

CHAPTER 31

A GLOSSARY
OF ANGLICAN TERMS

absolution (n.) God’s forgiveness, pronounced by a bishop or priest over an individual or congregation after a confession of sin.

absolve (v.) To pronounce God’s forgiveness.

acolyte (n.) A layperson who serves at the altar, carrying holy objects and serving the clergy in a variety of ways.

Advent (n.) The season of the Christian year which leads up to Christmas. It celebrates the coming of Christ, both in his incarnation and his second coming.

Agnus Dei (n.) A prayer for mercy. The phrase is Latin for “Lamb of God.” The prayer begins “Oh Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.”

alb (n.) A white robe worn by those serving in worship near the altar. It’s often tied with a rope belt called a cincture.

altar (n.) The table upon which Holy Communion is celebrated. When we use the word “altar” we’re focusing on the sacrificial aspect of communion. When we call it a “table” we’re pointing out that it’s a covenant meal.

altar rail (n.) A long bar, usually made of wood or metal. It separates the area near the altar from the rest of the sanctuary. The congregation kneels at the altar rail to receive communion.

ambo (n.) When there's one lectern in a sanctuary, it's called an ambo. When there are two, one is the lectern and the other is the pulpit. The word "ambo" is Latin for "both."

Anglican (adj.) Of, or related to, the Christian tradition that comes out of the Church of England.

Anglican (n.) A person who identifies as part the Anglican tradition, or who is part of an Anglican Church.

Anglican Church (n.) The collection of all churches that are part of the Anglican tradition. Most are also part of the Anglican Communion.

Anglican Church in Canada (n.) An Anglican province located in Canada. It's aligned with the Global West.

Anglican Church in North America (n.) An emerging Anglican province in North America. It's aligned with the Global South.

Anglican Communion (n.) A federation of independent Anglican provinces, all linked to one another through tradition, affinity, the fellowship of the Anglican primates, and the guidance of the archbishop of Canterbury.

Anglo-Catholicism (n.) A tradition within Anglicanism which specifically emphasizes the catholic and orthodox elements of the Anglican Way.

annual meeting (n.) A yearly gathering of all the members of an Anglican congregation.

anoint (v.) To put holy oil on a person while praying for them.

Apocrypha (n.) Writings of history and prophecy read by the Jewish people in the time of Jesus, considered by some to be part of the Christian Bible, but generally not received by Christians as the Word of God.

Apostles' Creed (n.) An ancient statement of faith. It's normally used by Anglicans in the context of baptism, confirmation, or burial. It's also used in Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer.

Apostolic succession (n.) The spiritual lineage of bishops, representing the unbroken relationship of today's church with Christ's twelve Apostles.

archbishop (n.) The most often-used title for a bishop who has been chosen to lead an Anglican province. An archbishop is referred to as "the Most Reverend." See also, "primate."

archbishop of Canterbury (n.) After the queen, the head of the Church of England. He has historically been the moderator of all the bishops in the Anglican Communion. While he's influential, he's not a Pope and has no direct authority outside of his province.

Ash Wednesday (n.) The first day of Lent, and a day of fasting. Worshipers receive ashes on their foreheads in the shape of a cross.

aumbry (n.) A small cabinet or shelf near the altar which houses the Reserved Sacrament, sometimes spelled "ambry"; also called a "tabernacle."

baptism (n.) The sacrament by which a person becomes one with Christ and his church.

bishop (n.) A person who serves as an overseer in the Anglican Church. A bishop's title is "the Right Reverend."

bless (v.) To pronounce God's favor on a person, group, place, or object.

Book of Common Prayer (n.) The book that contains the prayers and liturgies of the Anglican Church. There are several versions. The 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* of the Church of England is widely acknowledged as definitive, though it's infrequently used in worship services.

canon (n.) 1. A special assistant to a bishop. 2. An assistant minister at a cathedral. These canons are usually ordained priests or deacons. 3. A rule of the church, or a collection of rules; sometimes referred to as Canon Law.

canticle (n.) A prayer based in Scripture that may be sung, spoken, or chanted.

cassock (n.) A long robe, usually black. It's sometimes worn by those who serve at the altar, and is often covered by a smaller white garment called a surplice.

cathedral (n.) The official home church of the bishop of a diocese. It takes its name from the Latin *cathedra*, for chair.

celebrant (n.) A priest or bishop who leads a Eucharistic worship service.

celebrate (v.) To lead a service of Holy Eucharist.

chalice (n.) A cup used to hold the wine during communion.

chapel (n.) 1. A smaller sanctuary in a church building. 2. A sanctuary or prayer room in an institution such as a school, hospital, or airport.

chasuble (n.) A poncho-like garment, sometimes worn by a priest while celebrating communion.

Christmas (n.) The twelve-day-long season that begins on December 25. It commemorates the incarnation of the Son of God.

Church (n.) 1. All the people of God in Christ, the royal priesthood of all believers. 2. A denomination, as in “the Episcopal Church.” 3. A local congregation, as in “St. John’s Church.” 4. The building in which a local congregation worships. 5. The primary worship space in the building of a congregation, a room otherwise known as a “sanctuary.”

Church of England (n.) The Anglican Church in England; the “mother church” of all other Anglican Provinces.

church plant (n.) A new congregation, usually less than five years old; may not be financially independent.

church planter (n.) A person involved in the leadership of a church plant, sometimes referring to the clergy person leading the work.

collect (n.) Pronounced COL-lect. A short prayer with a single request, thanking God for something, and ending with praise to the Holy Trinity.

Collect of the Day (n.) A collect assigned to a specific week of the church year. It’s usually said as part of the Sunday service, and will thereafter be said during Morning and Evening Prayer for the rest of that week.

communion (n.) The sacrament of Christ’s body and blood.

Compline (n.) Pronounced KOM-plin. The fourth of the Four Hours. Usually said before bedtime.

confession (n.) A prayer of repentance, either said by an individual or a group. Congregations often say a confession together as part of the Eucharist.

confirmation (n.) A rite performed by a bishop in which a person reaffirms the baptismal commitment to Christ, is blessed by the Holy Spirit, and is noted as an official member of the Anglican Church.

congregation (n.) A local fellowship of Christians, sometimes called a church or a parish.

consecration (n.) 1. The mystical work of the Holy Spirit in making Holy Communion from simple bread and wine. 2. The ordination of a bishop.

cross (n.) The most common symbol of the Christian faith.

cross (v.) To make the sign of the cross with the hand across one's body, also called "crossing yourself" or "making the sign of the cross."

crucifer (n.) An acolyte who carries the processional cross in worship.

Daily Office (n.) 1. The daily Bible readings set aside for Morning and Evening Prayer. 2. The non-Eucharistic services at which those readings are read.

deacon (n.) A person ordained as a servant to the marginalized in the Anglican Church. Deacons are called "the Reverend" or simply "Deacon."

dean (n.) 1. The head of an Anglican seminary. 2. The pastor of a cathedral. 3. Someone set aside to lead a Deanery. Deans are often referred to as "the Very Reverend."

deanery (n.) A smaller group of geographically related congregations inside a diocese.

diocesan convention (n.) The yearly assembly of clergy and lay people that governs a diocese.

diocese (n.) An organized group of congregations under the leadership of a bishop. Dioceses have historically been divided from each other geographically, though this is not always the case today.

elements (n.) The bread and wine set aside for use in communion.

epiclesis (n.) Pronounced Ep-ee-KLEE-sis. The portion of the Eucharistic prayer in which the Holy Spirit is asked to transform the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.

Epiphany (n.) The season of the Christian year between Christmas and Lent. Epiphany remembers the visitation of the wise men to the child Jesus, as well as Christ's revelation to all nations.

episcopal (adj.) Of, or pertaining to, a bishop. An action taken by a bishop is called an "episcopal act."

Episcopal Church (n.) An Anglican province based in the United States, but having congregations in some other countries as well; aligned with the Global West.

Eucharist (n.) The worship of the Triune God culminating in the celebration of Holy Communion; sometimes another word for communion itself. "Eucharistic" is an adjective meaning "of the Eucharist."

Eucharistic prayer (n.) The prayer led by a priest or bishop in order to celebrate Holy Communion. It's sometimes called the Great Thanksgiving.

Evening Prayer (n.) The third of the Four Hours, usually said around sundown. Sometimes called Vespers or Evensong.

Four Hours (n.) The four non-Eucharistic liturgies used by Anglicans in worship at morning, noon, evening, and night. Also referred to as the Daily Office.

font (n.) An object holding water in which a person is baptized.

Global South (n.) A broad term for the part of the earth found in the Southern Hemisphere. The nations of Latin America, Africa, and Asia are considered to be part of the Global South. Anglican provinces in this area tend to be theologically conservative.

Global West (n.) A broad term for the part of the earth found in the Northern and Western Hemispheres. The United States and Canada, the European Union, and Australia are considered to be part of the Global West. Anglican provinces in this area tend to be more theologically liberal.

Gloria (n.) A hymn of praise, often sung or said as part of the Eucharist. It begins, “Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth . . .”

Good Friday (n.) The Friday before Easter; a day of fasting. It’s the day we commemorate the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ.

Gospel book (n.) A large and often decorative book filled with the Gospel readings; used at the Eucharist.

Gospel procession (n.) The bringing of the gospeller and the Gospel book into the midst of the congregation so that the Gospel may be read.

gospeller (n.) The person whose task it is to read the Gospel during the Eucharist. The gospeller is often a deacon.

Great Litany (n.) The first liturgy published in the English language; written by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer.

Great Thanksgiving (n.) See “Eucharistic prayer.”

Great Vigil of Easter (n.) The first worship service of Easter Sunday. It's celebrated on the Saturday evening before Easter or before sunrise on Sunday morning.

Holy Week (n.) The week that begins on Palm Sunday and ends with Easter.

homily (n.) A sermon; the explanation and interpretation of the Word of God to the people.

intinction (n.) Pronounced in-TEENKT-shin. Dipping the communion bread into the wine, and then eating the two together.

Kyrie (n.) A prayer of repentance. The Greek words are "Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison, Kyrie Eleison." It means "Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy."

lavabo (n.) Pronounced lah-VAH-bo. The bowl into which water is poured to wash the celebrant's hands before the celebration of communion.

lavabo (v.) Pronounced lah-VAH-bo. The act of washing the celebrant's hands before the celebration of communion.

lay (adj.) Not of the clergy.

lay Eucharistic minister (n.) Sometimes abbreviated LEM. A layperson set aside to assist with the celebration of the Eucharist. May bring communion to those who were unable to attend the service. Many also serve as Lay Readers.

lay reader (n.) A layperson authorized to read the Bible or to lead public prayer during worship; a layperson authorized to lead the services of the Daily Office.

layman (n.), layperson (n.), laity (n., plural) Members of the church who are not ordained.

lectern (n.) A pulpit or book stand from which the lessons, creed, and prayers are read.

lectionary (n.) The list of readings from the Bible that are appointed for each Sunday of the church year. The lectionary provides an Old Testament, New Testament, Psalm, and Gospel reading for each Sunday, as well as for other holy days. The lectionary has a three-year cycle, which means that the same texts are read on Sundays every third year.

lector (n.) A layperson who has been appointed to read one or more passages from the Bible during a worship service.

Lent (n.) The forty-day season of the church year between Epiphany and Easter. It's based on the forty days Jesus fasted in the desert, and it is meant to prepare God's people for Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

lesson (n.) A reading from the Bible, or possibly an Apocryphal book. Lessons are appointed by the lectionary or by the Daily Office.

liturgy (n.) The form and practice of orderly, common worship.

Liturgy of Communion (n.) The portion of the Eucharistic liturgy beginning with the offertory and ending with the dismissal.

Liturgy of the Word (n.) The portion of the Eucharistic liturgy beginning with the opening acclamation and ending with the peace.

marriage (n.) 1. A covenanted, lifelong, monogamous relationship between a man and a woman. 2. The liturgy by which this relationship is blessed by the church.

- Mass** (n.) A word sometimes used for the Eucharistic liturgy.
- Maundy Thursday** (n.) The Thursday before Easter. The name comes from the Latin word *mandatum*, and refers to the Great Commandment Jesus gave at his Last Supper.
- missal** (n.) 1. The large book from which the celebrant reads the Eucharistic prayer. 2. Any book of prayers.
- mission** (n.) 1. A church plant in a foreign culture. 2. A congregation that is not financially independent.
- mission trip** (n.) A visit to a foreign culture made for the sake of proclaiming the Gospel in word and deed.
- missional** (adj.) The state of being engaged in proclaiming the Gospel in word and deed.
- missionary** (n.) A minister (lay or ordained) who brings the Gospel to a foreign culture.
- mitre** (n.) Pronounced MY-ter. A tall hat worn by a bishop. It often appears on the seal (logo) of a diocese.
- Morning Prayer** (n.) The first of the Four Hours, usually said around sunrise or breakfast. Sometimes called Lauds.
- narthex** (n.) An atrium or lobby that serves both as a community gathering space and as a buffer between a sanctuary and the outside world.
- nave** (n.) The part of the worship space in which the congregation sits. See “sanctuary.”
- Nicene Creed** (n.) A vital statement of Christian faith written in the fourth century. It is said or sung by the congregation on most Sundays in most Anglican churches.

Noonday Prayer (n.) The second of the Four Hours, usually said around noon. May be called Sext.

offertory (n.) The presentation of the congregation's gifts to the Lord in worship.

ordain (v.) To set aside a person for service as a deacon, priest, or bishop.

Ordinary Time (n.) A name for the Epiphany and Pentecost (Trinity) seasons of the church year.

ordination (n.) The liturgy by which a person is set aside for service in the church as a priest or deacon.

pall (n.) A cloth used to cover a casket or urn during a funeral.

Palm Sunday (n.) The Sunday before Easter. It commemorates the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem days before his execution.

parish (n.) A local congregation of Christians. Historically, the word referred to the geographic area around a local church building.

Paschal Candle (n.) A large candle which symbolizes the resurrection of Christ. It burns throughout the Easter season.

pastor (n.) 1. The ordained leader of a congregation, often called a rector or vicar. 2. the leader of a specific ministry in a congregation, as in "youth pastor."

Pentecost (n.) 1. The day that commemorates the coming of the Holy Spirit on the disciples in Jerusalem fifty days after Jesus' resurrection. 2. The season of the church year that begins on this day and ends with Advent.

plant (a church) (v.) To start a new church.

Prayers of the People (n.) The portion of the Eucharistic liturgy in which intercessions are made. These prayers are often led by a layperson or deacon.

priest (n.) A person ordained to preach and to celebrate the sacraments of the church.

primate (n.) Pronounced PRI-muht. A bishop who leads a province of the Anglican Communion, his title is usually “archbishop.”

procession (n.) The formal entry of the ministers into the sanctuary.

processional (n.) A hymn or song sung during the procession.

processional cross (n.) A cross on a tall pole carried in procession and recession by an acolyte.

province (n.) A collection of dioceses under a single primate. Each province is independent and tends to be based in a single country or geographic area.

pulpit (n.) A lectern from which homilies are preached.

recession (n.) The formal exit of ministers out of the sanctuary at the end of the worship service.

recessional (n.) A hymn or song sung during the recession.

reconciliation (n.) A rite by which a person repents of past sins through the ministry of a priest or bishop, ending with absolution. Sometimes called “confession.”

rector (n.) The lead pastor of a congregation. Usually, this congregation is financially self-supporting. The word comes from the Latin word for “ruler.”

Reserved Sacrament (n.) Communion elements left over and set aside after the Eucharistic liturgy. Normally distributed later to those who were not present in worship.

reverence (v.) To bow or kneel briefly before a sacred object, such as a cross. Sometimes, these bows are performed by bending at the neck, sometimes by bending at the waist.

sacrament (n.) An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure and certain means by which we receive that grace.

sacristy (n.) A room in which objects used in worship are kept and cared for.

sanctuary (n.) 1. The room in which the congregation worships. 2. The area of the room in which the congregation worships which is closest to the altar, inside the altar rail.

Sanctus (n.) A hymn of praise to God. It begins with the words “Holy, Holy, Holy Lord; God of power and might . . .” It comes from Revelation 4:8 and is sung or said during the Eucharistic prayer.

Sanctus bell (n.) A bell or group of bells rung at specific moments in worship.

sexton (n.) A person whose role it is to keep the church property clean, orderly, and in good repair.

Stations of the Cross (n.) A service in which we follow Christ through his suffering and death. It’s often associated with a series of fourteen paintings spaced around a church’s sanctuary.

stole (n.) A long scarf-like garment that indicates the ordained role of deacons or priests. Deacons wear stoles over one shoulder and across their chests. Priests wear stoles over their necks and down their chests. A stole reminds us of the yoke of Christ.

surplice (n.) A white, rectangular piece of clothing worn over a cassock.

Sursum Chorda (n.) The first few lines of the Eucharistic prayer. These lines include the phrase “lift up your hearts,” which is what *sursum chorda* means in Latin.

tabernacle (n.) A small cabinet or shelf near the altar which houses the Reserved Sacrament. Also called an “aumbry.”

thurible (n.) An item used to hold burning incense in worship.

thurifer (n.) An acolyte who carries a thurible in worship.

tippet (n.) A long, black scarf worn over a cassock and surplice.

Trinity (n.) 1. One of the most important doctrines of the Christian faith. 2. The name of a feast day. Trinity Sunday is the Sunday after Pentecost, the day pastors are supposed to explain this doctrine to their congregations. 3. The name of a season of the church year. Trinity Season is the Ordinary Time after Trinity, also called Pentecost Season.

Trisagion (n.) A prayer for mercy. It comes from the Latin phrase meaning “thrice holy.” The words are “Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One; have mercy on us.”

vestments (n.) Clothing set aside to be worn in worship.

vestry (n.) The council of laypersons which governs a local congregation.

vicar (n.) The head pastor of a congregation. Sometimes this word is used because the congregation is not financially self-supporting. The word comes from the same root as “vicarious,” indicating that the vicar is standing in for someone else (either Christ or the bishop, or both).

warden (n.) A leader of a vestry. The presiding layperson of a vestry is usually called the senior warden, while the assistant president is called the junior warden.

Words of Institution (n.) The specific words that Jesus said while holding the bread and wine during the Last Supper.

worship leader (n.) A person who leads the congregation in musical worship. The term comes from the evangelical and charismatic traditions of the church.