



St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

To know, to love, and to serve Christ

Liturgical Gestures Guide

General times for Liturgical Movements

- **Crossing**
 - Times
 - If you see the Celebrant cross themselves, you can cross yourself
 - When Holy Water is sprinkled on you.
 - Words
 - Blessing
 - Sanctify us
- **Bowing/Genuflecting**
 - Times
 - If you see the Celebrant bowing, you can bow
 - Entering your pew
 - When any processional cross or Gospel passes you
 - At the crossing the Church before the altar
 - When coming into the presence of the altar
 - When passing or opening a Tabernacle or Aumbry
 - Handing something to the Celebrant. You both bow in respect
 - Words
 - At the name of Jesus
 - When you hear “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” when not a blessing
 - When you hear “Holy, Holy, Holy”

Holy Eucharist (Rite II)

- **Entrance Procession**
 - If there are processional crosses, you bow as they pass you

- If there is a Bishop present, and they are blessing people while processing, you may do the sign of the cross as they pass you
- **Opening Acclamation**
 - When the Celebrant begins service, irrelevant of the Church Season or Acclamation used, one can make the sign of the cross
 - The Gloria
 - “Lord Jesus Christ” and at the end of the hymn where it mentions “Jesus Christ” lyrics, bow at the name of Jesus
 - “Receive our Prayer” is a moment where it can be appropriate to bow as well
 - “You alone are the Most High....” One can bow to the end of the Hymn
 - At the end of the Gloria one can make the sign of the cross
- **The Lessons and Sermon**
 - The Gospel Procession
 - If there is a Processional Cross, you may bow when it passes you
 - Orient your body towards the Gospel Book and the clergy person proclaiming the Gospel
 - When the Gospeller proclaims “The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ According to _____”
 - One may do three small crosses with their thumb, one on their forehead, one on their lips, and one on their heart
 - Wait until the Gospeller crosses themselves to cross yourself
 - The Sermon
 - If the Preacher says a prayer before preaching, and crosses themselves, you may also cross yourself
- **Creed, Prayers of the People, and Confession**
 - Nicene Creed
 - At name of Jesus, one may bow

- During the section about the Annunciation / Incarnation “For us and our Salvation, you came down from Heaven....” it can be appropriate to do a deep bow
 - As this section discusses the Incarnation (God becoming flesh) and God humbling God’s self to become Human, we bow to honor that humility from God
- “With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and Glorified.” It can be appropriate to bow
- “We Look for the Resurrection of the Dead,” It is appropriate to make the sign of the cross
 - It is a reminder of our belief in the resurrection
- Prayers of the People
 - When we pray for the dead, it is appropriate to make the sign of the cross
- Confession
 - After the Prayer of Confession, it is appropriate to make the sign of the cross when the celebrant makes it with their hand during the Absolution
- **Offertory**
 - If there is a Thurifer present, the Thurifer will cense the people. They will bow, and then cense the congregation. When censed, it is appropriate to make the sign of the cross. It is proper to bow as a thank you to the Thurifer
 - Doxology, “Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost...” It is appropriate to bow at this verse
- **The Eucharist**
 - Sanctus
 - “Holy, Holy, Holy” to “Hosanna”, it is traditional and appropriate to bow during this whole section of the Sanctus
 - “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord”, there is a custom to cross oneself at this moment

- *****an approved liturgical error*****The origins of this tradition come from the fact that so few people knew Latin in the congregation. They heard “Benedictus,” which sounds similar to the word to Bless “Benedicat” in Latin, so people thought that it was a blessing for them. The context is actually proclaiming that Jesus is blessed for coming in the name of the Lord
 - It is now considered approved custom
 - “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord”, one may also bow at this time
- During the Prayer
 - Rite II, times to make the sign of the cross, the Celebrant will say
 - Prayer A, “Sanctify us also...”
 - Prayer B, “being sanctified by the Holy Spirit...”
 - Prayer C, “Let the grace of this Holy Communion...”
 - Prayer D, “...may your Holy Spirit descend upon us...”
- After the Great Amen
 - It is custom for the celebrant to bow after the full Eucharistic Prayer is said. It can be appropriate to bow as well
- **Communion**
 - Before receiving both the Bread and Wine, it is customary to make the sign of the cross
- **Blessing**
 - When the Celebrant says the final blessing, one makes the sign of the cross
- **Dismissal**