

To answer this question, I suppose one must ask, "Why do I believe in God and why am I a Christian?" The answers to those questions are easy; my parents made those choices and that is how I was raised. As I matured, I never dwelled too deeply on spiritual issues but fully accepted the fact that God exists and, in another decision made by my parents, the Roman Catholic faith provided the guidance to worship Him. I never had an epiphany moment that brought clear understanding of one's faith but during my years of going to sea and visiting vast expanses of ocean and ice, it was easy to believe in a Grand Creator and Master Designer of a remarkable world.

So, why am I now an Episcopalian? After my parents, the next most, and probably the longest lasting, influence on my life is my wife Jeanne. We had a relatively long courtship chronologically but due to my many absences, time together was limited. When we made the decision to get married there was no question as to where the ceremony was taking place. We would marry in Jeanne's family church, The Trinitarian Congregational Church in Concord, MA. We had both attended services in each other's faiths but never really discussed what our marriage would mean for formal church attendance as a couple. We moved to Virginia and began our life together away from family. As we made friends here, several families encouraged us to attend services at Christ Episcopal Church in Old Town Alexandria. We found that being Episcopalian was a good compromise between approaches to worship. When it became apparent that Christ Church was not a good match for us we moved to Emmanuel in 1973. This began a long and steady relationship with an approach to worship that was both traditional but also open to innovation. Additionally, Emmanuel's family-oriented and welcoming environment led to our decision to enroll our children in the preschool and eventually a 13-year education for both boys in St. Agnes and St. Stephen's Episcopal School.

The answer to the original question of "Why am I an Episcopalian?", really comes down to what is your 'comfort zone' and how much are you willing to be challenged to expand that zone to include things that are not traditional or move too far afield from your roots. For Jeanne and I Emmanuel has been a wonderful and nurturing experience. It has progressed through the years at a pace that allows acceptance to change without being radical or a threat to one's basic beliefs. In short, I believe that I am, and we are, Episcopalians because of Emmanuel Church; the relationships we have developed over the years, the influence on our daily lives, the commitments we were encouraged to make, the support from fellow travelers, and the growth of our faith through study, worship, and understanding leadership.