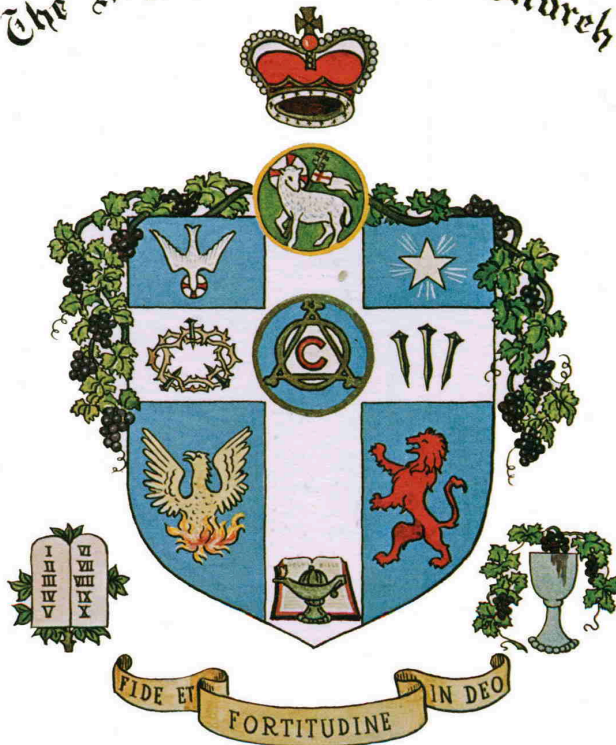


The Anglican Orthodox Church



Just Who is the Anglican Orthodox Church or AOC?

WHO ARE WE?

We are a Church who can be best described as Christian. We believe nothing that cannot be proved by "certain warrant of Holy Scripture" as one of our Articles of Religion puts it. We are not Calvinists, Lutherans or even Cranmerians. We are Christians following our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We do follow it from the perspective of the Anglican Tradition.

Often described as the Middle Way, walking a straight line between Roman Catholicism and radical Protestantism, Anglicans are Christians with their roots in the Church of England. The Church came to England in the first century AD with Roman soldiers and merchants. Although there are no written records until the fifth century, legend holds that Joseph of Arimethea, who provided the tomb for the burial of Jesus Christ, brought Christianity to England in 37 AD. He is said to have built a church in Glastonbury in Somerset. Whether Joseph of Arimethea was the first to carry the faith to England or not, Christianity did arrive in England by the middle of the first century and was established there by the middle of the second century. Saint Alban, who was killed in the year 304, is believed to be the first English Christian martyr, and the British church was represented at the Council of Arles in 314 AD. When the Romans left England around 400 AD, the Church was cut off from the rest of the world. In the year 597, Pope Gregory the Great sent Augustine, Prior of the Abbey of Saint Andrew in Rome and recently consecrated as a bishop, as a missionary to England. There, to his surprise, he found a well-established, vibrant church already in place. King Ethelbert and his Christian wife welcomed Augustine, and the king was converted and baptized. Augustine later became the first Archbishop of Canterbury. Augustine was apparently given significant latitude in allowing the English church to retain many of its deeply ingrained local customs and practices. That changed when William the Conqueror brought the by then Roman

Catholic church back to England. It might be said the Church in England was taken over by the Church of Rome in 1066 AD.

Over the millennium of separation, the Church of Rome had developed a liturgical system of worship that provided an ordered approach to worship. This ordered approach instilled not only a disciplined and orderly worship, but through its weekly repetition insured the church would make inroads into the people's hearts.

While there was much good that had come about in the intervening time, by the 1500s, the Roman Church had grown far from its first century roots with professed beliefs not only not found in biblical teaching, but contrary to the written Word as found in the Bible. The gulf between the Church of Rome and the Bible had grown so great Bibles were not allowed in churches and most priests were not allowed access to them. This meant the "Word of God" was whatever the "Church" in Rome said it was. After almost 500 years of growing heresy, a group of English clergymen and laymen lead a split from the Church of Rome and formed the Church of England. The King of England was the titular head of the Church under the religious guidance of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The first Book of Common Prayer was written in 1549 to bring the service of the Church in line with the teachings of the Bible. In addition, King James directed the placing of Bibles in each church in the common language so they could be read and understood by the people. The King James translation of 1611 is the most widely accepted and used biblical translation.

When people from England came to the New World, they brought their religion with them, not only the Puritans, but Church of England people, too. After the Revolutionary War, our split with the English Crown, the Church here became the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States.

As the sun set on the British Empire, churches around the world changed names, mostly adopting the Anglican label. In the 1960s an insidious virus took hold of the Episcopal Church of the United States. People who did not believe in God, let alone the Bible, whose loyalty was not to the One True God, but rather to good feelings or perhaps the Devil took over. The church became a home for anti-establishment, anti-Christ pro-homosexual priests, then bishops. In 1979, a new prayer book was adopted, claiming to be a Book of Common Prayer with modernized language. It was not, it was actually the first attempt by the non-believers to change the Church from within. Since that time, the Episcopal Church has lost over 80 percent of its members. The declining numbers show that those who believe in everything believe in nothing and do not need to go to church to find out they are okay.

In 1963, Bishop James Parker Dees saw all this coming and founded the Anglican Orthodox Church on 17 November 1963 - the first religious body to withdraw from the Episcopal Church in the modern era. On Passion Sunday, 15 March 1964 Dees was consecrated a bishop by Bishop Wasyl Sawyna of the Holy Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church of North and South America, assisted by Bishop Orlando Jacques Woodward of Old Catholic succession.

The Anglican Orthodox Church is a Protestant Catholic church. That is to say we believe those things believed by all Christians for all time. We believe that nothing can or should be required to be believed for salvation that cannot be proved by certain warrant (proof) of Holy Scripture. We are very much Bible-based. In the United States of America, the church uses the 1928 Book of Common Prayer, which is 82% Scripture by word count and 100% by concept.

Rooted in the mists of the past, planning for a bright future, the AOC forms a radiant bridge. While our service can be very traditional with organ music and all, there can also be pre-service contemporary Christian guitar accompanied singing! The wording of our worship service is directly from the King James Bible, though slightly modified. It was designed not to be in the common everyday language of the people but rather to be set in a linguistic style to do justice to the Glory of God, while still easy to read and comprehend. While we know some people feel the words are archaic, other people say they are the most beautiful prayers they have ever heard.

In 1967, Bishop Dees founded the Orthodox Anglican Communion for the purpose of providing coverage to churches abroad, and soon thereafter Bishops Khurshid Alam of Pakistan and Bishop V. J. Stephen of South India affiliated with the Communion, recognizing Bishop Dees as Metropolitan. New national churches in Kenya, Madagascar, Great Britain, and Colombia, rapidly followed. Upon this wave of expansion and success, the theological college of the jurisdiction and the communion, was founded.

Dees died during heart surgery on 25 December 1990. The church has been led by the Bishop Jerry L. Ogles of Enterprise, Alabama since 22 October 2000. He is the Bishop of the United States and the Metropolitan of the Anglican Orthodox Church's worldwide communion, with churches across the United States and in 22 countries around the world. These include Pakistan, Indonesia, Canada, India, Liberia, Madagascar, South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Central African Republic, Haiti, the Philippines, Fiji, Peru, Argentina, and the Solomon Islands.