

HOW CAN I BECOME A MEMBER AT GOOD SHEPHERD?

1. Before we can answer that question, we have to ask a few questions, because depending on your point in your Christian journey the route to becoming a member of Good Shepherd can vary.

- **A.** Have you been baptized? If no go to item 2, below, if yes go to question **B.** below.
- **B.** Have you been confirmed? If no, or not sure, go to item 3 below. If yes go to question **C.**
- **C.** Are you already an Episcopalian? If no go to item 4 below, if yes go to item 5 below.

2. The first step in a Christian journey is coming to a realization that *God* is real and is calling you. That can take many forms. Many churches emphasize being "saved", and *God's* call can take that form. At one moment you are in your old life, and in the next moment everything has changed. For others the realization of *God* is a slow, gradual process. For some they can never remember a time that *God* was not real. For some it is an intellectual journey, that turns spiritual at some point. There are as many ways to know *God* as there are people. One of the great strengths of the Episcopal Church is that we recognize the diversity of paths to *God*, and see that as a strength.

Once you know you want to be here, to become part of the *Good Shepherd* community all you have to do is to attend, and to contribute. The Episcopal Church encourages tithing, but does not require it, and will never take steps to embarrass you into increasing your contribution.

To take communion, normally you should be a baptized Christian. If you are not yet baptized, and still wish to take part in communion talk with the minister. It is his decision as to whether you may or may not partake before you have become baptized.

At some point in your Christian journey, you will want to be baptized, as an outward sign of your internal change. Talk with the minister. The two of you will know when and how to make this happen.

Now you are baptized, you attend Good Shepherd, and you contribute. At this point you are considered a full voting member of the parish, and a part of our community., but you are not yet a full Episcopalian. If you stop at this point, and some do, you may vote in parish meetings but you may not serve on the Vestry (the governing board of the church).

There is, however, one last step you may consider. You may want to be confirmed as an Episcopalian. To become confirmed, you must take a short class on what it means to be an Episcopalian, and you must be confirmed by the Bishop, either at his annual visit to Good Shepherd, or at another location. Once confirmed you may fully participate in all aspects of parish life.

3. If you are a baptized Christian, but not yet confirmed, you may become part of the Good Shepherd Community by attending regularly and by contributing. You are welcome at communion. You may participate in all aspects of parish life, but you are not yet an Episcopalian. You will be eligible to vote in parish meetings, but you will not be eligible to serve on the Vestry (our governing board).

There is, however, one last step you may consider. You may want to be confirmed as an Episcopalian. To become confirmed, you must take a short class on what it means to be an Episcopalian, and you must be confirmed by the Bishop, either at his annual visit to Good Shepherd, or at another location. Once confirmed you may fully participate in all aspects of parish life.

4. If you are baptized and confirmed then you are coming from a church with an apostolic tradition. If you are Lutheran (not Missouri Synod), then you should go to item 5. If you are from the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, or other tradition see the priest. Depending on your exact circumstances it may or may not be necessary to take a class on what it means to be an Episcopalian, and to have the Bishop lay hands on you as a way of welcoming you into the Episcopal Church. The priest will tell you exactly what will be required to welcome you into the Episcopal family.

5. If you are already an Episcopalian, or if you are Lutheran all that is required to become a full participant in the life of *Good Shepherd* is to transfer your membership from your previous church to *Good Shepherd*. Come to the church office, and they will be able to make that process happen.