

The E-Matt



A weekly glimpse of God's People, God's Work
at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Lisbon Maine

www.stmatthewslisbon.org

207-353-8453

The Rev. W. Beau Wagner, Rector

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Candles, robes and all sorts of shiny things!



By The Rev. W. Beau Wagner

Often people who come from Christian backgrounds that are less “liturgical” than Episcopalians ask why we do things the way we do on Sunday Morning. They are referring to the long robes, the candles, the processions, the up and down standing and kneeling, and all sorts of shiny things. In short, they are interested in all those things that make us look “different.”

Why do we do all of “that fancy stuff?”

Well, the short answer is we do it for God. The long answer is that we do it so that you—the worshiper—can come into a state of mind that makes

The Rev. Beau Wagner lifts the newly consecrated elements.

a meaningful encounter with God possible. Our Sunday Services are designed to take the individual out of his or her normal routine and suspend the “troubles of the day.” Hopefully the worshiper will develop a sense of being on sacred ground, partaking of a relationship with the holy.

It is a time that you may worship God, learn about God, encounter God and know that He is God.

Our services are designed to allow you to approach the throne with an appropriate sense of awe and wonder at the same time understanding that this God, who is so very different and above us, stoops to save. We attempt to balance our understanding of God as different and above us (note how our altar is physically raised above the



Worship on Pentecost (the Feast of the coming of the Holy Spirit) included children waving banners and the singing of rousing praise music.

congregation), and our understanding of God as the one who became incarnate and is with us. That is one reason we celebrate the Lord's supper every week.

So the robes and candles, the formalities and ancient prayers are there to help us step out ourselves and remember we are part of something greater – part of the communion of the saved throughout the world and throughout time, standing before our all loving and all powerful God.

The kneeling, the responses, the up and the down, and all the shiny stuff has been designed over thousands of years to bring all of our beings into worship. Humans are humans. The service uses the five senses to help the worshiper understand the incredible gift God have given by being present with us. The eyes are presented symbols and objects of

visual beauty. The ears are engaged by word and music. The senses of smell and taste are challenged by the smell of the bread and the wine. The sense of touch is brought into worship by the passing of the peace, the standing and sitting and in some instances kneeling.

So we do all that “fancy stuff” on Sunday in order to bring as much of you as possible into the moment of meaningful and transformative encounter with Christ.

If you want to know more about the history of our service, I invite you to read through the Instructed Eucharist at our website: www.stmatthewslisbon.org