

# Getting in and Growing

About 15 or so years ago, Bishop Roger J. White of Milwaukee made a telling comment about The Episcopal Church. It's easier to get in than it is to get out, Bishop White told a group in St. Louis. He was right, of course. But there have been times and places where it hasn't been easy to get in either. Invitations to be part of the church have not always come easily for our people. Two members of the Diocese of Bethlehem are trying to make it easier to get in. Someone else is going to have to address why it's so difficult to get out.

Jenifer Gamber and Bill Lewellis are the authors of *Your Faith, Your Life: An Invitation to the Episcopal Church*, published recently by Morehouse Publishing, an imprint of Church Publishing, Inc. Both are eminently qualified to take on a book like this. Ms. Gamber already has written one book, and is active as a speaker on Christian formation and as a retreat leader. Fr. Lewellis is editor of Bethlehem's diocesan newspaper and a member of the diocesan staff.

This is an unusual book, and not what one might expect when examining the title. For example, I anticipated a presentation about The Episcopal Church that would be so positive that it would make others want to join. That's not what I found. Instead I found an informative book that is likely to make existing members of the church better Episcopalians.

In their introduction, the authors call their book "an invitation to reflect on personal transformation as you consider facts about the Episcopal Church." I found that to be a tall order. The book presents a wealth of information about The Episcopal Church, and that alone would make it worthwhile, but readers are nudged to go beyond the information.

For example, at the end of each chapter, five "imperatives" are presented which could be used for individual study or in a group discussion. They are: Be Attentive, Be Intelligent, Be Reasonable, Be Responsible, and Be in Love Transformed. Some readers would suggest that the first four imperatives

would be impossible for me, but never mind. Each of the imperatives has reflective questions for readers to ponder.

This book covers a lot of ground. There's a chapter on Bible stories, and another on history and others titled Navigating the Church, Spirituality (particularly good), Worship, and Sacraments. There's even a glossary that contains everything from Corporal to Mandala to Trisagion.

This is a valuable book. There's enough in it to sustain, for example, an adult education class in a parish for at least a year. But I wish the publisher had used a different subtitle. "An invitation" is a bit misleading, unless it were to read something like "An invitation to learn more about The Episcopal Church."

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A priest writes to report what he found when he moved to a new parish:

"The interim moved the Ash Wednesday liturgy to Tuesday, on the reasoning that the pancake supper would bring more people out than Ash Wednesday alone."

He found the reserved sacrament in a fruit juice glass with a paper napkin over it. At Easter, the paschal candle was kept in a corner, and the opening Easter acclamation in the liturgy was unknown to the congregation.

Needless to say, the new rector has some work to do.

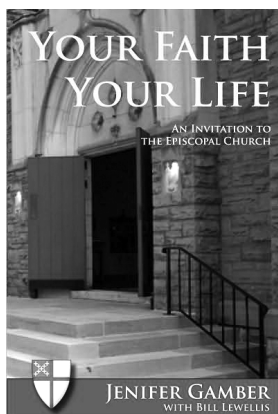
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While The Episcopal Church for the most part ignores Father's Day, the same cannot be said for St. Stephen's Church, Barbourne, England. On Father's Day, the church distributed free bottles of beer to men who were present at the liturgy. The Ven. Roger Morris, archdeacon of Worcester, who presided, told the *Telegraph*, "I don't see any other time that we can stop and remember fathers, and this is a gesture saying, "Here's something that will bless you."

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To Michael in Maine: You are correct. There was a Book of Common Prayer published in 1552, only three years after publication of the first BCP.

*David Kalvelage, executive editor*



## *Did You Know...*

**In a recent Living Church News Service web poll, 83 percent of respondents said they disapproved of churches "celebrating the life" of slain abortion doctor George Tiller.**

## *Quote of the Week*

**The Rev. Jim Field, vicar of St. George's Church, Ivychurch, England, on those who stole lead from the roof of his historic church: "I know as a vicar I should not be saying this, but if they catch whoever did this, I want their heads on stakes outside."**