

Morning Worship Service



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John F. Kennedy Shakes hands with Father Richard J. Casey after attending Mass at Holy Trinity Church.

On March 4, 1933, at 10:15 a.m., prior to his swearing-in ceremony,

President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt and his wife Eleanor attended a church service at St. John's Episcopal Church, next to the White House. They did the same at Roosevelt's 1937 and 1941 Inaugurations, and arranged for a private service at the White House the morning of his fourth Inauguration on January 20, 1945. Roosevelt's Inauguration Day worship service set a precedent that has been followed by Presidents ever since.

Franklin Roosevelt was not the first President to attend church on Inauguration Day, however. In 1789, George Washington attended a service at St. Paul's Chapel in New York City immediately following his swearing-in ceremony. Although this feature of Washington's Inauguration did not set a precedent, religion still played a role in subsequent swearing-in ceremonies. Almost all Presidents since George Washington have placed their hand on a Bible when taking the oath of office. And all Presidents have included some reference to the Almighty in their Inaugural addresses (except George Washington's second address, which was only 135 words).

The following list provides information on Inauguration Day worship services attended by Presidents and Presidents-elect since 1933.

Table of Worship Services Attended by President-Elects

President	Inaugural Event	Service Attended
George W. Bush	January 20, 2001	Attended private service at St. John's Episcopal Church;
William J. Clinton	January 20, 1997	Attended private prayer service at Metropolitan AME Church;
William J. Clinton	January 20, 1993	Attended private prayer service at Metropolitan AME Church;
George H.W. Bush	January 20, 1989	Attended private service at St. John's Episcopal Church;

President	Inaugural Event	Service Attended
Ronald W. Reagan	January 21, 1985	Attended private service at St. John's Episcopal Church; On Monday, January 21, attended service at National Cathedral
Ronald W. Reagan	January 20, 1981	Attended private service at St. John's Episcopal Church;
James E. Carter	January 20, 1977	Interfaith prayer service at the Lincoln Memorial;
Richard M. Nixon	January 20, 1973	No apparent church service Inauguration Day morning; attended church the next day
Richard M. Nixon	January 20, 1969	Attended official prayer breakfast in West Auditorium of the State Department;
Lyndon Baines Johnson	January 20, 1965	Attended private service at National City Christian Church;
John F. Kennedy	January 20, 1961	Attended Mass at Holy Trinity Church;
Dwight D. Eisenhower	January 20, 1957	Attended services at National Presbyterian Church ; Took private oath of office that day; public ceremony the next day.
Dwight D. Eisenhower	January 20, 1953	Attended service at National Presbyterian Church ;
Harry S Truman	January 20, 1949	Attended service at St. John's Episcopal Church ;

President	Inaugural Event	Service Attended
Franklin D. Roosevelt	January 20, 1945	Private service held in the East Room of the White House;
Franklin D. Roosevelt	January 20, 1941	Attended service at St. John's Episcopal Church;
Franklin D. Roosevelt	January 20, 1937	Attended service at St. John's Episcopal Church ;
Franklin D. Roosevelt	March 4, 1933	Attended service at St. John's Episcopal Church ;