

The Top Ten Reasons Why I Love the Episcopal Church

St. Bart's, New York

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1. The Episcopal Church values both tradition and progress. Because we are an ancient Christian tradition rooted in the worship, service and love of the Triune God, we treasure that which has withstood the test of time, including the historic Creeds, the traditional spiritual disciplines, the sevenfold sacraments, and the threefold orders of ministry. We value how that same God is moving in contemporary life, teaching us of liberation, justice, equality, freedom and peace that heretofore were veiled, subjugated to, and clouded by fear and prejudice;
2. Our Church holds to three primary authorities: Scripture, Tradition and Reason. We believe the Bible has authority in daily living, and we remain open to the continuing unfolding and deepening of God's revelation in history by using all of the faculties given to humans -- reason ... personality, DNA, heart, emotions, mind;
3. The Episcopal Church values comprehensiveness -- we are large and roomy enough to contain a diversity of belief and opinion. This keeps us from being rigid, self-opinionated, judgmental, self-congratulatory and elitist. We affirm drawing the circle of God's love ever wider;
4. Our Church believes that love and service of God is most fully expressed in love of and service to our neighbor. By extension, we believe our call from God -- beginning in Baptism -- is to spend ourselves, our talents and material resources in seeking peace in our warring world, actively working for justice in the brokenness of the **exploitation of others, and respecting the dignity of every human being** -- no matter how great the differences between us;
5. The Episcopal Church endeavors to proclaim the Gospel through invitation rather than coercion, manipulation and imposition of belief;
6. Our Church openly acknowledges both my holiness and my sinfulness, that I am less than what I was made to be, and I am restored through Christ's love and forgiveness. We also acknowledge that God's loving forgiveness does not make me better than anyone else, it simply and powerfully makes me better than I otherwise would be;
7. We openly proclaim and attempt to practice radical welcome and hospitality, making room in relationship, friendship, community and belonging of any and all of God's

children; to be the beloved community of Jesus who values and respects the dignity and blessedness of all people, including racial, social, gender, income, and marital equality;

8. The Episcopal Church values the whole created order, endeavoring to be good stewards of all that God has made and given to us, including earth care, financial generosity and accountability, fidelity and respect in relationships, promise-making and promise-keeping, the animal and natural world, providing safe havens for the abused and neglected, and the fostering of beauty and the common good, including being advocates for art and music;
9. Our Church is concerned for all people of all faiths, or those with no faith, especially those who are caught in extreme poverty. We seek to be part of the efforts to eradicate poverty through relief, development and sustainable community;
10. While we seek to love God and neighbor with all commitment and intention, we don't take ourselves too seriously. We seek to enjoy our life together, to laugh often, to celebrate life, to relish in God's created order, to chortle at some of life's foibles, and to live life with light-heartedness, simplifying when possible and appropriate, sharing generously with others.