brands us, sets us apart as belonging to God.

One of the main ministries of the Spirit is to give God's people assurance that they belong to Him. Some people may find the idea of assurance to be a bit cocky or arrogant – how can you be so sure?

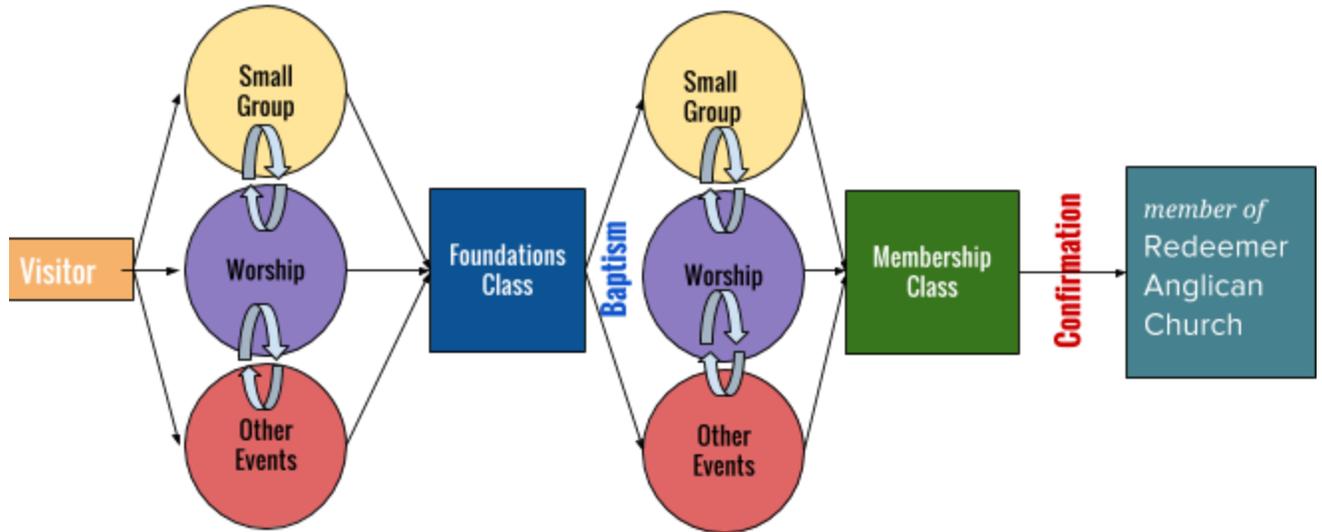
¹⁵ Stott, John. *Your Confirmation*. 11.

The Importance of the Church community

Another helper in the realm of assurance is the nurturing of a church community. C.S. Lewis once said that he found it more difficult to believe while traveling than when he was at home. This is normal! The church community reminds us, holds us accountable, offers a place to belong, to believe, to grow, to flourish, to serve.

Sample Question: What are the mere benefits of adoption vs. the lifestyle of having been adopted?

Redeemer On-Ramp | Visitor-to-Member



Visiting Redeemer, but not yet trusting & following Jesus as Lord and Savior.

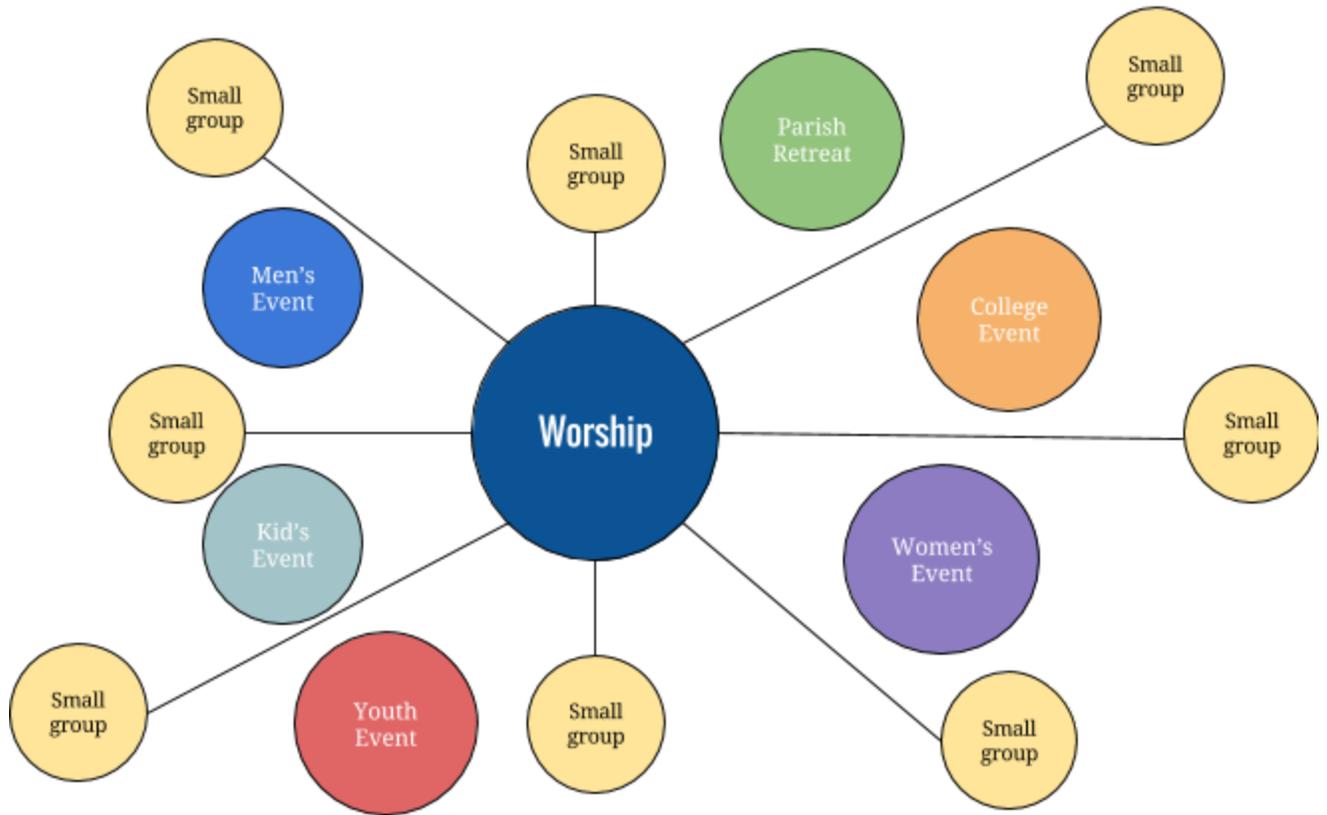
Participating with Redeemer as a baptized Christian, but not fully committed to the church family.

Serving and leading as a confirmed Christian & committed member of the Redeemer church family.

Implications

- Everyone who is new to Redeemer, Christian or unbeliever, should take the Foundations Class.
- Everyone who wishes to become a member of Redeemer, must take both the Foundations and Membership classes.

Redeemer Ministry Program Structure



Implications

- Sunday Worship & Small Groups are the regular, weekly rhythms for all Redeemer members.
- All other events are “Pop-Up” ministries. They pop up occasionally so that we can inject some specialized ministry into a particular demographic of the church, but then we pop them back down so that we can return to the weekly, sustainable rhythm of worship and small group.

Assigned Reading

Please read Part III: The Anglican Church, p. 140-218 in *The Anglican Way*.

For Further Reading

The Living Church | John Stott

To Be A Christian: An Anglican Catechism

For the Life of the World | Alexander Schmemmann

Our Anglican Heritage | John W. Howe & Sam Pascoe

The Baptized Body | Peter J. Leithart

Christian Theology | Alister E. McGrath

The Faith We Confess | Gerald Bray