

**Let's count the clichés
about Episcopalians.
I can't count that high.***

Dear Friends,

Last Saturday eight of us spent the day in a One Day Seminar meant to “learn about the Episcopal Church”. But we did far more than that! We listened to one another’s faith journeys – where they have come from and how they came to be at Christ Church. We learned something of the history of the Christian Church from its ancient and Medieval Foundations, what led up to the Protestant Reformation, and how the Anglican Church made its way distinctively through that process.

Over lunch we talked about theological issues and questions about spiritual practices and concerns. What exactly happens to that bread and wine during the Eucharist? What makes a sacrament a sacrament? How exactly is authority exercised? How does the tradition you come from understand and practice these things, etc?

We also looked at how the Episcopal Church is structured - how it really works - from the local parish level to the National and International Level. What it means to be part of the Anglican Communion and a Global Community of Faith. This was not at all about mere clergy; the focus was on the laity and their role in Christianity.

Why do we offer these opportunities? I find it increasingly necessary and helpful as so many of the people who come through our doors come from other traditions, and may not know that much about the Episcopal Church. The Haiku “*Let's count the clichés about Episcopalians. I can't count that high.*” has a lot of truth in it! By dialogue and conversation, by comparing and contrasting our beliefs and how we come to them, those who are curious about the Episcopal Church are finding their place among us.

We do so for another reason, too. An ancient reason. From the very beginnings of Christianity, the “Great Fifty Days of Easter” (*referring to the time from Easter Sunday to the Day of Pentecost*) were observed by the Church as a special time of instruction to the faithful. This is the season when we are *all* encouraged to strengthen our faith by special study and renewal. As I mentioned in my last sermon, Easter is only the beginning of the unfolding of the story of God’s faithful people in the new reality of the Resurrection; it is for each of us to pursue our Lord and deepen our relationship with him.

Finally: because there were many who were unable to attend the course in April, Deacon Cuff and I are offering another Seminar on **Saturday, June 1st from 9am to 2pm**. The class is specifically tailored for those who are new to the Episcopal Church, but all adults are welcome to come. I assure you, you will hear about things you never heard about in the Confirmation instruction of your youth. Those who attend will have the opportunity to be received or confirmed by Bishop Stokes when he visits on June 30th, but none are required to do so. The primary goal is a deeper understanding of who we are and where we are going in our faith. Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

Peace,

Mother Lisa+

**from Episcopal Haiku, by Sarah Goodyear and Ed Weissman*