

# We are St. Paul's



## Christian

We believe in a loving, liberating, and life-giving God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe in following the teachings of Jesus Christ, whose life, death, and resurrection saved the world.

While we will always have questions about God, the Church, and our own faith, we have two foundational creeds that we use during worship: the Apostles' Creed used at baptism and daily worship, and the Nicene Creed used at communion. In reciting and affirming these creeds, we join Christians across the world and throughout the ages in affirming our faith in the one God who created us, redeemed us, and sanctifies us.

In the waters of baptism, we are lovingly adopted by God into God's family, which we call the Church, and given God's own life to share and reminded that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ. Holy Baptism, which can be performed through pouring of water or immersion in it, marks a formal entrance to the congregation and wider Church; the candidates for the sacrament make a series of vows, including an affirmation of the Baptismal Covenant, and are baptized in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are marked as Christ's own forever, having "clothed [themselves] with Christ" (Galatians 3:27).



*\* Thanks to Ed Barels and Luke Woodfin for the photos used in this booklet.*

*Empowering disciples of Jesus for Chattanooga and the world.*  
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# Episcopal

The Episcopal Church, established shortly after the American Revolution, has its roots in the Church of England (also known as the Anglican Church). Anglicanism had a strong following in colonial America. But when the colonies won their independence, the majority of America's Anglican clergy refused to swear allegiance to the British monarch as was required. As a result, the Episcopal Church was formed. The Episcopal Church today is part of the Anglican Communion, a global communion of Anglican and Episcopal churches in many nations around the world. The Episcopal Church is comprised of 109 dioceses (geographic district under the pastoral oversight of a bishop) in 16 different nations.

One of the things that unites Episcopalians and other Anglicans around the world is the heritage of the Book of Common Prayer. Since the 16th century, when Thomas Cranmer translated and edited the texts that became the first Book of Common Prayer, we have placed a high value on public worship that is beautiful, reverent, and accessible to all, conducted in a language understood by the people worshipping. Our current American Book of Common Prayer, published in 1979, stands in a long line of prayer books that have kept this tradition alive as the Anglican Communion has spread around the world. The 1979 book is centered in a theology of baptism as the foundation of Christian life, and is heavily influenced by the ecumenical movement of the 20th century--different Christian denominations working together to realize those things we share in common.

We have a legacy of inclusion, aspiring to tell and exemplify God's love for every human being; women and men serve as bishops, priests, and deacons in our church. Laypeople and clergy cooperate as leaders at all levels of our church. Leadership is a gift from God, and can be expressed by all people in our church, regardless of sexual identity or orientation.

The Eucharist (which literally means "thanksgiving") is the family meal for Christians and a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. As such, all persons who have been baptized, and are therefore part of the extended family that is the Church, are welcome to receive the bread and wine, and be in communion with God and each other.

As Episcopalians, we know we are not perfect. Our institutional histories and our individual histories all contain stories of when we have acted in ways that were less than God calls us to be. But with trust in God's grace, we look forward to a future where all will be welcomed, cared for, and loved, and we try to live that future story in our life together now.





## Our Local Parish

St. Paul's Church is a member of the Diocese of East Tennessee, which includes 45 parishes and 5 worshipping communities serving nearly 16,000 active members. Since 2017, the Right Rev. Brian Lee Cole has served as the Fifth Bishop of East Tennessee.

Our Rector, the Rev. Brad Whitaker, was called to lead St. Paul's in 2015. He leads a staff of two other priests, a deacon, and ten laypeople, who work together to strengthen and enrich the life of the parish. St. Paul's has over 1300 active members, and on any given Sunday almost 400 people gather for worship. On Sundays and every day, our members volunteer in the church and in the community, living out our mission in the world. (See the insert for a list of outreach grant partnerships and volunteer opportunities with community partners.)

The founders of St. Paul's Episcopal Church first met in 1852, and the parish was founded in 1853. We currently hold services in our second nave on Pine & 7th Streets in downtown Chattanooga, Tennessee. Built in 1888, our Nave is on the National Register of Historic Buildings.

Throughout the year, we gather for Sunday worship at 8:00 a.m. for a spoken Rite I Eucharist (traditional language service of scripture, prayer, preaching, and communion with no music) and at 10:30 a.m. for Rite II Eucharist (contemporary language service of scripture, prayer, preaching, and communion with hymns and chant led by our choir and organ).

During the summer, June through August, we also gather for a casual service, "Summer Special," which is held on Sundays at 9:15 a.m.

From September to May, Christian formation is offered for all ages on Sundays at 9:15 a.m.



In 2019, St. Paul's Church identified our mission statement for this generation of Christian witness in Chattanooga:

***“Empowering disciples of Jesus for Chattanooga and the world.”***

Our mission statement is informed by our six core values:

### **WORSHIP**

We worship God as a community, celebrating the gifts God has given to us.

### **WELCOME**

We welcome all and foster strong connections with each other in the parish.

### **INCLUSION**

We share God's love for all creation, and make a place in our community for every person.

### **FORMATION**

We strive to grow in our understanding of God, as Christ is formed in us.

### **SERVICE**

We reach out in loving service within and beyond our parish.

### **TRADITION**

We steward our rich tradition, and use it as a foundation for future growth.



*Ed Barels*

There is much more to learn about St. Paul's, but the most important thing to learn is this:  
***YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!***