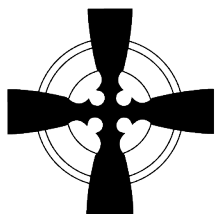


**WHY WE DO  
WHAT WE DO.**



**St. Bartholomew's**  
**EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
Imitating Jesus Christ and Maturing in Him.

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# 1. A Brief Interpreted History

## ***Establishing an Identity of Via Media through the Reformation***

The English reformation, although localized and very much Protestant in theological direction, resembled the Catholic Counter-reformation more than much of the Protestant fervor that was overturning the continent at the time. The English reformation took place in-house and involved a gradual set of institutional reforms. Richard Hooker, who was a late sixteenth century reformer, and who gained much influence during the Anglo-Catholic revival of the nineteenth century, observed the wars and bloodshed that followed doctrinal battles on the continent and contended that Christians must grow tired of the violent turmoil, desiring to come back together and discuss a method a means of becoming one Holy Church devoted to Jesus Christ.

The English reformation had the unique combination of impetuses combining national and political pressures that occurred between England and the papacy, as well as a theological reformation that was being fueled much by what was taking place on the European continent. These forces helped to form the identity of the national Church from which we have gained a sense of Anglican worship and theology. While decidedly protestant in content and structure, unlike some of the other reformed movements, the earliest parts of the Anglican tradition contained neither a strictly defined doctrine to which it must adhere (the tradition later adopted a set of articles, grounded in the Swiss-Rhineland confession of faith, to which all ministers and clergy were to subscribe) nor a flamboyant leader to which it conformed. Rather, the two most influential people for setting the course of Anglicanism, Thomas Cranmer and Queen Elizabeth (Tudor) both opted for moderation over militancy, leaving both the traditional Catholics, and the continentally influenced Protestants frustrated for what they saw as a lack of completion.

King Henry VIII, whose infamous dispute with Rome over his heirless marriage to Catherine<sup>1</sup>, the same woman whose nephew's soldiers in Rome prevented the Pope from offering Henry his desired (and required) annulment, was originally labeled as "Defender of the Faith" by Pope Leo X for his defiance to early Protestantism. Henry's eventual move to split from Rome extended beyond his dispute over his annulment and his betrothment to Ann Boleyn but was ultimately a form of political posturing. In the process, he succeeded in strengthening the English Crown by separating the power of the Pope over the Church in England. Through the manipulation of English Parliament, Henry established the national Church, which determined the Crown to be the only head of the Church in England, decreeing that the Bishop of Rome was to have no more authority than any other foreign bishop. The connection to the Roman hierarchy was severed creating a political reformation. Henry introduced the English Bible to the Church, and made small increases to the use of English liturgy. He also closed all of the monasteries, but besides that, the Church remained relatively unchanged, much to the chagrin of the growing support for Protestantism in England. The most influential Protestant decision that Henry made was to appoint Thomas Cranmer as Archbishop of Canterbury, the head See in England. It was Cranmer who was a major author of the

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<sup>1</sup> Henry did have a daughter, Mary, with Catherine, and an illegitimate son, the Duke of Richmond

English reformation, and, with Henry's selection of a Protestant tutors for his son Edward, it was Cranmer's designs which had a lasting impact on the Anglican identity of worship and theology.

Cranmer designed the first two Prayer Books – 1549 and 1552<sup>2</sup> – setting the tone for all future revisions. He did this during the child reign of Edward VI being given the power to introduce radical changes through Edward's Protestant friendly Privy Council. Cranmer was heavily influenced by Continental reformation, being a firm believer in justification of grace by faith alone, and implemented some of its designs in the design of the English Prayer Book. He also, with the support of Parliament, implemented some Protestant ideals such as all English liturgies and the legalization of clerical marriage. In 1553, he wrote the Protestant 42 Articles that, currently existing as the 39 Articles, would come to be the charter of Anglicanism.<sup>3</sup> However, Cranmer maintained many of the stylistic traditions of the Catholic Church, updating them with the radical underpinnings of Protestant theology. He was ultimately martyred by Queen Mary I (Bloody Mary) in 1556 during her five-year reign in which she attempted to outlaw and abolish Protestantism, making it punishable by death. Mary's autocratic method of abolishment, and the association of Catholicism with death made her incredibly unpopular, and sabotaged her attempt to reestablish the Church of her father, Henry VIII.

It was the reign of Elizabeth I that did the most to firmly establish the roots of Anglicanism. The death of Mary brought back an influx of Protestant exiles, freshly schooled and zealous for the styling of the Continental reformation. Elizabeth, the young queen, was facing pressure from all sides regarding her rule and the future of the Church. Despite her own convictions, over which there has been much speculation, Elizabeth was a ruler who sought to diminish the bloodshed and fighting over the issue. In 1559, within the first year of her reign, Elizabeth established the Act of Supremacy and the Act of Uniformity in parliament. The Act of Supremacy made her the supreme governor of the Church of England, cutting the ties with Rome that Mary had reestablished. Unlike Henry the VIII, this title recognized a monarchical limitation and didn't presume sacramental authority, as it was understood at the time as to be established through ordination. Rather, it limited her jurisdiction to the Church's ecclesiastical, administrative details. The Act of Uniformity established Prayer Book worship as central to the Church, re-inaugurating her brother's Protestant influenced Prayer Book of 1552 and introduced some minor Catholic friendly rites from the 1549 Prayer book, combining it into the 1559 Prayer Book. The Cranmer influenced 1559 set the tone for all of the preceding revisions, including the 1662 version, which continues as the official Prayer Book of the Church of England today. In reordering the Church structure, combining Catholic ecclesiology with Protestant theology, Elizabeth sought humble moderates who would be sympathetic to both the Catholic and the Protestant leanings. She could find no one better than in the bashful academic Matthew Parker who she appointed as Archbishop of Canterbury. Parker actually begged Elizabeth not to appoint him, preferring his books to the limelight, which is exactly the reason why he was ordered to the position. During the following 10 years, while a more Protestant structure and worship was the legal religion, and priests and bishops had to swear to both of the Acts (officially denying Catholicity), Elizabeth

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<sup>2</sup> See BCP pg. 866 for the articulation and guidelines set up by the first Prayer Book.

<sup>3</sup> See BCP pg. 867.

pointed out that she didn't desire to "make windows into men's souls" (Anglicanism 106) and the practice of Catholic rites, while officially prohibited, were largely ignored and no blood was shed over their practice. The English Church's national identity led to a pragmatic approach to Anglican theology as it struggled early on with the nature of pluralism: while officially Protestant leaning, Elizabeth created an environment of tolerance and increased individual liberty over many areas on the continent, subject to the loyalty of the citizens to their national identity.

However, the international struggle between Catholicism and the Protestants found its way into the country's politics, as the Pope's fight against the revolutionaries pitted him against the English monarch. In 1570, Pope Pius V excommunicated Elizabeth with his bull *Regnans in Excelsis*, in an attempt to encourage English Catholics to perform a coup d'état. In releasing the English Catholics from their allegiance to the State, what the bull ultimately succeeded in doing was firming the English Church's link with the crown. The Catholic sympathizers suddenly found themselves as potential traitors, with severe punishments for betraying Queen and country, and Protestants found themselves in a favorable position. Catholic proselytism turned to illicit means, gaining cardinal support for the taking of Elizabeth's life. Assassination attempts, foreign invasion, informers and torture created a political warfare that forced English citizens, Catholic and not, to see the potential for chaos and to intentionally analyze itself as a nation with an established Church.

On the other side of the Roman Catholics was an emerging community of zealous, Continental Protestants called Puritans who were adamant about reforming church structure and liturgy to not contain anything that is not in scripture. The Puritans had a growing influence in parliament, the same vehicle by which the Queen established moderation, and were becoming increasingly the mainstream by the later 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Puritans wanted to see a reform of the Church that eliminated extra-biblical content, arguing that the Church of England ought to take on a Presbyterian or Congregationalist model of governance. While they had no intention of separating from the State, they were a pressure against some of Elizabeth's moderate policies.

It was Elizabeth's brilliant political posturing, evading and squelching the radical Catholics who sought to overturn her rule, and her continued defiance of the Puritans who sought control of the Church and the control of English spirituality and morality that created the famous Anglican identity of the *Via Media*, or the middle way. Two influential theologians emerged from the era that wrote pieces in defense of Elizabeth against Catholicism and against Puritanism: John Jewel and Richard Hooker. What emerged was an understanding of the *Via Media* that is not in the negative, as in not Catholic or not Protestant, but a positive association with an honest approach to Church. With the reflection of the two scholars, the *Via Media* essentially attempted to avoid the excesses and errors that the authors perceived to occur on both sides of the struggle, avoiding the superstition of Catholicism and the individualism of the Anabaptist movement, the *Via Media* neither rejected Catholicism nor Protestantism, but attempted to merge the best ideas of both: Thus the theologies of the *Via Media* eschewed both Calvinism and Rome, instead offering a third way, "Show us anything clearly set forth in Holy Scripture that we do not teach, and we will teach it; show us anything in our teaching and practice that is plainly contrary to Holy Scripture, and we will abandon it." (Anglicanism 119)

An emerging feature from the time of the reformation to the Evangelical movement in the 18th century was the movement away from the middle ages' perspective of a unified society. Church and state were interwoven in the time of Henry VIII, and most English could not distinguish their Christian identity from their citizenship: being a good member of society meant being a good member of the Church. As such, theological, doctrinal, and liturgical discussions regarding the Church were far different than any that we might know today. Denominationalism was a much later emergence, and so issues of preference, conflict, and war were as much political as they were related to the Church. It wasn't until the Enlightenment, with an increased focus on reason and increasing allowance for public renunciation of Christianity, that the notion of pluralism came into being. After years of dispute, turmoil, chaos and dissension, the Toleration Act in the later part of the 17th century was issued, removing any penalties for English worshippers who did not subscribe to the official ecclesiology, making room for religious diversity in England. While the Church of England continued to receive official status, pluralism took over as the order of the day. Even practicing Roman Catholics and Unitarians, which were not included on the bill, were de facto allowed to continue their practices. Anglican identity had to shift from being the Church of the state, to being one version a greater Church, surviving in large part because of its institutional entrenchment, and the diversity with which its confessional Prayer Book worship had evolved to cope with following in the Elizabethan tradition of inclusiveness: that coming together in worship and prayer superseded doctrinal stringency or liturgical rigidity (Maybe. But it's being interpreted for today.)

### ***The Evangelical Movement***

The time leading up to the origin of the Evangelical movement in the 18th century is described as one of "pastoral neglect worldliness." (Anglicanism 31). The century that preceded it is marked the end of the powerful personal rule of monarchs and saw the beginnings of the industrial revolution, which gave far more influence and power to individuals. The Church, which consisted mostly of poor country parishes, was having a hard time coping with the changes that England was facing. Attacks on religion itself were coming hard from the rise in popularity of Deism, a rationalization of religion, and subversive form of Christianity that denies the active participation and involvement of a personable God in the history of humanity.

The condition of the Church was perfect for the passion and emotion imbued by the Evangelical movement. The movement was not an isolated experience, distinguishable within a particular sect or group. Rather, as a way of describing the First Great Awakening that took place in America at the time, it was a simultaneous spreading of enthusiasm for the gospel and a passionate plea for holiness by preachers. John Wesley, one of the principle participants in the Evangelical movement, has been often described as a wandering revivalist, apt for a man who walked and rode over 250,000 miles throughout England, preaching 40,000 sermons between the years of 1783 and 1791. (Anglicanism Neil 189) After having his conversion experience in 1738, which he described as a "warming of my heart", Wesley was devoted to building institutions encouraging Christian discipleship and holiness. Wesley focused on theology, education



and discipline. He believed that the laity (and clergy) was sorely undereducated in the gospel and that they needed groups and books that would provide edifying learning experiences. Part of Wesley's conversion experience was emotional grasps of the Augustinian doctrine of justification by faith alone. However, he was far enough removed from the reformation, and the Protestant struggle against works righteousness, that he had no difficulty incorporating an understanding that a Christian's outward life must reflect the inward change: Faith without works is dead. While committed to the Anglican Church, Wesley adopted a form of itinerant preaching that eschewed the traditional understanding of parochial ministry. In his rigidity about refusing to be tied down, and the Church's own rigidity about parochial ministry, the seeds had been sown for a regrettable Methodist schism following his death.

However, the movement was not isolated to Wesley, or other high profile preachers such as George Whitefield. Within the Anglican Church, increasing numbers began associating themselves with the Evangelical identity ably incorporating the Anglican idea of the parish church into their newfound passion. The movement, both inside of the Church and out, was not focused on the liturgical, doctrinal, or theological debate that had been so burdensome up to that point. Neither was it an organized group as much as it was individual experience. Defining an Evangelical was defining someone who had a passion for the Bible, the Prayer Book, and for his or her experience with God. As described by Sir James Stephen, "an orthodox clergyman as one who held in dull and barren formality the very same doctrines which the Evangelical clergyman held in cordial and prolific vitality; or by saying that they differed from each other as solemn triflers differ from the profoundly serious." (Neil 193) Evangelicalism was the experience of God and His grace, combined with the passionate desire to transform one's life, acting what one believes by living it in the world. The movement gained a great deal of support in the Church and grew political clout through the likes of William Wilberforce who used his passion to fight for the abolition of slavery in parliament. Its effect left a permanent effect on Anglican identity that continues to contain a large and vibrant Evangelical component.

### ***The Oxford movement***

Low Church Protestants dominated the Anglican Church through the 18th century with very few who remained loyal to a more Catholic approach to liturgy and theology. Evangelicals, while represented by a smaller proportion of clergy, were amongst the most dynamic and most influential single group, dominating the time. However, with the onset of both the American Revolution and the French revolution, there became an increased attraction to the High churchmen's demand for apostolic succession and the clear authority of the Church. Obedience, and order became increasingly attractive in the chaos.

In 1832, parliament passed the Reform Act, which allowed citizens from any religious background to become members of parliament. Up until that point, parliamentarians were united in that they were all Anglican, able to join together in Communion. With the Reform Act, theoretically, non-Anglicans had say over issues of the Church. This sparked a tremendous opposition to the relationship between Church and State. It was in 1833, when Parliament attempted to interject in matters of the Church with the Irish Church

Measure, that things climaxed. On July 14, 1833, John Keble preached his sermon on “National Apostasy” rejecting parliaments right to interject in issues of the Church, giving the impetus for the formation of the Anglo-Catholic movement.

The Oxford movement grasped on to these High Church ideals. Unlike the earlier 18<sup>th</sup> century Evangelicals, from the very beginning they were an established, organized party, with a center in Oxford and a means of distributing information via their tracts, subsequently becoming known as Tractarianism. The movement attracted many influential scholars and leaders, notably Edward Pusey and John Henry Newman. Their influence and tracts renewed an interest in pre-reformation theology and practice, re-introducing much of the Catholic theology that continue to be popular today but had not been up to that point. The Oxford movement has heavily influenced recent Prayer Book revisions. The movement was the impetus behind the Gothic revival of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and a growing love of ritual and ornate practices that later groups (principally the Ecclesiology Society led by John Mason Neale) inspired by the Oxford movement implemented.

However, despite the superficial changes, most importantly, the Oxford movement challenged the Church in a time of floundering to ask the question, “What is the Church?” Its focus on authority and dedication, wrapped up with austerity and sacrifice challenged some of the lackadaisical ideas of what Church was. More than a club, more than an association, more than an offshoot of the State, the Church was the Body of Christ. The Church was the representation of God in the world, and, as such, ought to be approached with the seriousness and focus that that identity deserved.

The movement lost popularity when Newman wrote tract 90, which was a Catholic interpretation of the 39 Articles. While some of the Articles, written by Cranmer and revised in Elizabethan England, were purposely vague for the purpose of allowing many Protestants to sign on to them in clear conscience, Newman stretched their limits, identifying them with early Catholic theology. The reaction was intense, and Newman was accused of being sordid, disingenuous, and full of sophistry, haven taken the Charter of the Anglican Church through such subtle logic that they were obviously not meant to be taken on. Because of his status as a leader of an influential Church party, the outcry was immense, and the integrity of the Anglican Church was called into question. Newman, and some others in the Movement, eventually seceded from the Anglican Church, becoming members of the Roman Catholic Church. However, their influence has remained strong on the Anglican Church, including their influence over the Cambridge movement, which reintroduced an interest in neo-gothic architecture, their increasingly ornate liturgies, as well as. The High Church movement has much to ascribe to them for its increased popularity and its influence on Anglican liturgy.

### ***The Episcopal Church in America***

With the War of Independence came a crisis for the Church of England’s presence in America. Many loyalists fled North to Canada and Nova Scotia because of their pledges to the Crown. In particular, a part of the ordination oath was an oath of obedience to the British throne. The Church was left with an empty shell of an episcopacy, (had never HAD an episcopacy) with a very few members. It held its first General Convention in 1785 in an attempt to organize itself and came to be known as the Protestant Episcopal

Church in the United States of America. The Church was well established in the colony areas, especially Virginia where it had once been the established Church.

The Church did not suffer the divisions of many other American denominations, but it had weaknesses in that, due to its Episcopal nature, it was unable to keep up with the pace of American expansion. Where other churches were sending out pastors and missionaries into frontier territory as quickly as they could find volunteers (often spreading an uneducated, questionable gospel) the Protestant Episcopal Church was amongst the slowest, creating Episcopal structures wherever it expanded. As such, by the time the Church arrived, there were already well established churches from other denominations in the region. An anomaly in its missionary outreach is that the Evangelicals in the church tended to send their missionaries overseas, or to un-reached regions, while the Anglo-Catholics tended to focus their attention on America. As such, regions of the country, particularly the north and south Midwest, are highly influenced by the Anglo-Catholic movement, while the Evangelical movement has influenced much of the rest of the world.

In the 1789 General Convention, as a national independent Church the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America issued its first Prayer Book. The Convention set forth an “A Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church.”<sup>4</sup> With respect to the Church of England, the Convention commented on the Church of England’s own articulation of the allowance for flexibility in local practices by proper authority. The Convention recognized the importance of the Church of England and its own indebtedness to it, “The Church of England, to which the Protestant Episcopal Church in these States is indebted, under God, for her first foundation and a long continuance of nursing care and protection...”<sup>5</sup> laying out its own foundation of authority, as well as its relationship to the Church of England in a preface that continues to exist in the front of the Prayer Book today.<sup>6</sup> In emphasis, the authors declared, “it will also appear that this Church is far from intending to depart from the Church of England in any essential point of doctrine, discipline, or worship; or further than local circumstance require.”<sup>7</sup> As such, the Episcopal Church, while inaugurated as a national body with national authority and idiosyncratic structure, continues to operate within an essential cooperative, dialogical, relationship with the Church of England.

Because of its separation from the Church of England, the Episcopal Church had to form its own structure of authority. The General Convention exists as the national method of governance, which meets every three years and consists of the House of Bishops (the bishop from every diocese) and the House of Deputies (4 laity and 4 clergy from each diocese). Unlike other provinces, the Episcopal Church’s presiding bishop has no more hierarchical authority than any other bishop within the province, but the position exists as a position of influence and representation.

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<sup>4</sup> BCP pg. 8.

<sup>5</sup> BCP pg. 9.

<sup>6</sup> BCP pgs. 9-11.

<sup>7</sup> BCP pg. 11.

(Sources: the Study of Anglicanism Revised Edition, Stephen Sykes, ed. et al.;  
Anglicanism, Stephen Neil)

## 1b. History: Elements

### The Anglican Communion –

The Church of England primarily spread because of British commercial interests. Local churches were planted in ports, colonies, and towns corresponding with British expansion. From its inception, each of these offshoots was under the authority of the Bishop of London. Today, the Anglican Communion is a vibrant network with associated provinces all over the world. The growth of the Communion is particularly notable in areas of the developing world. What the Anglican Communion was, and what the Anglican Communion has come to be is an example of a complexity in the relationships and authorities of the Church interacting with national politics. The Communion, at best, is a loose affiliation of related denominations, based off on respect, cooperation, and loyalty with some common connection to the See of Canterbury.

The complexity began to develop as the British colonies began to form their own governments and obtain their own legislatures. The Church of England, as an established Church under the authority of British parliament, had a difficult relationship in developing colonies. Authority had to be given to the Archbishop of Canterbury to consecrate foreign bishops in emerging territories. However, by that point, both the Scottish Episcopal Church, and the Protestant Episcopal Church in America had already claimed their own sovereignty and independence – America had gone through the Scottish episcopate to consecrate its first bishop and, in fitting fashion, replaced established authority of the state with a representational style body that would convene as General Synod, attended by bishops, clergy and laity. (British Parliament later passed the act that allowed it to approve of the consecration of the subsequent bishops.) Both of these experiences proved that the Church did not need to be established with the government in the territory in which they operated. However, as the preface to the 1789 American Prayer Book contended, these national churches had no intention of cutting all ties with the Church of England, but rather intended to maintain a relationship. Other colonies soon followed suit, and, with the impetus of several cases in which the English court system rejected its authority to listen to appeals that were presented to it by foreign lands with their own legislatures. A distinctly Anglican worldwide identity began to develop. Independent national Churches with an affiliation to the Church in England began emerging all over the world, wherever British influence had rested.

In 1865, a fundamental component of Anglicanism was developed. In a letter to the Archbishop, the Provincial synod of the Canadian Church petitioned to have a general council meeting such that Anglicans from all over the world could congregate, form doctrine, liturgy, and fashion the Church. The then Archbishop, Charles Longley, realized the difficulty of convening such a council, questioning its legality. Longley, instead made the offer to convene a synod that would focus on cooperation, leaving issues of doctrine and canon to the independent national bodies. He sent out 150 invitations to Bishops from around the world to join him at Lambeth, with 67 responding. Because of the refusal of the Bishop of York, the meeting was reduced from synod status to conference status. The Lambeth Conference was established, with regular meeting every ten years with invitations that are solely the discretion of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

While Anglicanism is steeped in tradition, history and theology, association with the Archbishop of Canterbury through Lambeth solely determines affiliation. None in attendance have authority over others, nor is what occurs at Lambeth binding. Rather, the spirit of the Communion is one of cooperation, respect and loyalty. Unlike the Roman Catholic Church, there is not trans-national, hierarchical church authority. However unlike many Protestant churches, affiliation is not limited to being merely parochial or regional. Rather Anglicans have an affiliation with churches around the world that come together under a common banner. This cooperate communion has many advantages, able to operate as a global network. However, it is tentatively balanced, precariously balanced on the spirit of mutual humility, service and common worship, mixed with the historic Anglican theology of *via media*. Like Anglican theology and history that has differed from its continental Protestant and Roman Catholic contemporaries with their focus on doctrine or tradition, so too the Anglican Communion exists. The danger facing the Communion today is not to be found in heretical doctrine (Pike's denial of the Trinity was not heretical? Spong's wholesale rejection of Christianity was not heretical? Etc. etc.) or rampant traditionalism, but in the hard-hearted arrogance and militant hubris present in various factions, each believing they know what is right (Cranmer, Latimer and Ridley died for what they knew was right...can we not distinguish between legitimate profession of faith, on the one hand, and hysterical bigotry on the other?). This resonates deeply with the worst and bloodiest of English history following the reformation, and the very reason that the *via media* was pursued to begin with.

### **The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral 1886, 1888 (BCP 876 –878) –**

The 1888 Lambeth conference adopted a set of resolutions that came to be called the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral. While having no binding canonical status (though they were explicitly affirmed by TEC's General Convention eight times between 1895 and 1982), the resolutions have helped shape much of Anglican theology since their inception. The resolution contains four key Anglican elements regarding God and the Church. The entire text is contained within the Book of Common Prayer pages 876-878. The Conference recognized that: 1) Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation; 2) The Creeds (Apostle's Creed and Nicene Creed) are sufficient statements of Christian faith; 3) Baptism and Holy Communion are two sacraments by which God offers his grace to us and 4) it is through the traditional episcopacy that we can approach the unity of God's Holy Church. This last reference was a way of keeping order with a growing number of breakaway and offshoot groups that would split over issues instead of investing in solutions.

### **The Book of Common Prayer –**

The first Prayer Book for the Church of England, written in 1549 by Thomas Cranmer, emerged out of a mediaeval tradition of ritualized prayer and worship. With the legalization of Christianity in the Roman Empire in 313, and the increasing popularity of Christian worship, exponential Church growth necessitated a means of enacting uniformity in theology and liturgy. Many Bishops were unable to cope with the increasing demands for spontaneous public prayer. As well, the lines between Church and

State quickly blurred, introducing a political atmosphere to public worship. Suddenly, the words said in prayer, and rites performed in the service had further reaching implications. The emerging Christendom created an environment that did not clearly distinguish a Christian identity under a sovereign God, from political citizenship. Baptism was a ubiquitous introduction as a member of society, rather than the ceremony of Christian inculcation that it had once been. As such, what emerged in mediaeval society was a class of professional Christianity present within the ordained clergy and monastic orders that became increasingly separated from the common laity. The role of this professional class was to perform religious rites and prayers, very often done in a mere whisper and in old Latin, such that the laity increasingly became mere spectators of the task being done. The Church's connection introduced rites and roles that these holy orders were to do for society. The increasingly influence of the Papacy combined with the increasing function of the holy orders culminated in an increasing codification of rites and rituals that supported the coinciding ballooning doctrines of the role of worship: Eucharistic elements that became superstitiously observed, the bread and the wine being separated from their original meaning and communal participation into a type of clerical ritual worship. The laity was not allowed to even drink from the cup because of its sacredness. Monastic orders believed that their professional function was to perform the ritual of the daily office, segregated from all others. The absurdly undereducated liturgical theology, and two-tiered Christianity that developed was a major impetus behind the protestant reformation and the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation. As Jeffrey Lee writes, "At its heart the Reformation was a liturgical movement. The reformers were as concerned about the state of the practical piety of ordinary worshipers as they were about biblical and sacramental theology." (Lee 47). However, (Good heavens...just to speak of England alone, Cranmer's D.D. (which degree many of his colleagues also held) normally took at least 17 years to obtain - whatever else they were, the English Reformers - and their Continental counterparts - were certainly not undereducated) while most agreed that scripture as centrally important in determining worship, there was a great deal of disagreement over what this meant. Martin Luther opted to keep everything not explicitly condemned through scripture, while John Calvin made radical cuts.

Cranmer was heavily influenced by the continental protestants, particularly of their understanding of the justification of grace through faith. However, the English Reformation was much different than his continental counterparts, and the evolution of the English Prayer Book reflected the political atmosphere this. Unable to perform many changes until the death of Henry the VIII, whose break with Rome was by-in-large political Cranmer's first Book of Common Prayer, written in 1549, under the commission of the heavily protestant privy council to the boy king Edward VI, was a collection of these mediaeval Catholic rites with a decidedly protestant makeover. The Prayer Book emphasized the participation of laity in worship. Parliament passed an act of Uniformity (which was passed with every subsequent revision) requiring all churches in England to use The Book of the Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, after the Use of the Church of England in all worship. Feeling he didn't go far enough (and many feeling he had already gone too far), Cranmer introduced some more Calvinistic theology into his second Prayer Book in 1552. The Prayer Book came to be an indicator of allegiance to the State. Contention over the Prayer Book grew. When Mary came to power, she restored the Latin rite, and

reconnected with Rome. However, she did not reign long enough for her policies to take root. It was Elizabeth who, in creating the 1559 Prayer Book, attempted to create a liturgy that would appease some of the tension between Catholics and Protestants, reintroducing elements of the 1549 Prayer Book, whilst reducing the anti-papacy statements in Cranmer's 1552 revision. This approach to Common Prayer had a deep impact on the shape of the future revisions of the Prayer Book. The English Prayer Book today, which continues to be the official 1662 Book of Common Prayer, remarkably takes the shape of the Elizabethan settlement with its focus on "simplicity and the ideal of common prayer, a rhythm of daily praying with psalms and scripture, and Eucharistic worship on the Lord's Day." (Lee 53)

## **The American Prayer Book**

The American Church had to overcome much due to the political situation between America and England in the 18th century. Notably amongst this was a need to create an American Prayer Book. The American tradition was heavily influenced by the non-juror Scottish Episcopal Church, which was a tradition that had earlier refused to swear a loyalty to the English crown, separating Church from the powers of the State. (The chief mark of non-juror influence on the American BCP was the inclusion of an epiclesis in the Prayer of Consecration...it might be useful to explain that here). The American tradition quickly found itself in a similar situation, being a Church uprooted from its connection to Crown and Parliament. After much contention and confusion (the Church hierarchy was in shambles with its separation from the order in England, and England's refusal to ordain new bishops) the General Convention meeting of 1789 worked remarkably quickly to transform the English Prayer Book to their own, dubbed, The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, According to the Use of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America: together with the Psalter, or Psalms of David. The non-juror influence helped the American tradition shape the Prayer Book without a direct connection to the State.

No significant changes occurred for a century, until the Catholic renewal that permeated England in the shape of the Oxford movement made an effect in America. As the socio-political landscape of America changed with the Industrial Revolution, the civil war, the increasing influence of liberalism and increased immigration, the many in the Church were arguing for a greater deal of leniency to adapt liturgy to local needs. Many were looking for the answers in traditional patterns, rites and presentations in lieu of the change and had been using Anglo-Catholic traditions to be able to do this. The 1892 book allowed for the inclusion of the practices that had already been taking place. Without making major revisions to the text of the 1789 book, it did make concessions for local liturgical variance. It was from this allowance that much of the ornate liturgies, décor, vestments, and Anglo-Catholic influence really influenced the way that services are still done today. The 1928 Prayer Book went even further, not just allowing for local variance, but prescribing a far more Anglo-Catholic style of worship. The Liturgical movement that was sweeping through the Church during its authorship heavily influenced the most recent 1979 revision of the Prayer Book. The Liturgical movement attempted to bring back historic liturgies that focused on communal participation and worship. The essence of the liturgy is not the celebration of the liturgy itself, but its use in



community. Thus the direction of our most recent Prayer Book is an attempt not about perfecting rites, or saying the proper thing to God, but about shaping a Godly people (One of the members of the Standing Liturgical Commission that devised the 1979 BCP - Urban T. Holmes, the dean of Sewanee - later admitted that the goal of the majority of the revisers had been to abolish the "Tudor deity to whom Archbishop Cranmer prayed" - see Holmes' article in the Festschrift for Massey Shepherd, "Worship Points the Way"). (I think I'll leave this one out.) As our prayers and our actions shape that we are, so too our liturgies shape us, and liturgies that focus on communal worship, will shape a community that is dedicated to God. The direction of Prayer Book worship is about the people who share in the common experience under one God, embodying a classic Anglican, and Christian understanding of Common Prayer. It is an emergent tradition, balancing history and the present through practicing the prayers and worship of the Church before it, while allowing for revisions based on the particular need of the present moment. Prayer Book worship links all of the Church throughout the ages under a common lineage.

### **KJV Bible –**

The King James Version of the Bible was the first authorized English translation of the bible. Due to the Protestant influence of the prevalence of scripture, and the position of monarch as authority in the English Church, there was an increasing demand for a translation of the bible that would be officially recognized. James I pooled a great deal of resources into its creation, pulling together 50 or so of the top scholars in the area, using all resources available to publish the translation in 1611. Because of the translation's official tradition within the Church, and the subsequent expansion of British influence, the KJV nestled into a position of considerable influence, with many being resistant to more modern translations and scholarship.

### **Creeds –**

The creeds are a historic affirmation of Christian beliefs created and ratified over several general ecumenical council meetings of the entire Christian Church. The Nicene Creed, as it has come to be known today, was created at the Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.), with the text changed in the Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.) Partly in response to a growing Arius controversy – a belief offered by Arius that denied the idea of the Trinity, subjecting Christ to having been created by God rather than a part of God – that was plaguing the Eastern portion of the Church in the Roman Empire, Emperor Constantine assembled the councils as a means of restoring order within the Church. The vast majority of Bishops present rejected Arius' doctrine as heresy, excommunicating its proponents, and established the Creed as a Christian statement of faith and an explicit description of the doctrine of the Trinity. The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral<sup>8</sup> recognizes the Nicene Creed as a sufficient statement for the Christian faith. Article VIII of the Articles of faith<sup>9</sup> gives it significant stature because it embodies what scripture teaches. The Apostles' Creed developed some time later – which is itself derived from the

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<sup>8</sup> BCP pg 877.

<sup>9</sup> BCP pg 869.

baptismal creed of the very early Church, which became entrenched because of the threat of Gnosticism in the second century –, surfacing in the liturgy of the Western Church in response to Gnosticism. While it does not have the authority of being produced and ratified through General Council, it gained de facto authority in the Western Church. Article VIII <sup>10</sup> also recognizes its legitimacy, and the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral suggests that it is a symbol of baptism.

The adherence to the Creeds connects modern liturgies and worshipers with a history that extends back to its inception. History's presence and authority work as a guiding compass for the Church, directing it through its various controversies and struggles, and emphasizing the voice of the Church throughout the ages. Modern Christians sometimes fail to give proper credence or respect to Christians from bygone eras, preferring contemporary interpretations and decisions, a democratic deficiency that creates a type of myopic tyranny of the living. The Creeds recognize the attention and prayer that has existed in the Church from its very inception, and its ageless ability to act as the body of Christ.

### **39 Articles (BCP 867-876) –**

The 39 Articles of Religion are an edit of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer's original 42 articles, which were written in 1552 and enacted in 1553 under King Edward VI. The original Articles were written as the English Church's response to issues affecting the Roman Catholic Church. The continental Protestants –particularly Calvin – and their emphasis on the justification of grace, heavily influenced Cranmer by faith alone. However, he did not go to the extent of many of the protestant Churches, but wrote the Articles as a means of creating identification for the English Church in light of the Roman Catholic deficiencies. The articles were greatly influenced by Protestant confessions, the Confession of Augsburg (1530) and the Württemberg Confession (1552). (Whoa...they explicitly affirmed justification by grace through faith in Articles 11-14 and predestination (single) in Article 17) The Articles were edited to be more conservative during Queen Elizabeth's reign and in 1571, they became the legal canon of the English Church. The Church of England continues to view the Articles as foundational to Anglicanism, although Anglo-Catholic groups such as the Tractarians challenged their Protestant interpretation during the Oxford movement in the 19th century. While they continue to be legally binding for clergy in the Church of England, Anglican provinces outside of England have adopted them less restrictively. The Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America adopted the articles in 1801 after roughly 25 years of debate, altering some of the text to meet some of the local needs and nuances. They had authority in the Episcopal Church under the seventh article of the Constitution until the 1980's when the Constitution was revised and their authority was removed. However, they continue to be a guiding principle in Anglican theology and are included in the Prayer Book.

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<sup>10</sup> BCP pg 869.

## **1559 Settlement –**

In the first year of her reign, Queen Elizabeth put into practice a set of moderate principles that would lay the groundwork for a distinctly Anglican middle-way. After five years of blood shed and Protestant suppression under Mary, upon coronation Elizabeth had desperate Protestants and anxious Roman Catholics trying to influence her decision over the Church. With the establishment of the Act of Supremacy, Elizabeth re-established monarchical authority over the Church, although to a lesser extent (different title, same powers) than her father, Henry the VIII, again cutting ties with Rome. With the Act of Uniformity, Elizabeth established Prayer Book worship. While Elizabeth's 1559 Prayer Book continued to be primarily Protestant, she reintroduced some Catholic concessions for the sake of moderation. (Once again, the 1559 BCP was pure 1552 except for the words of administration, the omission of the Black Rubric, and the inclusion of an ornaments rubric, oh, and all right, omission of the more vitriolic prayers against the Pope). Elizabeth chose to fill ecclesial authority with moderate men rather than with the extremists, and chose to try and not judge the nature of conviction that drove both groups. In all, the settlement did not go far enough either way to please either of the extremes, but it allowed for the vast majority of Christians in Britain to operate within the same Church, and laid down the foundation for cooperative common prayer that would allow Anglicans to overcome many of the controversies that plagued it.

(Sources: *The Study of Anglicanism*, Stephen Sykes, et al.; *Opening the Prayer Book*, Jeffrey Lee; *Commentary on the American Prayer Book*, Marion J. Hatchett)

## 2. Authority and Method: Scripture, Reason, and Tradition

I wonder if you really want to characterize Anglicanism in this way? The "three-legged stool" metaphor became a cliché in the late 19c, and was certainly not proposed by Richard Hooker (see Laws V.8.2 for what he actually said). The "stool" metaphor is typically understood today in two different ways, neither of them helpful in characterizing Anglican theology. (1) The late 19c cliché...Evangelicals look to Scripture as their authority, Anglo Catholics look to Tradition, and Modernists/Liberals look to Reason (defined as "the assured results of modern scientific inquiry"). Therefore - the reasoning goes - Scripture and Tradition and Reason are identical categories, like tubes of paint, and individual Anglicans are at liberty to mix and match according to their individual tastes. This view represents Enlightenment individualism run wild. And this perspective also reduces Scripture to a human artifact - rather than the transcendent Word of God breaking into human history - and marginalizes it. "The assured results of modern scientific inquiry" will trump Scripture on any subject - see for example the House of Bishops' document on sexuality in the late 1990s. (2) A more intelligent interpretation of the cliché is the view that Anglicans read Scripture by means of Reason (the human faculty, not the alleged conclusions of scientific inquiry) through the lens of Tradition. This is certainly true of orthodox Anglicans, but it is also true of every Protestant tradition - Lutherans do it, Presbyterians do it, Baptists do it, and so on. This method is not peculiar to Anglicans, and hence not a very helpful way of characterizing the Anglican way of theology. I'll email separately a distilled form of the introductory lecture I gave in the "Anglican Way of Theology" course that I taught at Trinity...you may like to consider this paradigm as an alternative to the unhelpful "stool" metaphor.

### **Scripture –**

Article VI of the Articles of religion<sup>11</sup> states that the Holy Scriptures contains all that is necessary to salvation. Scripture is one of the three tenets that hold together Anglicanism. Anglican theology has always subscribed to the reformers vantage of *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture Alone) as a reaction against the Roman Catholic Church. However, Anglican Theology is not literalist in its approach to scripture, but believes that scripture is authoritative because it points to the saving works of Christ. This is common with most other reformation theology, such as Martin Luther who wrote of a metaphorical understanding of much of scripture that centered on his Christology. Thomas Cranmer's writing suggests much the same. Christ is the gospel, not the words that are written on

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<sup>11</sup> BCP pg. 868.

page, and the early Canon was developed as a collection of documents giving apostolic teaching to that end. Article VII<sup>12</sup> offers that both the Old and New Testament are valid because they point to Christ. Much of the fundamentalist/literal perspective on scripture did not appear until the 19th century.

In the Anglican tradition, God's inspiration does not mean that God gave the literal words to the author, guiding the pen, but that God is involved in the process, having authority over its entirety from its creation to its interpretation and reading in community. It is not a one-time event, but a series that falls under the providential authority and control of the Creator. Old Testament writers, who were known to have written about issues in their own time, wrote stories that pointed to God's saving acts and the anticipation of Christ. Paul's epistles and the four Gospels that were each targeted to a specific audience, have greater implications for us today because the early Church opted to collect, and collate these pieces of correspondence.

Anglican theology recognizes that Christians are not a people of the book, but a people of the Person. We worship and respond to the Word of God, which does not take shape in ink of the text, but in its efficacy to relate God's story to us. The scripture is not authoritative in all things, boasting a type of inerrancy of historical details from the scientific interpretation of Creation to the revelations of John as it is rooted in the worldview of its authors. Rather it is authoritative as the story of God's interaction with God's people, and is important in the way that He speaks to his people through it. Therefore, scripture must be accompanied with a proper degree of common prayer, humility, study, and interpretation.

### ***Tradition –***

The irony is that the tenet *Sola Scriptura* can simply not exist on its own since it took something to compile and authorize scripture. The question often given to new Anglican seminarians is, "what came first, the Church, or the bible?" The answer is, of course, the Church since it was the Church that compiled the bible. Scripture would have no meaning if it also weren't for its authors who took the time to write the letters to the various communities to whom they were speaking, or if God did not give credence to its existence. Scripture is therefore dependent on the culmination of activity that surrounded its creation. It also requires community to interpret and enact. Scripture does not sit in an abstract bubble, containing a set of meaningless propositions or stories. It is God's story as God acts in the world; it is the story of the Church. The tension of individual interpretation – particularly as we recognize the hermeneutical hurdle that the further we are removed from its original authors the less likely we are to understand their original meaning – grows as a culture of compartmentalizing biblical understanding grows. Unversed, undereducated, isolated interpreters too easily champion their own interpretation of scripture, which is so diluted from the source and from community that it produces dangerous and disastrous results, not recognizing that their individual interpretation is entirely dependent on a team of biblical scholars who had to interpret original language texts and contexts to give allow this individual interpretation to occur to begin with.

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<sup>12</sup> BCP pg. 869.

Interpretation requires community. As dangerous as disconnected, individualistic interpretation is, there is another danger in interpretation: to view community with the myopic lens of modern hubris. Individuals are limited in their ability to reason, see, emote, and understand. They are often affected by self-interest or self-concern, and by empathetic intuitions limited to their own difficulties. Therefore, to wipe away a history of community struggling through the same issues is akin to cutting off a major artery. Christian tradition is full of reflection, struggles and decision that are beneficial to our own. Of particular importance are the Christian fathers; the early centuries of thought that went into some of the most difficult periods of identity founded important works that helped shaped what Christianity is today.

Anglicanism is shaped by a history of reformers who opted to refine, rather than chop, the traditions of the Church, holding on to the tradition of the Early Church Fathers. While able to recognize some of the discrepancies that were taking place in the Roman Catholic Church, the reformers opted to continue with traditions (such as the Creeds) and practices that the Church before them had, using scripture as a reference for cleansing. Prayer Book worship continued the tradition of a history of worship, as worshipers spoke the same words, believed the same beliefs, and responded to the same rites as the worshipers that preceded them had. At the same time, Prayer Book worship has evolved, being in constant dialogue with those that preceded, and those that will proceed any given moment of worship. It is both a static reminder and an emergent tradition. The lineage of the episcopacy, as well as the lineage of beliefs and decisions is essential to Anglican identity, understanding that neither individual, nor generation has a monopoly on the proper interpretation of worship. As such, the emergence of tradition exists as one of the three pillars essential to Anglican existence.

### ***Reason –***

Reason is, of course, the third necessary leg in the tripod of Anglicanism. Reason avoids blind Biblicism and traditionalism by challenging both in light of contemporary circumstance. Neither tradition nor scripture is static, but operates in the context of a Church that continues to serve God in the light of the particularities of time, place, and circumstance. Richard Hooker, one of the most influential Anglican theologians argued that reason was to supersede Biblicism by understanding the context of biblical context. If the original context of a biblical precept is irrelevant to a current situation, then the reason of the Church no longer allows it to adhere to the precept (Laws II-III) (Anglicanism, Sykes – 115). In fact, even the most biblically fundamentalist of churches adhere to this principle to varying degrees. Very few churches believe that many of the morality/purity laws that were inscribed in the Pentateuch are applicable today, but rather were written in context, for the local culture. So too, nearly every Church believes in the authority of the Gospels and Epistles, but none approach them with literal, obedient fanaticism. Few have actually cut off a hand or plucked out an eye when it has caused us to sin (Mark 9:47), and few believe that a woman's hair must be long for her to be glorified, or a man's hair needs to be short (1 Corinthians 11:6; 14). There is, therefore, always a degree of reason that goes into interpretation and application.

Change has been classically conservative, with the onus of change to be on reason for proving otherwise. The English reformers opted not to rid Anglicanism of Catholic rites

unless they could be proven to go against their reformed theologies. So too, change in any practice of the Church, while welcomed, must be proved on the basis of reason. The practice of approaching reasonable interpretation and application is far more difficult than the theory, with Anglicans in every generation raising contentious issues with each other because of different vantage point about what dictates “reason”. The rise of biblical criticism, scientific empiricism, and the Enlightenment’s rational individuals has led to a great number of approaches to reason. Perhaps, for in an accommodating Church, the future of reason, and the future of Common Worship are not best met simply with further study, or greater knowledge, but reason must be predicated on a system of humility, agape love and prayer.

(Sources: The Study of Anglicanism: Stephen Sykes et al.)

### 3. Worship

From the very earliest formation of the Church, Christians have been gathering together to listen to God's Word, partake in communion, to pray, and to be encouraged to go out and live the life of faith in the midst of the world. This, in essence, is worship. The Greek word for liturgy (*leitourgia*) means "work" or "service" on behalf of God (Lyman, 63). The Church is God's people doing God's work. It is both an essence and an action: being and doing.

Early worship modeled a counter-cultural understanding of the victory of Christ, through which God's grace is offered: Grace is not an inert state, something to be received and possessed or stored, but rather it is a model of action, dynamic within circumstance and relationships. Worship is not only God's action, but it is our own participating in it. Like a virus that requires a vessel to grow, grace is given life through fellowship. All of the actions surrounding the gathering were about listening, responding, participating and encouraging.

The English reformers were working within the context of a Church heavily rooted in Judaic roots filtered through Western Philosophic thought, and layered in centuries of tradition. Reformed approaches to address some of the abuses were taking place both inside and outside of the Western Church's structure. The English reformers, like many of the Continental reformers, attempted to strip some of the unnecessary rules and rubrics that layered on through years of tradition in an attempt to reestablish an understanding of grace and worship more closely associate with Apostolic teaching. To do this, the reformers placed a heavier emphasis on scripture as containing all off the necessary elements to salvation. Unlike some of their Continental counterparts however, the English Church continued to believe that tradition could play an important role in worship. The articles of religion deal heavily with the Reformer's attempt to strip the excess and re-establish an original integrity. Of particular note to the element of worship is Article XXXIV<sup>13</sup>, which states that traditions and ceremonies need not look alike in every place and in every time. At the inception, the Anglican Church has believed that worship is rooted in the context of the local congregation, and will vary to be consistent with their particular needs. Traditions are not to be imposed, but neither are they to be discarded and ignored. Rather they are to operate in a dialogical relationship with community. Worship does not begin with the adherence to some strict practice, or even to some strict belief that is not present within scriptures, but rather to the commonality that occurs when Christians gather. Common prayer reestablishes the early practice of listening to God's Word, responding, partaking in the sacrament of communion, and encouraging one another, preparing themselves to do God's work in the world. At its core, the actions in worship are purely expressive, offered as either personal devotion or meant to draw meaning and add depth to the liturgy. In that way, the Prayer Book allows for any expression, provided that it does not disrupt from the ability of other congregants to participate, or belie the theological significance of the various elements. For instance disorderly worship is discouraged because it has a tendency to draw attention away from the event, and onto the individual (St. Paul deals with much the same

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<sup>13</sup> BCP pg 874.



issue in his first letter to the Corinthians). Likewise, the priest is limited in his or her actions surround consecration, like elevating the elements, to inhibit the possibility of portraying superstitious theologies. Early English reformers stripped many of the actions and sayings developed in the Roman Catholic Church in order to deemphasize many of the abuses that they thought were taking place, bringing liturgical worship styles in line with a more reformed Anglican theology.

Our actions in liturgy are merely outward signs of an inward response. Given that the worship is both recognizing the state of grace in Christ's victory, as well as choosing to actively participate in it, any actions or words that encourage listening, response, fellowship, and that are preparatory for the Christian's life outside of the service are permitted. In short, worship is only constrained by the principles of the edification of the community.

(Sources: Early Christian Traditions v. 6, Rebecca Lyman; The Study of Liturgy, ed. Cheslyn Jones; "The Jewish Background to Christian Worship" R.T. Beckwith; Prayer Book Rubrics Expanded, Byron D. Stuhlman.)

## **3b. Worship: Actions**

Actions and gestures are ultimately about drawing out meaning from the liturgy, and they are personal ways of expressing worship. The 1549 Prayer Book reads that they should be “so set forth that every man may understand what they do mean, and to what use they do serve . . . touching . . . gestures: they may be used or left as every man’s devotion serveth without blame.” (Rubrics expanded 21). Article XXXIV of the 39 Articles<sup>14</sup> indicate that traditions and rubrics need not be rigid or confining, looking the same all the time, everywhere, but are to change such that they are edifying to the local community.

### **Standing –**

The early Church’s default posture was to stand, celebrating the victory in Christ’s resurrection. Standing continues to represent praise and affirmation, and is used in times of respect, as in when the Gospel is present.

### **Kneeling –**

Kneeling has come to represent a position of penitence, humbly submitting oneself before God. Much of the liturgical penitence entered into the rubrics during the time of the reformation. While the current revision of the Prayer Book prefers standing to kneeling, the option is given for local variance. Kneeling is best suited for the Confession, the Prayer of Humble Access (We do not presume to come to this thy table... BCP 337) and the Prayers of the People, although standing is perfectly acceptable.

### **Sitting –**

Sitting is the position for hearing the Word and being taught, and occurs for the Sermon and the readings (except for the Gospel, where one stands out of respect).

### **Arms outstretched, palms raised (Orans) –**

This is a traditional position of receiving what God is offering. It has become common for clergy to use this posture on behalf of the congregation, particularly during the consecration of the elements or other moments when there is an expectation of reciprocity.

### **Folded or clasped hands –**

The origins of the folded or clasped hands are likely out of obedience to one’s liege under feudal lordship. It is often used by the celebrant in prayers said in unison, or

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<sup>14</sup> BCP pg 874.

prayers said by others. It is often the default posture of the celebrant when he or she is not performing a function.

### **Bow and Genuflect –**

There are two types of bows. A simple bow is from the neck and the head, and is given in respect to the name of Jesus or the Trinity, the altar, the cross or to other persons. A solemn bow is from the waist and is done in response to Christ present in the sacrament, to His incarnation (as represented in the Creed) and to the altar on entering and leaving the Church. In higher Churches, a genuflection (bending of the knee) replaces the solemn bow, and stems from what was a common gesture of respect for high officials in civil society. Lower churches forgo the bow altogether, particularly through emphasizing the nature of the Holy Table rather than the presence of an altar.

### **Hands opened –**

This gesture is an act of invitation, typically used by the celebrant, particularly as an initiation to prayer.

### **Hands laid on objects or persons –**

Hands extended over objects or persons – Both are actions to indicate the invocation of the spirit in the action. Laying hands on a person during prayer to invoke the spirit is an action that is recorded in the New Testament.

### **The sign of the cross –**

The sign of the cross can be made over a person, and object, a place or over oneself and may represent devotion, identity, blessing, absolution, exorcism, consecration for holy use, or the conclusion of something done to the honor of God. Its use goes back to the early fathers, with St. Basil in the fourth century making reference to it having originated in Apostolic times, which is recordable as early as St. Tertullian, who acknowledged it in the late second century. The sign of the cross means many things in different contexts, but is a prayer in action. By making the sign, Christians are acknowledging the Creed, the Trinity, Jesus' death and resurrection, and their own membership in the Christian community. It is a renewal of our baptismal covenant, having died to self, and resurrected to Christ, as well as a sign of discipleship. Some speculate that the sign developed as a means of identifying the newly baptized, indicating to whom they belong. In short, it's a prayer that recognizes the holiness of God and celebrates his actions in Christ.

The common Western method for making the sign on oneself is to press together the thumb and index and middle finger, touching the forehead to the sternum and then the left shoulder to the right shoulder. When making the sign over a forehead, lips or an object, only the thumb is used. As the meaning is ultimately devotional, and the prayer

individual, representations, particular methods or mystical numbers are really irrelevant, and best avoided as the intent is to enhance the liturgy, and not detract from it. During the service, there are various times when it can be used, although the Book of Common Prayer never requires it and it is entirely at the discretion of the individual. It can be used in the Creed to remember the baptismal covenant, at the beginning or ending of the Daily Office, at the Gospel as a way of desiring to receive God's Word, and during the absolution that follows confession as an indication of God's forgiveness and actions. The celebrant will make the sign during a baptism as a sign of God's seal on the initiate,<sup>15</sup> during unction using oil,<sup>16</sup> and on Ash Wednesday on the forehead of the congregants.

### **Hands lifted –**

A gesture of hearts being raised to God in praise, expectation or offering. This is often done during the Eucharistic Prayer.

### **Objects lifted up –**

Similar to lifting hands up, the celebrant lifts objects up in response to an offering to God, or presenting to God.

### **Kiss –**

The Kiss of Peace is an action that dates back to the New Testament that is done to greet each other as community, as well as sign of forgiveness, reconciling community members to each other before they take the Holy Communion. The kiss gradually grew out of style, replaced with a *Pax Brede* (Peace Board) in the middle ages, which was passed around and which everyone kissed, eventually being supplanted by more culturally relevant hand clasping or other greetings.

A kiss is also a sign of respect and is sometimes used by the celebrant to honor the altar when entering or leaving, as well as kissing the gospel after having heard God's Word. However, the action is relevant only in a cultural context, and Western Churches have generally supplanted it with handshakes, embraces or other culturally relevant gestures.<sup>17</sup>

(Prayer Book Rubrics Expanded, Byron D. Stuhlman; An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church, Don S. Armentrout and Robert Boak Slocum.)

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<sup>15</sup> BCP pg 308.

<sup>16</sup> BCP pg 456.

<sup>17</sup> BCP pg 407.

### 3c. Worship: Sacred Space

The idea of sacred space does not emerge in Christian Theology alone, but is exhibited in many different religions. The Old Testament contains many sacred places that are set apart because God had made and appearance there. The Church had long followed a practice of consecrating sacred places from other religions, “baptizing” them for Christian use. Theologies of spirits played a part in how the places were exorcised. However, understandings of spiritual places played a peripheral role to the far more tangible one of function: The places where Christians gather have always been more influenced by the functional necessity than sacred theologies.

The New Testament speaks of the earliest Christians gathering in people’s homes. Archaeological evidence has produced such meeting places, some with walls knocked out to produce a larger common area capable of holding everyone who came to take part in the communion. With the legalization of Christianity in the Roman Empire (313 A.D.) and the increasing popularity of Christianity and influence of bishops, home churches were no longer able to serve their function. Home churches made way for larger, dedicated buildings fashioned after contemporary Roman public architecture. Churches resembled the Roman Basilicas of the era, with an emphasis on the dedicated space for the communion altar and Bishop’s throne. The Eastern Church developed a similar model, although they began to use domes.

In the middle ages, as the theology of the Sacrament escalated moving away from the participation of community to the efficacy of the elements themselves. The laity became less important than the actual rites of the clerics surrounding the elements. Increasingly, architecture was designed to meet the theological shift, separating the congregation from the altar and the area where the priest performed his function of celebrating. As individual clerical masses increased in importance, churches adopted extra wings and chapels to accommodate the demand. Because of the misalignment of theology, many Continental reformers opted to tear down churches or walls that hindered the theological understanding of communal participation in worship. They built smaller churches that resembled the assembly places of the day. In an attempt to bridge the gap, the early English reformers continued to use Roman churches with a reformed theology. A surge in anti-iconography and a vigilant theology denying the superstitions surrounding the celebration of the saints found the Continental reformers clearing offensive icons and effigies, some tearing down and redesigning the church entirely that held them (and that emphasized the Popish doctrines that the reformers despised), while others opted to continue to use as stripped down version of the existing architecture. The Church of England chose the latter. Many Episcopal and Anglican Churches today continue to resemble Roman Catholic churches, except where the Roman Catholic churches have statues of saints, the Episcopal and Anglican churches are simply bare. Likewise, early English reformers preserved the chancel and the screen, reserving it for Holy Communion for both the priest and the laity. The nave that had developed to separate the laity began to be used for Daily Prayer. Slowly, as new churches developed they shrunk in size from the previous Roman architecture, losing the chancel and centralizing the activity into a single room more observable to all. The centuries that followed found competition between the different participants of the Church of England.

Through the influence of the Oxford Movement and a surge in liturgical renewal, the 19th century saw a revival in Gothic architecture. Churches were built or refashioned to a mediaeval ideal, reintroducing the chancel, yet in such a way that the congregation could continue to participate. This movement has continued to influence Church architecture until fairly recently. Lower Church influences have returned an emphasis on community and function, with new churches being designed much more similar to the Basilicas of the early church. Like the churches from every century, new churches are gleaning wisdom from contemporary architecture in their functional aspects.

As it sits, the theology of the sacred space is not about the space itself, but about a gathering place for the body of Christ to Worship God. The doctrine of the Church as described in Article XIX of the 39 Articles states that it is the people when gathered, who share in the sacrament and preach God's Word that make the place important.

(Source: The Study of Liturgy, Cheslyn Jones ed.)

### **3d. Worship: Sacred Space – Elements**

The various architectural elements are largely influenced by the style in which they are built. Since the reformation, functionalism has been emphasized, depleting the former theologies which emphasized the elements of the communion themselves, and which separated the laity from the mass. Churches from the nineteenth and up to the mid twentieth century have a heavy influence stemming from the Gothic revival that was tied in a large part to the great influence of the Anglo-Catholic Oxford Movement. More recent church architecture has been influenced by contemporary structures such as theatres and public buildings. Many reformed traditions, including influencers in the Roman Catholic Church following the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) emphasis architecture that encourages participation in the elements of the service.

The theologies surrounding the doctrine of Church worship then have a large influence on what the architecture will look like. For instance, Continental reformers, reacting to a Roman Catholic Church that highlighted individual, clerical masses, separating clergy from laity, and a high reverence for the bread and the wine, responded in two ways: by either increasing participation in communion, or de-emphasizing communion altogether, as well as placing a new emphasis on the component of hearing God's Word in worship. Churches with an emphasis on hearing God's Word (scripture reading, preaching) adopted architecture to accommodate the function. Theater style seating takes precedent over altars, holy tables and rows for coming to the front. The Anglican Church, with its Via Media, is very susceptible to an array of architectural influences, and participants worship in a hodge-podge of environments depending on the liturgical influence when the Church was built and how it is used in contemporary times. It is not uncommon, for instance, for a low-Church congregation to worship in a church built under heavy gothic influences, or for high-Church Anglicans to worship in a theatre style Church. As such, although an interesting study, the liturgical meaning behind the architecture is far more complicated, and perhaps less important than its current functional attributes.

#### **Altar –**

The altar is central to Eucharistic worship, and is the focal point of the church. The mention of the use of an altar is alluded to several times in the NT, with Heb. 13:10 being the first to name it. Very early on the Church adopted the altar, which is carried over from the Judaic custom surrounding ritual sacrifice, using it in the Eucharist in conjunction with the Christ's sacrifice on the cross. The early Church fathers including Ignatius, Tertullian, and Cyprian refer to an altar as it pertains to the celebration of the Eucharist. Liturgies and theologies surrounding the altar and the sacrifice emerged, with their pinnacle in the mediaeval period when the sacraments, and the Eucharist were observed with what the early English reformers referred to as a great deal of superstition. The earliest altars were merely the tables in the churches where the community gathered. However, as Eucharistic celebrations began to occur at the tombs of martyrs, they shifted to stone. Immovable, solid stone altars began to be built over the bones of martyrs. With the expansion of Christianity, and the increase private, clerical masses, relics became

popularized (and profitable), in the consecration of altars. Roman Catholic theology heavily emphasized sacrifice in the theology of the consecration of the elements in the mass, and the altars reflected it. However, both continental and English reformers rejected the sacrificial theology, and emphasized the altar as the table for the Lord's Supper, replacing the large stone fixtures with wooden, moveable raised ones. With the 1552 revision of the Prayer Book, the use of the term "Holy Table" is prevalent to emphasize a reformed theology of Eucharist. This has created many tensions within Anglican identity, with many Anglo-Catholic groups preferring a greater emphasis on the Catholic sacrificial component of the altar and the Eucharist, while many Evangelical and lower Church Anglicans would prefer and reference to the clerical rite of sacrifice to be removed at all, with a greater emphasis on a Holy Table. It has many issues in the ecumenism movement as well, as the Roman Catholic Church's doctrine surrounding the sacrifice behind communion differs from the Anglican one. In 1896, in response to Pope Leo XIII dogmatic bull *Apostolicae Curae* which addresses the perceived component of altar sacrifice in the consecration of the elements, Anglican archbishops responded: "First, we offer the Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; next, we plead and represent before the Father the Sacrifice of the Cross . . . and, lastly, we offer the Sacrifice of ourselves to the Creator of all things, which we have already signified by the oblation of His creatures. This whole action, in which the people has necessarily to take part with the priest, we are accustomed to call the communion, the Eucharistic Sacrifice" (New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10006a.htm>).

Most protestant Anglican theology eschews practices of genuflection in front of the altar, holding to the reformers' emphasis of a table for the Lord's supper, however, higher Anglican Churches, especially those influenced by the Oxford Movement in the 19th century, will often genuflect or give a solemn bow to the altar, once upon arriving, and once upon leaving the church, while giving a simple bow after receiving the sacrament. Similarly, some celebrants will kiss the altar as a sign of respect. These actions are not consistent with Anglican Eucharistic theology, but are carried forward from pre-Reformation sacramental theology<sup>18</sup> and so, while discouraged, are ultimately the choice of the individual for purposes of personal devotion.

### **Altar Linens –**

The use of linens during communion is recorded as far back as the fourth century, but possibly used earlier. It became law in the Roman Catholic Church in the mediaeval period, reflecting its sacramental theology of transubstantiation, preventing any of the elements from touching the altar. As such layers of rubrics were introduced about proper methods of consecrating altar cloths, and proper numbers to be used to coincide with this theology. Article XXVIII of the 39 Articles<sup>19</sup> rejects the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation as extra-biblical, and, in doing so, removed the necessary theological rubrics surround the altar and cloths. The Prayer Book gives the single instruction for the communion that "The Holy Table is spread with a clean white cloth during the

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<sup>18</sup> See Article XXVIII, BCP pg 873 for an Anglican warning against this theology.

<sup>19</sup> BCP pg 873.



celebration.”<sup>20</sup> No special fabrics or additional regulations are necessary. This process takes place before the service, or during the offertory, and sometimes involves stripping the altar of its decorative, liturgical colors.

### **Banners/Flags/Pennants –**

Banners are a way of decorating the sanctuary, identifying a number of things such as liturgical seasons, denomination, and particular saints. Banners originated in secular heraldic procession, but found their way into the liturgical processional in the mediaeval period. Recent trends have used banners as stationary decorations.

### **Bishop’s Throne –**

The bishop’s throne has been present since the legalization of Christianity in the Roman Empire. With the legalization, the Bishops were raised in influence and authority, taking on larger roles in the community that were once reserved for secular authorities. In an Episcopal-structured church, the authority of the bishop means that all within the diocese are under his or her tutelage, guidance and authority. The Bishop’s throne has had a heavy influence on Church architecture.

### **Narthex / Interior and Exterior Vestibule –**

In the early Church, the narthex was a room at the west end of the building, divided from the nave by a wall or a screen. Because early Churches did not allow non-members to participate in certain aspects of worship, the narthex operated as a room for catechumens, energumens, and penitents to listen, but not partake. As this tradition gradually faded out, the narthex became more of a Western porch that acted as an entrance and a gathering point. As such, under current practice, narthex is actually a misnomer for a vestibule. The interior and exterior vestibules are lobbies that separate the inside from the outside. These lobbies act as much as noise reduction as they do greeting places.

### **Nave –**

The nave is the central part of the church, generally between the narthex and the chancel, where the congregation sits. It has been suggested that the name originated from the Latin word *navis* (ship) because Gothic architecture’s vaulted ceilings resemble the keel of a ship. It could also be because the early Church was often referred to as a ship.

### **Sanctuary –**

The sanctuary is the part of the church that contains the altar. With the increased practice of building churches on a holy spot, or consecrating the altar with holy relics, the

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<sup>20</sup> BCP pg 406.

sanctuary was the sacred area within which the priest performed his priestly duties, and was often cut off from the rest of the congregation. However, the reformers rejected the holiness of these places as superstitious. Many Protestants later rejected altar rails, as they created too high of segregation between the sanctuary and the nave.

Sanctuary is also a term for the Church's right of protection. The Right of Sanctuary is an understanding that holy places, like the Church, are subject to a higher law than the law of the world, and therefore are called to stand against the world's power for the benefit of those who need it. It can be traced back to the Old Testament, where Israel had asylum cities devoted to protecting people from punishment so that God's justice could be enacted properly. While there was some legal grounding for churches invoking the right of sanctuary in the medieval period, these were eroded in the Reformation, and finally stamped out in the seventeenth century. Modern sanctuary climates, which have seen the protection of immigrants and refugees, are based on principles of moral conviction and persuasion than judicial privilege.

### **Stain Glass Windows –**

Windows in a Church are determined by architectural influence and have little theological or liturgical significance. What is consistent is that from the very beginning, because of their purpose functioning as gathering places for communities, windows in Church architecture were important to allow light in, meeting the tone of the worship gathering. The earliest basilicas had large, raised windows surrounding the nave. Like much of Church architecture, the evolution of the window was heavily influenced by the medieval period's Gothic style.

Many reformers included windows in their destruction of what they considered idolatrous images in Churches, replacing them with plain glass. Many Protestant Churches eschew the ornate windows, opting to continue to simply use plain glass. Stained glass windows came back into fashion in the Church of England in the 19th century, as the Oxford movement gained influence, through the time of Gothic revival. Stained glass windows are purely aesthetic, and, like many other elements of Church structure, intended on to draw out the liturgy by offering a reflective ambience.

(Sources: An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church, Don S. Armentrout; Gothic Architecture; Wikipedia; The Study of Liturgy, Cheslyn Jones ed.; Nave, Wikipedia; New Advent Catholic Dictionary; The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church 3rd ed; Prayer Book Rubrics Expanded, Byron D. Stuhlman; Commentary on the American Prayer Book, Marion J. Hatchett)

## 4. Eucharist – Two Liturgies

The shaping of Sunday liturgy has been recorded as far back as the second century. In its simplest form, a community has always gathered to listen to God's Word, and to partake in the Lord's Supper. Much of the New Testament is written with this very intention, to be read aloud and shared within particular communities as letters of encouragement, doctrine, direction, and discipline. What would have begun as a local house church meeting and reading Jewish scriptures, came to increasingly include letters from the Apostles and Church leaders that were distributed between regional Churches – the Gospels and epistles were each written with particular audiences in mind and with the understanding that they would be distributed. St. Paul's letters in particular benefited from ubiquity and authority, becoming a widely used early staple. While the canonization of the Christian scripture occurred centuries later, despite the proliferation of Gnostic and other heretical documents, the documents contained within New Testament as it currently exists were all well known by the second century Church, each used and read aloud in varying complications amongst the community.

Similarly, the gathering of the community to participate in the Lord's Supper has been central to worship since Jesus inaugurated it. Paul approaches its abuse in his first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 10:14-22; 11:17-34), which was likely written within 20 to 25 years of Jesus' own ministry -- most likely before any of the Gospels. Within it, Paul writes that the practice was handed down from the Lord (11:23-25) indicating a tradition in which Paul himself was discipled rather than one that he initiated. While there is no evidence of the exact shape before the fourth century, it is logistically likely that the community church would meet for both the Word and the sacrament at the same time weekly. Paul's letter to the Corinthians indicates the importance of the community participating in the sacrament together. His letter admonished the cliques that were forming in the Corinthian Church, with groups (likely those who could afford to) meeting before everyone arrived and partaking of the sacrament, getting drunk, without everyone being present (1 Cor. 11:21-22). His mention about discerning the meal is not about recognizing the presence of Jesus in the bread and wine, but about His presence in the community action of worship, which is ignored in the cliques' actions.

Recent study has tried to fill the gaps of what is not said in Scripture with what would have been culturally assumed, brought in from Jewish traditions such as *birkat hamazon*, a blessing that follows meals. Justin Martyr gives us our first record of a thorough liturgy sometime in the mid second century, and it contains a Eucharist that offers thanksgiving and supplication through the Word and the sacrament. The Eucharist, containing both word and meal, came to be a common form of Worship on Sundays, Easter and other Holy days, following the pattern of hearing the word, partaking in the communal meal, and responding with thanksgiving and supplication. Under the influences of Thomas Cranmer and other English reformers, Anglicanism adopted a model that bridged the gap between the heavier sacramental emphasis of the Roman Church, and many of the Continental Protestant churches' tendency to emphasize the Word more by a stricter adherence to teaching, preaching and bible reading. Recently, under the second Vatican Council (1962-1965) the Roman Catholic Church has also readopted a Eucharist with an emphasis on both the Word and the sacrament. As well,

many Protestant churches, seeing a danger in the attraction of preaching personalities and worship as merely oration are beginning to find meaning by reintroducing the sacramental meal as a means of balance.

(Sources: Opening the Prayer Book, Jeffrey Lee; Commentary on the American Prayer Book, Marion J. Hatchett; The Study of Liturgy, ed. Cheslyn Jones et al.)

## **5. Ministry of the Word**

The Holy Eucharist, which is the major form of worship performed most often, contains two major elements: the Ministry of the Word and Holy Communion. The Ministry of the Word, also referred to as “The Proclamation of the Word of God”, “The Word of God”, and “The Liturgy of the Word” has three major sections: the Entrance Rite, the Word of God and The Prayers, Confession, and Peace.

### **The Entrance Rite –**

The entrance rite was a practical introduction following Emperor Constantine’s legalization of Christianity within the Roman Empire. The new freedom initiated a surge of attendance in local churches and cathedrals. Where the congregations previously begun more informally, simply reading scripture or a greeting from the celebrant, it began acquiring formalities to prepare the congregants to settle themselves to hear the Word. The procession gradually grew as a liturgical means of performing this, the celebrants and the gospel brought forth in the midst of the people to focus their attention. While there is a tendency to increasingly introduce pomp and meaning into this rite itself, liturgical reform continually attempts to cut out the layers of distraction, emphasizing the simplicity of the action: everything that occurs in the entrance rite is meant to prepare the community to hear God’s Word.

The entrance rite consists mainly of an acclamation before entry with an Introit (Kyrie, Gloria, Trisagion, or other canticle or psalm, or hymn) during the procession and a greeting or a collect to conclude. The special rites for occasions include: Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, the Easter vigil, the Pentecost vigil, baptism, confirmation, marriage, burial of the dead, ordinations, the celebration of a new ministry, and the consecration of the Church. Other than these occasions, there are four rites to choose from to suit the various setting: the standard rite, the order of worship for the evening at the entrance, the great litany at the entrance, and the penitential order at the entrance.

The entrance rite is significant only in that it sets the tone for the rest of the service. The entrance rites follow the tone of the liturgical season, and, as such, rites such as the penitential order or the great litany are used in seasons when the focus of the Eucharist is on repentance. The entrance rite should not awkwardly take away from what follows it.

### **The Word of God –**

Listening and responding to the Word of God is at the heart of the Ministry of the Word. What began in the early Church as a community reading from Jewish scripture, quickly came to accommodate the letters from the apostolic fathers that were in circulation, written with the very intention of being read aloud alongside scriptures. Long readings continued to be cut as the Church made room for increasingly complex entrance rites. Readings were also organized to correspond with the liturgical calendar and took

form in a lectionary. The current lectionary used covers a great deal of the Old Testament and all of the New Testament every three years.

As much of scripture was written with the intention of being read aloud in community, the emphasis is on listening to the Word rather than following along in a pew Bible. The first reading is generally from the Old Testament, except in Lent when it is a reading from the Acts of the Apostles. The second reading is from the New Testament. The entire lectionary centers on the Gospel, which is read last. The Gospel of John is read in Lent and Easter, and the Synoptic Gospels read the rest of the year.

After each reading the congregation is given a chance to respond as community and individually. The silence that follows the reading is intended for an opportunity to reflect and listen. As well, the community is to respond together to each of the readings through some form of psalm, hymn or anthem. The Prayer Book allows for many variations within this time. The use of the gradual between the Old Testament reading and the Epistle can be documented as far back as the mid-fourth century and came to be a regularly used psalmody. The current Prayer Book gives a great deal of freedom in how the Psalm is offered.

The sermon is intended as an exposition on the readings as they relate to the particularity of the local congregation. After the sermon is given, the community reads the Nicene Creed, the opportunity for it to declare a response of faith to the scriptures, and the Word given to them, affirming their beliefs in light of what was just heard.

## **The Prayers, Confession, and Peace –**

The Prayer Book allows for local congregations to form their own prayers specific to their own needs. While there are special prayers for special days, the form generally follows prayers for: the Universal Church, its members and its mission; the nation and all in authority; the welfare of the world; the concerns of the local community; those who suffer and those in any trouble; and for the departed.

Before participating in Holy Communion, the community is called to confess its sin, and to make peace with each other (see for instance Matt. 5:23-24). The Prayer Book encourages people who need help in examining their conscience to go “to a discreet and understanding priest, and confess your sins, that you may receive the benefit of absolution, and spiritual counsel and advice”<sup>21</sup> While the current revision refrains from making the exhortation mandatory, the expectation is the same: that the individuals participating in it are to prepare themselves for the sacrament, approaching it with integrity. The sacrament is to be participated in with free conscience, and reflected upon as grace offered, received by faith. To receive by faith requires a type of spiritual honesty. Likewise, the community is to confess together and make peace with each other. The Priest has authority to deny any member communion who he or she thinks is not in a state to receive it.<sup>22</sup> The confession is a communal acknowledgment of sin and failure. Article XI of the 39 Articles<sup>23</sup> acknowledges grace as the sole means of our reconciliation with God, and by no merit or action of our own. The communal confession recognizes

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<sup>21</sup> BCP pg 317.

<sup>22</sup> BCP pg 409.

<sup>23</sup> BCP pg 870.

this, and celebrates this. As such, depending on the rite, it can be said either kneeling or standing whether it is approached penitential, or in celebration of grace offered.

The peace originally took the form of a kiss but adapts with culture and has grown to include any combination of greeting and embrace offered in love. It is both an acknowledgement and communal celebration of Jesus' action and our own reconciliation to God as well as a chance for members of the community to reconcile with each other before approaching the sacrament.

(Sources: Prayer Book Rubrics Expanded, Byron D. Stuhlman; Opening the Prayer Book, Jeffrey Lee; Commentary on the American Prayer Book, Marion J. Hatchett.)

## **5b. Ministry of the Word: Elements**

### **Exhortation (BCP 316)–**

Under recent revisions, the Prayer Book does not insist that the Exhortation be read at all during the Eucharist, but rather that there is implicit any time it is celebrated. Originally, the exhortation was to be read the Sunday before the Holy Communion and was a challenge to all unrepentant sinners or anyone not in charity with the world. Later revisions heightened the exhortation, insisting that participants prepare themselves before approaching the table. Later revisions also included the insistence that Christians regularly partake of the sacrament. The exhortation continues to be implied in the current Prayer Book, and a theology of preparation and worthy and prepared reciprocity continues to be central to Anglican theology.

### **Decalogue (BCP 317) –**

The Decalogue is a rendition of Exodus 20:1-17 (Ten Commandments). English reformers insisted on a complete immersion in each of the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. The Decalogue replaced the Kyrie in the liturgy in 1552, and came to be required within the liturgy under Queen Elizabeth. The Decalogue is an option in the liturgy during penitential seasons as current Prayer Book revisions have removed it as a requirement.

### **Processional Hymn –**

In the fifth century, Pope Celestine introduced a psalm in the procession. An extended version of the psalm with the *Glori Patri* became common. A use of a hymn or a metrical psalm was sanctioned under Elizabeth and came to be a regular part of the liturgy, with an entirely separate hymnbook to organize.

### **Opening Acclamation –**

This has come to be recognized as the beginning of the service.

### **The Kyrie –**

The Kyrie eleison was an acclamation for an emperor that was adapted for Christian liturgy traceable to the fourth century. Pope Gelasius I inaugurated it at the end of the fifth century. In its most contemporary language it reads, "Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy," (BCP 356) Kyrie eleison is merely the original Greek translation of the text. In a service the Kyrie, the Trisagion or the Gloria in excelsis (or another song of praise) is used as an acclamation of honor. It is said three, six or nine times to reflect the number of the Trinity.



## **The Trisagion –**

The Trisagion is an Eastern hymn meaning thrice holy. In contemporary language, it reads, “Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.” The Western Church adapted it by its use in Good Friday services. It became popular in Germany during the reformation. It is an alternative to the Kyrie or the song of praise and is said once or three times as a reflection of the Trinity.

## **Gloria in excelsis / Song of Praise –**

The Gloria in excelsis (Glory in the Highest) was a popular hymn of praise used in Daily Prayer since the fourth century. Between the eleventh and the twelfth centuries, it came to be customary in use on Sundays except in Advent, pre-Lent and Lent. The early Anglican Prayer Book revisers placed in the Eucharist between the post-communion prayer and the blessing and required it to be read. The American Prayer Book allowed it to be substituted for a hymn. Currently, it is placed in the entrance rite and is not to be used during Advent or Lent. If an alternative hymn is used, it is typically another hymn from the Daily Office more appropriate to the particularity of the day celebrated. While any response to worship is purely personal devotion, and therefore, barring disruptive behavior, acceptable, there is no liturgical reason or precedent for making the sign of the cross at the end of the Gloria in excelsis.

## **The Collect –**

The collect possibly originated from a term used to collect all of the prayers for the people who were called to pray, or it may refer to the nature of the prayer which is said to collect the people and begin mass. Around the fifth century, a prayer was inserted into the entrance rite to petition God that His people might listen and hear the Word being proclaimed. It has come to be a structured prayer possessing a rhythm and symmetry and whose content is reflective of any major day celebrated, or is a more general reflection of needs. The current Prayer Book follows Thomas Cranmer’s desire to limit the number of collects to one per service. Only at burial or ordination is a second collect said. The collect is the conclusion to the entrance rite.

## **Procession –**

The procession developed from a very practical need of initiating the service. With the legalization of Christianity in the Roman Empire by Emperor Constantine’s Edict of Milan (313 A.D.), churches became increasingly popular (particularly with the Emperor as a self-proclaimed Christian). Rites that could begin merely with a quick statement and readings, adopted formal entrances to allow the people to collect themselves and prepare for the service. The clergy began to formally process in the midst of the people with the Gospel to indicate the beginning of the service, drawing their attention to the liturgy of the Word. Candles and incense were ways of introducing stately formality, as they were used in secular functions to indicate the importance of the function. In the late nineteenth century, with no historical or theological precedent, the

choir in some churches began processing with the clergy. This practice quickly spread to many churches.

It is common to show a sign of reverence to the name of Jesus and to God's presence throughout the service. One such time occurs during the procession as the gospel is being carried amongst the people. Custom encourages a simple bow from the head and shoulders, although all such acts are purely personal devotion and should not be dictated, confined, or expected. As is the case for all personal devotion, all is permissible provided that it does not distract or take away from the communal component.

### **Lectionary (BCP 888) –**

The lectionary used on Sundays and Holy Days are different than the one used in the Daily Office. The lectionary developed from the tradition of reading scriptures in synagogues. What began as early Christians reading from the Old Testament (the only scripture they would have had) began to include the apostolic letters that were distributed throughout the churches. As the Christian canon developed, and the liturgical calendar took form with fixed Holy Days, particular readings became tied to those Holy Days, while the rest of the scripture was read in between. At its roots, the liturgical practice of the combining the calendar and lectionary is used to bring the lessons to life much more vividly. As churches read and participated in the story contained within the Gospel annually, it helped dramatically move God's actions from being abstract to very real and experientially developed. However, because of the increased liturgies, what began as long readings on Sundays, were shortened for the sake of time. The Roman Church eventually settled on two readings, one that was either from the epistles, or the Old Testament, and the other from the Gospels. The early Anglican reformers adopted the Roman Lectionary as it was used in the Sarum Missal (the Roman rite used at the time) although there was much criticism about it. With the introduction of the prayer book, Thomas Cranmer altered the lectionary, increasing the length of the readings dramatically through the use of the Daily Office lectionary. Until 1892, Morning Prayer was required before the Sunday Eucharist. The current lectionary has dramatically increased Sunday readings to compensate for the decreased use of Morning Prayer, covering much of the Old Testament and almost all of the New Testament every three years. It centers around the gospel reading, with the Gospel of John being read through Lent and Easter, and the synoptic Gospels being read through on given the particular year cycle: it mostly follows that Matthew is covered in Year A, Mark in Year B, and Luke in year C. Every year begins at the beginning of Advent.

### **Sermon/Homily –**

Preaching and teaching about the scriptures read was common in the early Church, and an exhortation to teach is even in the New Testament letters themselves. The importance of preaching decreased in the Middle Ages in lieu of sacramental theology and liturgy. However, most of the early reformers, including the Anglican reformers, demanded that it be returned to a regular occurrence. The Prayer Book continues to require a sermon or the reading of a homily on all Sundays and Holy Days.

The priest typically gives the sermon, although it could be offered by anyone. Its purpose is to explicate the readings (primarily the Gospel) for the purposes of the community to whom he or she is delivering it. It is not central in the liturgy of the Word, but points to the readings, with special emphasis on the Gospel reading, which is the central component.

### **Nicene Creed –**

The congregation responds to the reading and hearing of the word with their affirmation of beliefs by quoting the Nicene Creed. The Nicene Creed emerged as a statement of faith in a general council meeting of Nicaea (325). The council was initiated by Emperor Constantine, and was intended to address a number of concerns of the Church within the Roman Empire. Of particular note was the controversy that was emerging in the Eastern part of the empire surrounding the teachings of Arius on the subordination of Jesus to God the Father. Bishops from across the Church came together and adapted a baptismal saying that was already in use, to include all of the major components of belief. It was later altered at the Council meeting in Constantinople (381 A.D.). There continues to be some division between Western and Eastern rites as the West gradually included the filioque clause (“and the son” in the line beginning with “We believe in the Holy Spirit”) as it is not included in the original council’s version, but was picked up via common usage in Western rites.

In their vehement adoption of *Sola Scriptura* (by scripture alone) many Continental reformers rejected the Creed because it contained extra-biblical material, preferring instead to use the Apostles’ Creed. The Apostle’s Creed has no council authority, but was in common use, particularly in Western Rites, seeming in response to Gnosticism. Because of the significance of the councils, and its usage in Eucharistic rites, early Anglican reformers continued to allow for the use of the Nicene Creed in the early Prayer Books. Article VIII of the 39 Articles<sup>24</sup> gives both Creeds (the Nicene Creed and Apostles’ Creed) significant stature in the liturgy. Later liturgical revisions gave the Nicene Creed an increasing presence. In the most recent revision, it is to be said on Sundays and major Feast Days.

### **Prayers of the People –**

The Prayers of the People, or the Prayers of Intercession, are more than just a reminder of the Church’s and individual Christian’s responsibility to the world. Rather, the prayers recognize God’s participation in the world, and His love and involvement in the Church as God responds to the prayers of his people willingly listening and participating through the Church. Records of the Prayers in the liturgy following the readings and the sermon date back as early as the second century. The elements involved in the prayer are also very traditional, stretching far beyond the needs of the congregation, but incorporating the entire world. With the exception of special days, Rite II in the Prayer Book allows for the congregation to develop their own prayers provided they follow the historical guidelines of including prayers for: The Universal church, its

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<sup>24</sup> BCP pg 869.

members, and its mission; The Nation and all in authority; The welfare of the world; The concerns of the local community; Those who suffer and those in any trouble; And the departed.

### **Confession/Absolution –**

The confession holds the tension of being both individual and corporate acting as the individual's penitent recognition and confession of his or her own sin, and the general confession of the community. The earliest Church liturgies did not include a confession or an absolution, as this was the role of the Eucharistic prayer – By giving thanks to God, congregants are recognizing that it is only by His grace that they are received, and therefore they have sinned. Likewise, the communion was generally perceived to be a sign of God's forgiveness. The introduction of a confession came out of the reformation period, and reflected a penitent approach to worship. Confession was created as a means of one preparing for communion. Confession of sin continues to be recognized as worship, for by recognizing our failures we are recognizing Gods' grace and victory. The general confession allows the community to recognize that they as a body never reach perfection but by Christ. The general confession is not a confession of personal sin alone, but recognizing the failures of the local and greater Church.

The Absolution emerged in the same period, and is a liturgical recognition of God's action. The priest does not dispense forgiveness, but reminds the community of its existence and availability.

## 6. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is called by many names: the Lord's Table, the Blessed Sacrament, Divine Liturgy, the Mass, the Great Offering, and Holy Communion are a few of them. The term Eucharist used in the Book of Common Prayer is a Greek word for "thanksgiving" and covers the entire act of preparing for and participating in the communion, which is the second liturgical movement in the Eucharistic celebration. Because there is direct biblical evidence of Jesus participating in the Lord's Supper, and inaugurating it for his disciples (Luke 22:14-23; Matt. 26:26-29; and Mark 14:22-25) Holy Communion is one of the two institutions that both the Reformers and the Roman Catholic Church agreed in importance and designation as a sacrament.

There is no single position on Anglican Eucharistic theology as the nature of Anglicanism has held in tension a great diversity of positions and viewpoints. Thomas Cranmer and Richard Hooker both emphasized the action of taking communion over the state of its elements. That is to say that the theological discussion surrounding the actual presence of Christ in the elements (wine and bread) was diminished as merely speculative, unable to be proven by our primary source.<sup>25</sup> More important was the disposition and the faith of the person who presented themselves to receive the elements. Later disputes arose with the rise of John Wesley who emphasized the Evangelical roots of Anglicanism and its theology of communion vis-à-vis the Oxford Movement (1833-45), which emphasized the Roman Catholic history and traditions. The complexity of the topic, and the diversity of opinion have led many to believe that the mystery of the sacrament is greater than one that can be defined or controlled. And the mystery is this: the taking of the bread and wine<sup>26</sup> is an outward sign of an inward grace. All of Anglicanism holds the sacrament to be significant<sup>27</sup> not in the power of the bread and wine, nor in the ability of the priest to conjure said power, but in the significance of the symbol: God offers His grace to those willing to receive it. The sacrament then is not received by eating the bread, or drinking the wine, but by presenting oneself before God in faith.

This has some communal and individual implications: the sacrament originated out of a culture that viewed table fellowship with utmost esteem. Jesus' willingness to commune with sinners and outcasts created outrage amongst some of the established culture because in doing so Jesus' eschews the moral hierarchy and is willing to be associated with those who have not bought into the structure of the religious establishment. He creates his own fellowship of any who are willing to come together in his name, establishing the sacrament of the table fellowship of his followers. The implication is that, at the table, each presents himself or herself individually before God, receptive to His grace, but each also is sharing in a communal action. By eating of the bread and wine, each Christian is recognizing the equality of every other member of the community in which he or she exists. By taking the sacrament together, each Christian is

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<sup>25</sup> see Article 28, BCP pg 873.

<sup>26</sup> see Article 30, BCP pg. 874

<sup>27</sup> see the warnings against taking it in the wrong state: Article 29, BCP pg 873; 1 Corinthians 11:17-33.

recognizing that all have sinned, and fallen short of the glory of God, but it was for these sinners that Jesus came, sacrificed himself and offered Grace. Therefore, it is very much a community participating in “thanksgiving” as the name implies.

(See Articles 25-26; 28-30, BCP 1979 pgs. 872-4; Sources: *Worship Without Words*, Patricia S. Klein, *The Study of Anglicanism*, Stephen Sykes, et al.)

## **5b. The Lord's Supper: Liturgy**

The Holy Communion presents the second half of the Eucharistic celebration and exists within a liturgy surrounding the sacrament of bread and wine. This liturgy of the ministration of the sacrament extends well back to the earliest Church whose liturgy rapidly moved from practical to symbolic. First century records refer to ceremonies that involved the liturgy of the Word, and the liturgy of the sacrament. Our current liturgy follows the same pattern. The liturgy focuses on the community's participation in the Holy Communion, with the entire service containing elements that emphasizes this event. The whole liturgy is a celebration of God's offered Grace through Jesus Christ, and an invitation for the community to participate in that offering.

### **Offertory –**

The offering is a fundamental component of the Holy Communion, and the Prayer Book designates that the offering is to be brought forth by a representative of the congregation. The money (or any other offerings) as well as the unprepared bread and wine are brought forward. The “offering” of bread and wine follows the practice of the early church that would designate an individual or group to provide enough of the elements of which the community was to partake. The elements would then be “offered” to the community. While most Churches have altar guilds to provide for these, the elements are still “offered” by members of the community as a gift to the community. The collection plays a powerful role in the service. In the action, the community is offering to God, and each other what He first gave to them: the resources that they need to live. The members of the community recognize that their money and the fruits of their labor is not their own, but God has provided all of it for them, and so they offer it back to God, and back to the community (resonating with Jesus' summation of the greatest commandments). In this time, everyone recognizes his or her own skewed and sinful approach to the world and his or her own sinful desires, and participates in thanksgiving for God's perfect, selfless sacrificial offering.

### **The Great Thanksgiving –**

The Great Thanksgiving begins with the call to the community to “lift up your hearts,”<sup>28</sup> and ends with the communal Lord's Prayer. It is at the heart of the Eucharist as the point of the liturgy that the people celebrate God's action and offering. There are many different versions of the prayer to allow for diversity, and to give room for the liturgy to emphasize different points for different occasions. Throughout the prayer, the actions of the celebrant are merely a way of emphasizing the prayer being said, and in no way are meant to suggest that they have any particular power. In reaction to the rise of theology which suggests that the celebrant is responsible

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<sup>28</sup> BCP pgs 333 (Rite I, 1), 340 (Rite I, 2), 361 (Rite II, A) , 367 (Rite II, B), 370 (Rite II, C), and 372 (Rite II, D).

for consecrating the elements, Anglican liturgy recognizes that God is the one who initiates and consecrates, listening and responding to the request of his people,<sup>29</sup> and therefore, the Great Thanksgiving is a celebration of God's offering and the communities expectation of God's faithfulness as present in the sacrament (and well beyond).

### **Fraction –**

The breaking of the bread is both practical and commemorative. In order to share the bread, the bread needs to be broken, however every Anglican tradition has recognized the significance of the bread broken, as Jesus was broken, and calls for silence to reflect upon that.

### **Communion –**

The congregation steps forward to participate in the sacrament, invited to be a part of what God is doing. The sacrament is received in the context of individuals and community, partaking in the grace that God is offering. It is offered by God, and received by faith. The climax occurs with the dismissal, sending the community out to do the work of God in their greater society.

(sources: Opening the Prayer Book, Jeffrey Lee; A Dictionary for Episcopalians, John N. Wall; Prayer Book Rubrics, Expanded; Byron D. Stuhlman; A Prayer Book Manual, Charles W. F. Smith ed.; The Study of Liturgy, Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, eds.)

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<sup>29</sup> See for instance Article 26 on the Sacraments as offered by an unworthy Minister, BCP pg 873.)



## **5c. The Lord's Supper: Elements**

There are several elements in the liturgy of the Eucharist, which are intended to symbolize its significance. Many of the added components of the liturgy have more of a historical context than a theological one, and while not necessary, continue to be present as a way to visually and verbally articulate the story of what God is doing to His Church. The components, as the liturgy, are a type of drama intended to immerse the participants in the greatness of God's offered grace.

### **Receiving Communion –**

The Prayer Book only indicates that the congregants need step forward to receive communion, indicating an active choice of participation in the sacrament. The methodology of receiving communion varies from church to church and reflects local accessibility particularities and congregational preferences mixed with historical traditions that, themselves, originated out of their own particularities. For instance, up until the eighteenth century, it was common to have the sacrament brought out to the congregation and received where they were. Altar rails, in front of which it has become custom to kneel, were originally introduced in the seventeenth century to prevent dogs from fouling the altar. The introduction of the altar rails mixed with the mediaeval tradition of piously kneeling to receive the sacrament. The very ancient custom of the Church was to stand in order to recognize the victory of Christ that the sacrament represented. Modern liturgy does not demand standing, kneeling, or coming to the front to receive communion, but leaves the issue to local congregations and diocese to determine.

### **Who is Welcome?**

As the Eucharist is a continual renewal of a baptismal covenant, worship for a people who are dismissed to go out and do God's work, the Holy Communion is intended for any who are members of the Christian community. This is nearly universally recognized as baptism into the Body. The earliest Churches held the Holy Communion in secret, asking those who were not members to leave for that time. Debate over "open" and "closed" table, is a misnomer. Both recognize that God's invitation and grace is for all willing to receive it, and that that invitation is freely given. Grace is a gift available to all. The sacrament was inaugurated and offered to those who have welcomed the invitation, and as it is received by faith. It is a communal action as much as it is individual, and so most Anglican theology and practice limits the sacrament to those who are able to receive it as members of the community who have accepted grace in faith – typically the baptized.

## **Common Cup –**

Sharing bread and wine is a tradition that many cultures have had. Bread and wheat has been central to life and nourishment of societies, while wine and alcohol has played an important social role. Jewish social and sacred traditions during the time of Jesus placed an important emphasis on sharing food celebrating the actions of God, all the while recognizing and participating in His community. Christian tradition adopted this model, possibly from a combination of its Jewish roots and maintenance of Judaic sacred custom. The institution of the Last Supper also introduced it. As rites throughout the tradition have centered around the ministrations of the Word, and the sacrament, emphasis on the communal nature of worship has meant that the community has partaken of common bread and drank from the same cup. The chalice emerged over time and is strictly ornamental. In the Middle Ages, newly ordained priests were often given chalices as gifts for their new ministry. The number of chalices used is directly a result of functional necessity, but the symbolism is of a community recognizing and receiving God's grace together.

## **Bread –**

The bread is the first element offered in communion. The bread used by the early churches would have been baked by congregants and offered to the community to share. The bread that would have been used in the institution of the Lord's Supper affects the debate over whether leavened or unleavened bread should be used. The supper took place during the Festival of Unleavened Bread, which indicates that the bread would have likely been unleavened. Alternatively, communion is a celebration of Christ's victory on the cross, and the use of unleavened bread does not signify God's dramatic and celebratory action through Christ.

The wafer (host in Roman Catholic Church) appeared during the Middle Ages when the theology of transubstantiation raised many superstitions about the relationship between the bread and Jesus' body. The wafer was introduced to prevent any waste or sacrilegious treatment of Jesus' body. Article 28 of the 39 Articles<sup>30</sup> dispels these as myths that are not contained within Holy Scripture. The Prayer Book allows for the use of either leavened or unleavened bread, as well as either wafer or baked bread, depending on the local congregation's and diocese determination.

## **Wine –**

This is the second element of the sacrament. Differing from Roman Catholic practice of the day, Article 30<sup>31</sup> states that both the bread and the wine were (and are) to be offered to the congregation as both were inaugurated by Jesus to be a part of the sacrament. In certain cases, where the local congregation understands the need, grape juice is substituted for the wine. However, as grapes naturally ferment and pasteurizing grape juice is a fairly recent process, the "fruit of the vine" used in the Anglican Church is wine. Alcohol is also known to have many positive social attributes, and has been used

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<sup>30</sup> BCP pg 873.

<sup>31</sup> BCP pg 874.

by many cultures in fellowship. Another benefit of wine is that the alcohol, combined with the silver in the chalice, naturally reduces the possibility of health concerns related to sharing in the common cup.

### **Intinction –**

This is an alternative method of receiving communion. Instead of drinking from the common cup, the elements are combined by way of dipping the bread into the cup. As it takes away from the image of the community sharing the meal, most churches reserve this method as a health precaution for those who are ill. Some diocese and churches do not allow intinction at all in order to prevent the misunderstanding of the sacrament as being individually received. In any case, the method is merely practical, and attempts are made to diminish any liturgical disruption.

### **Altar preparation –**

See Altar for more information on some of the things that take place around the Altar.

### **Consecration and Reserved Sacrament –**

See Consecration for more information on the action of setting things apart for sacred use.

The Eucharistic rite is intended to consecrate the elements for the sacrament of Holy Communion. The whole liturgy and Eucharistic Prayer is a celebration that performs this. However, on certain days of the year or during special situations there is no Eucharist performed. In these cases, if a Holy Communion is to be held, the elements are taken from the reserved sacrament, or elements that have been consecrated by a priest or bishop on a prior occasion and set aside for such purposes. Article 28<sup>32</sup> has created a degree of disagreement between various components of the Anglican Church. Most early Protestant Churches banned the act of reserving sacrament for personal devotion, and Article 28 states “The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was not by Christ’s ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.”<sup>33</sup> This corresponds with the early Anglican Church’s theology of partaking in the sacrament, and receiving it by faith, rather than the elements themselves containing some distinguishing characteristics. It was written in reaction to practices and theologies regarding the sacraments that many Protestants and Anglicans considered unduly superstitious. Traditions at the time placed increasing emphasis on the elements themselves, elevating them during the service, and having them on display for private devotion. Competition rose for prime seating to be able to observe the elements in the service, while altars and churches were dressed to emphasize their presence. The elements were often on display throughout the week for pietistic reasons of devotion. Seeing the elements quickly became more important than all of the other

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<sup>32</sup> BCP pg 873.

<sup>33</sup> BCP pg 873.

elements of the service, while participation and actually taking communion diminished. Reformers and early English theologians reacted to this extreme, insisting on deemphasizing the elements, and emphasizing the participatory element of the sacrament. Early revisions of the Prayer Book removed obligations such as the necessity that all leftover elements from the Eucharist were to be consumed. It was not until the resurgence of Roman liturgy through the Oxford movement that many of the Catholic liturgical symbolism, such as consuming the leftover sacrament, were reintroduced.

The occasions that allow for using reserved sacrament include: Good Friday, Communion for the Ill, and the absence of a Priest. In the case of communion for the ill, the current revision of the Prayer Book offers a shorter version of the Eucharist, and encourages that the ill participate in its celebration as much as possible, emphasizing the participatory nature of the sacrament.

The Anglican tradition emphasizes the sacrament as held in the common cup, allowing only one chalice on the altar through the rite. In order that there might be sufficient bread and wine for the Holy Communion, additional elements can be consecrated during the Eucharist.

**Storage:** Because of the sacrament's centrality in mediaeval worship, vessels for storing the consecrated elements emerged. While mostly functional, they became increasingly ornate and elaborate. Emerging out of the elevated position of piety, traditions of pious genuflection or making a sign to the vessels containing the consecrated elements emerged.

### **Ambry –**

The ambry is a safe in the wall near the altar. It is primarily used for storing the chalice and other vessels used for communion. With the revival of the use of reserved elements, given permission from the bishop, high churches will also use it to store consecrated elements. Mid and lower churches are likely to keep the reserved elements in the sacristy.

### **Pyx –**

The pyx is a container that hangs above the altar for keeping the consecrated elements in high churches.

### **Vestments –**

See Vestments for more information on the significance and history behind vestments worn throughout the service.

The vestments worn through communion are indicative of the individual's role and station. Vestments, like much of the tradition surrounding communion, have evolved from a historical significance or need, and are now mostly used to set the stage, and enhance the significance of the event for the participants.



Chasuble: a bishop or priest wears the chasuble when he or she is celebrating the Holy Communion. The priest typically wears it over an alb and stole, while the bishop wears it over a dalmatic. While there is a variation in style, the chasuble is poncho shaped, draping over the undergarbs. The style was common street wear for citizens in the Roman Empire, and as such was used by the celebrant in worship at the time. One possibility of its evolution is that the cleanest, newest and best chasuble was reserved for the priest celebrating the Holy Communion and over time, a distinguished garment separated itself for the liturgical function. The Church later limited its use to distinguish particular offices. The color of the chasuble reflects the liturgical season being celebrated, although it is not uncommon to have a white, all-purpose chasuble worn year round.

Dalmatic: the bishop and deacons wear the dalmatic. The bishop wears it under a chasuble while celebrating the Holy Communion, while it is the primary vestment for the deacon for the celebration. It is a short tunic with wide sleeves. It was originally a vestment of honor worn by the bishop and the bishop's deacons and is typically associated with festal occasions, not worn during penitential services. It is generally made of silk, but can be made from any material. Like the Chasuble, it reflects the color of the liturgical season celebrated.

(Sources: *Worship Without Words*, Patricia S. Klein; *Opening the Prayer Book*, Jeffrey Lee; *The Study of Anglicanism*, Stephen Sykes; *Commentary on the American Prayer Book*, Marion J. Hatchett; *Prayer Book Rubrics Expanded*, Byron D. Stuhlman; *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, [www.newadvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org); *The New Liturgical Movement*, [thenewliturgicalmovement.blogspot.com](http://thenewliturgicalmovement.blogspot.com); Wikipedia.)

## 6. Baptism: Theology

The theology behind baptism is a source of countless books, debate, and division. It has been one of the central tenets of Christianity, and it along with Holy Communion, are the two sacraments recognized by the entire Church from antiquity to the modern era. While Holy Communion continues to be less important to certain Protestant Churches, which emphasize the word of God and preaching, baptism is nearly universally recognized as foundational to Christian initiation.

The ubiquity of initiation ceremonies in nearly every community connotes the importance of the ritual of identification and communal membership. Communities that deemphasize the importance of initiation ceremonies, and blur the line of membership, quickly find themselves awash in a type of irrelevancy: the human heart longs to belong and be included, and, by very definition, that inclusion and membership must be symbolically differentiated from non-membership. Churches that are lax on membership requirements and responsibilities quickly identify the difficulty of the accompanying apathetic and lackadaisical participation commonplace with individualistic, consumptive worship. Church hopping, and irregular attendance flow from an understanding of worship that excludes the communal component, or the discipline of individual membership.

The origins of Christian baptism were carried over from the Jewish practice of baptizing the “God-fearers”: non-Jewish individuals who sought to convert to Judaism. The rite of initiation included a ritual ceremony that included being circumcised and cleansed in water while responding to the questions of the community. Early Christians, which had a very large Jewish component, rejected some of the nationalistic, gender specific practices, such as circumcision, but assimilated baptism adapting it to the developing Christocentric theology. Baptism was a means of initiation into Christian community and carried much imagery, from the parting of the red sea in the story of the Exodus to the cleansing that John the Baptist performed in the wilderness. However, Christian theology predominantly focused on baptism as the imagery for being cleansed by the very blood of Christ, and being included into the family as a welcome child of God, Jesus’ own. The early and very influential martyr tradition celebrated the death of the martyrs as a baptism by blood, shared with Christ in pursuing the gospel: death was the ultimate baptism.

The very early catechumenate period was anything but easy, requiring three years of teaching and discipling, making sure that the initiates were versed in the tradition. If Church leaders saw moral issues, or questioned the initiate’s development, the period was extended to address the concerns. Only fully baptized Christians were welcome into the full worship ceremony, particularly Holy Communion. As such, much of the rites of initiation were secretive, with initiates unaware of what they were to go through. The baptism itself was often so traumatic that many of the newly baptized had the very real feeling of having drowned and come back to new life. The strength of the bond in the initiation experience gave them a strong link with the other members of the community who had gone through the same experience. Initiates were dipped three times, all the while being asked to respond to questions contained within the baptismal creeds. It was

from these baptismal creeds that the Nicene Creed was ultimately developed and sanctioned by the Church.

With the popularity of Christianity that followed the conversion of Emperor Constantine, the tension between the State and the Church was dissolved. The surge in numbers created a shortage of clergy, growing demand for entrance, and a lack of zeal of the new converts. As such, rites were drastically cut, and requirements loosened. Through the same period, the Donatist controversy, which in large part surrounded sin and character, encouraged St. Augustine to develop a theology describing the nature of original sin, and baptism as a method of cleansing humankind of its inherent sinfulness. While adult baptism was still the norm, an increasing number of children were being baptized as well based on Augustinian theology, as well as perceived apostolic precedent in the baptism of entire families. In fact, adult baptisms weren't only the norm, but because of the superstition surrounding sin and baptism, later life baptisms were encouraged except in times of emergency. Some, including Augustine, contended that the passions of youth or the requirements of public office would lead one into sin and not allow one to be fully prepared for an entire life conversion and, as such, baptism should be put off until these passions were satiated. An enhanced Catechumenate was established a means of initiation into the body with increasingly complex baptismal rituals.

From the middle of the fifth century, baptism switched from being a mysterious, secretive, and complex rite of initiation for adults, to being primarily for infants. Lent and Easter continued to be the primary preparatory and entrance points, although other major feast days, were regularly used. Also through this period, the separation of the single rite of initiation occurred, casting confirmation as a later, strengthening sacrament. From the early Church until recently, official theology has not always directly translated into the actions of popular piety. The reformers (and indeed theologians today) complained loudly that there was a shortage of theological understanding amongst the clerics, and particularly amongst the laity, who would often supersede orthopraxy (proper practice) with those practices developed out of thoughtless tradition, and cultural norms. Theologies that influenced rites to include "exorcisms, anointing, scrutinies, the giving of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, signing with the cross, chrismation, vesting in new garment, [and] giving a new light" (Anglicanism 294) which the early Church had placed a heavy emphasis on, had paled by the time of the reformers. The shift from adult to infant initiation under Christendom had drastically altered the significance of the event, shifting the period from years of learning and discipleship, to an event that culminated in a week. The theology behind the process of initiation had separated into two separate sacraments of Baptism, including First Communion and Confirmation. This is the system that the Reformers inherited. Their focus on biblical basics drastically cut everything but the actual water baptism. A greater emphasis was placed on the role of the godparents and the role of faith in the candidate. However, because the practice of infant baptism could not be proved wrong through scripture (apologies to the contrary were present) the custom of baptizing infants continued, despite many of the reformers position that this detracted from the relevance of the sacrament.

Thomas Cranmer approached baptism conservatively only cutting what he believed to be superstitious and superfluous. Some of his edits allude to the fact that he was aware of the early Church practices, and though he was aware that the practice of the

Church could not be turned on the head of a dime, added thoughtful liturgies that would renew some of the early theology: this included removing private baptisms except in emergency cases, reserving them for Sundays and holy days such that the adults present would be reminded of their own baptismal covenants. Cranmer went against the Roman rite of confirmation, opting to include a rite for the young baptized who had come to an age when they were of the mind to come to sin, and were able to recite the Creeds, the Lord's Prayer, and answer the Catechistic questions. Thus the confirmation was to "give strength and defense against all temptations to sin and the assaults of the world, and the devil" (Anglicanism, 295)

The theology of the 1549 Prayer Book remained strongly in the Augustinian tradition pertaining to the forgiveness of sin, which all humankind is born into.<sup>34</sup> Private baptism remained the custom, despite Cranmer's attempt to reinvigorate the practice with theology, and the concession to allow them to continue was a back down of the reformers theological agenda for the sake of tradition practice and personal piety.

Cranmer would make additional edits in the 1552 Prayer Book, cutting further ornateness (and redundancies) from the ceremony. The rite that continued to include infant baptism, albeit altered from the mediaeval tradition, as well as a separate confirmation process that was significantly strengthened, would shape the practice of Anglican baptism until today.

Anglican baptism means more than remission of sins, but is about being baptized into a body of believers.<sup>35</sup> Baptism is about the community, and while reformers discussed the benefits of infant versus adult baptism (with many theological and scriptural variances), Cranmer's edits effectively reshaped the discussion. Ardently opposing private baptisms (although ultimately allowing them because of the prevalence of popular piety and his own Augustinian theology), the early reformers placed the rite back into the community celebration such that those already baptized would take the occasion to strengthen their own baptismal covenant, and as well to emphasize that baptism was not simply about water washing away sin, but that the infant was to be a member of the community. As such, he or she was to be welcomed, held accountable, and supported in the context of a community's relationships. Likewise, when that infant grew up, he or she would hold the same responsibilities and relationship to the newly baptized. The role of godparents and confirmation were enhanced for the responsibility of Christian education, and the active choice to be a member of the Church respectively. As such, the sacrament of baptism is related to the sacrament of Holy Communion. Current conversations about appropriate liturgical process (i.e. full immersion versus a light sprinkling; infant baptism versus adult baptism; appropriate vestments; meaning and membership) are similar to the conversation regarding the bread and the wine in the Eucharist (i.e. consubstantiation versus transubstantiation or a memorialist viewpoint; proper vessels and vestments). The conversation and theology places the sacramental efficacy not in the actual rite or act in and of itself, but in the relationship of the rite as he or she is participating in the context of the body of Christ before God.

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<sup>34</sup> See Article IX regarding Original Sin, BCP pg 869

<sup>35</sup> See Articles XVI, BCP pg 870 and XXVII, BCP pg 873.



Article 9<sup>36</sup> contends that there is no longer any condemnation for those who believe and are baptized. The mutual belief and baptism connote a human response to a divine offering. It is by Grace that we are saved. As such, baptism is not some magic rite for washing away sins, nor is it a guarantee of salvation, such that the initiate is no longer responsible for any of his or her actions.<sup>37</sup> Rather, it is the primary symbol that an initiate can take to indicate the responsiveness of his or her faith in obedience, both to the grace being offered by God, and to his or her willingness to be an active participant in the body of Christ, the Church.<sup>38</sup>

(Sources: Commentary on the American Prayer Book, Marion J. Hatchett; The Study of Liturgy, ed. Cheslyn Jones et al.; The Study of Anglicanism, Stephen Sykes, et al.)s

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<sup>36</sup> BCP pg 869.

<sup>37</sup> see Article XVI BCP pg 870.

<sup>38</sup> See Article XXVII BCP pg 873.

## 6b. Baptism: Liturgy

As offered by the Prayer Book “Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ’s Body the Church. The bond which God establishes in Baptism is indissoluble.” (BCP 298) While the theology of original sin still exists as official doctrine in the Church<sup>39</sup>, and there is the condition of an Emergency Baptism that any may perform,<sup>40</sup> baptism is primarily a public rite done for the benefit of the community as much as it is the benefit of the person being initiated. The rite is performed on Holy Days, particularly those in the Church year that have traditionally emphasized and symbolized varying aspects of the baptismal covenant. The communal nature of the sacrament reminds the entire community of their own baptismal covenant, as well as their responsibility to each other under the Church as the Body of Christ. As such, infant baptisms are as apt as adult baptism, whereas private baptisms misinterpret the theology behind efficacy of the sacrament. The public rite included in both infant and adult baptisms emphasizes the community’s call of reaffirmation.

The sponsors who present and endorse the candidate are taking accountability for that child’s spiritual growth, promising to raise him or her through teaching and example in the Christian life. Parents also stand alongside the child as they ultimately have responsibility towards their children’s spiritual upbringing. Current baptismal practice has divided much of the catechistic routine between the sponsor and the rite of confirmation. Sponsorship has varied depending on the nature of community, with the early church all being able to vouch for the state of the initiate. In the modern world, the high mobility of people places a special emphasis on sponsors to be responsible in ways that the limitations of the parochial community is not able to be. Since adult baptism is preferential consistent historically and theologically, at the presentation they are presented first, admitting to their desire to be baptized. Younger children and infants follow by age and are presented by their sponsors.

The liturgy follows a process of renunciations, equivalent to the exorcisms traditional in the Church, and adherence to Christ. The candidate is denying the powers of evil and the influence of the world their place in his or her life, and is confessing a desire to turn to Jesus as Savior and to obey him as Lord. Because baptism is a public rite, and it is the responsibility of the community of Christ to support each other, the liturgy includes the opportunity for the congregation to participate in it. The congregation is asked if they are willing to participate and support the candidates in their life of Christ. The Congregation is then bidden to take part in the covenant.

One of the most notable instances in the baptismal celebration is the exclusion of the Nicene Creed. As the baptism is intended as a community’s renewal as well as the initiation of the person who is being baptized, the Apostle’s Creed is directly integrated in the rite as the Baptismal Covenant<sup>41</sup>, which the entire congregation participates in. The candidate is then prayed for: The prayers for the candidate emphasize the belief that it is through God that we received grace, and not by our own actions. The prayers

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<sup>39</sup> See Article IX of the Articles of Religion, BCP pg 869.

<sup>40</sup> BCP pg 313.

<sup>41</sup> BCP pg 304.

emphasize the death of the old life and the birth of the new life, as well as praying for a future hope in the Eschaton.

The thanksgiving over water reemphasizes a Lutheran inspired revision that replaced the theology of consecrating water. The early reformers rejected the mysticism behind consecration that had appeared in mediaeval theology, affirming the early Church's belief that all water had been sanctified for baptism through Jesus' own baptism in the Jordan River. Luther's "Flood Prayer" recognized the flood and the exodus as washing away sins, and reintroduced Jesus' baptism as the sanctification of all water.

The most recent Prayer Book is the first book to reintroduce the anointing of oil since the reformation, where it was rejected for its abuse, and lack of biblical support. The theology of baptism continues to emphasize that water is enough for baptism, but the oil is a strong symbol of Christ (the anointed one) and has been traditionally used in pre- and post-baptismal rites since the second century in connection with exorcism and as an act of thanksgiving. The chrism is applied by the bishop and is olive oil, mixed with some perfumed oil (generally balsam).

The actual baptism has traditionally been done by immersion, typically three times to represent the trinity. As early as the second century affusion (pouring water) was used in places where there was not much water, or when the candidate was too weak to be immersed. Cranmer encouraged full immersion baptism except in the case when a child was too weak to be immersed. Immersion is still preferred, however the current rubric allows for the water to be poured upon the candidate. The actual baptism follows Matthew 28:19: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (NRSV).

Baptism is inclusion into the body of Christ, and is the sole qualification for being welcomed to partake of the Holy Communion. The current theology regarding baptism is heavily influenced by the Augustinian tradition that emerged from the Donatist controversy of the fifth century: baptism, when done properly in the name of the trinity and when water was used, was final and not to be repeated, full stop. This repudiated the Donatists and any other sectarian who believed that the efficacy of the sacrament was related to the viability of the cleric performing the action. In essence, the controversy clarified that the sacrament was valid because God, and not man, made it valid. Save for a few extremely sectarian churches, all believe in the validity of the single baptism. If the candidate is unsure of whether or not he or she had already been baptized, a form of Conditional Baptism is used.<sup>42</sup>

Baptism is integral to Christian initiation and participation in the body of Christ and is the sacramental action binding the initiate to the grace offered by Christ.

(Sources: Commentary on the American Prayer Book, Marion J. Hatchett; )

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<sup>42</sup> BCP pg 313.

## **6c. Baptism: Elements**

### **Baptismal Font –**

Early baptisms were done outdoors in lakes and rivers, however, there were many obvious reasons for wanting to move baptism indoors, including safety, comfort, reverence, and convenience. These early fonts were often hewn out of stone and were relatively shallow, able to accommodate many initiates at the same time. The fonts grew with Church architecture, moving beyond simple function to accommodate the importance of the rite. Entire baptisteries were devoted to the role of baptism, with the font central in this. Decisions that arose out of the Donatist controversy in the fifth century allowed for non-immersion baptism when there was a shortage of water, or when the individual was unable (particularly for health reasons) to be fully immersed. Since the prevalence of infant baptism that rose in popularity through the mediaeval period, baptism by affusion (pouring water) became increasingly common practice, particularly in Northern regions where the chill of the water made immersion baptisms difficult. The fonts shrunk to accommodate this practice, being little more than wash basins set aside in the baptistery, which itself shrank from the large separate rooms and buildings to being typically a railed off section, or side room reserved for baptism. These smaller fonts maintained much of the ornateness present in mediaeval architecture, with carvings, and three or eight sides representing the trinity or regeneration respectively.

Although they adamantly resisted the common practice of private baptisms, and typically preferred adult baptism, the early English and many Continental reformers accepted infant baptism. Instead, they incorporated their reformed theology into the rite, making it a public event for the entire congregation. As such, the font was more than just a vehicle for holding water, but a visual representation to the entire community of their own baptismal covenant. As such, the font is placed in full view for the community as a continual reminder. It is typically placed in a prime-viewing place.

### **Godparents –**

The rise of infant baptism necessitated the role of what was pre-baptismal catechesis. The sponsor takes responsibility in lieu of the child's lack of ability to make the conscious decision him or herself. The Godparent acts along with the parents to teach the child the Creeds, the Lord's Prayer, and other important Christian teaching, so that the child acclimates to the Church's catechesis. As such, the sponsor stands alongside the parents in the presentation of the child for the rite. However, neither the sponsor nor the parents are solely responsible of the Christian upbringing of the Child. The child's initiation is into the community, and, as such, the entire community is asked by the presider to be responsible for the initiates' Christian instruction.

## Confirmation –

Confirmation and baptism was originally the same rite. In the early rite, the initiate was baptized as initiation, and immediately following, the bishop would lay his hands on him or her for the reciprocity of the Holy Spirit. Confirmation and baptism began to separate as distinct rites at the time of Charlemagne who imposed Roman rites on the areas that he conquered. (Liturgy 148) As Christendom spread, there was a shortage of bishops to confer the Holy Spirit under the imposed Roman baptism. However, the high rate of infant mortality necessitated the immediacy of baptism. As such, baptism was often conferred very early on, while confirmation waited until the bishop was available. The practice switched from baptism-confirmation-communion, to baptism-communion-confirmation. That the communion was being offered before confirmation meant that the theologians had to develop a new understanding for confirmation since they believed that the communion administered by the presbyters in the absence of a bishop sufficiently conferred the Holy Spirit, and so confirmation embodied the reciprocity of the grace for preaching to others, or the grace of strengthening.

The confirmation was to take place at the next possible time that the bishop was available after the baptism. However, because of the size of the dioceses, that could take a considerable amount of time. As such, confirmation and baptism began separating, giving the former the look of being an entirely different sacrament. Theologies emerged in apology for the separation of this single rite: Around the year 460, Faustus of Riez preached that baptism was complete for the renunciation of sin, but confirmation increases the conference of grace. While baptism was enough for salvation, the grace that came with the completion of confirmation built the person up for the strength needed in this life. (Liturgy 150) This position was adopted in the medieval Western doctrines. Thomas Cranmer went against the Roman rite of confirmation, opting to include a rite for the young baptized who had come to an age when they were of the mind to come to sin. Thus the confirmation was to “give strength and defense against all temptations to sin and the assaults of the world, and the devil.” (Anglicanism, 295) Confirmation was not an automatic rite of initiation (as baptism had arguably become), but was for adults who lived a life consistent with what they professed from their mouths.

Around the second half of the twentieth century, this classic mediaeval model of baptism and confirmation as initiation into a nurturing Christian community began to fall apart in the West where Christendom was disappearing, and where Anglican Church presence lost its dominance. Fewer people were coming forward for confirmation, and many were using confirmation as an opportunity to graduate from Church attendance. A 1968 Lambeth Conference report, “The Renewal of Church in Faith,” reinvigorated the discussion and shape of the rites today. While it was not binding, the report suggested that Holy Communion be administered to those who were of a proper age, and had received the proper instruction that came with confirmation. The report also suggested a region-by-region investigation into the relevancy of both rites. There came a growing movement to recombine both rites into a single event that included baptism, confirmation and first communion. However, this was predominately squashed by episcopacy where bishops were to become even less relevant in a modern denomination by losing their role in the ritual of confirmation. The pattern of initiation that emerged was a baptism that provided membership and participatory access to the Holy Communion. Confirmation

has become a process of renewal, and the opportunity for an individual to reaffirm the covenant that was made in baptism. It is symbolic more than theological or sacramental, and is associated with one's commitment to the authority of the episcopacy in the Episcopal Church.

### **Baptismal Days and Emphasis –**

Baptism is often coordinated with the Liturgical Calendar in order to emphasize particular elements.

Easter Vigil: baptism as death and resurrection

Pauline Emphasis: Pentecost – baptism as receiving the Holy Spirit

Lukan Emphasis: First Sunday After Epiphany – Baptism of our Lord, signifying new birth, regeneration

Johannine Emphasis: All Saints' Day, or the Sunday after All Saints' Day – reception into the communion of saints.

Bishop's Visitation: emphasis entrance into the Holy Catholic Church

(Sources: Commentary on the American Prayer Book, Marion J. Hatchette; New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia, [www.newadvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org))

## 7. Holy Orders

One of the most difficult tensions held by the Church of England has been the distinguishing of the clerical roles and identities. Sacramental theologies that emerged out the medieval ages used Aristotelian speculative philosophy to separate identity into form and matter. Clerical duty surrounding the substance of the sacrament necessitate a distinctive ontological identity to work with the substance of the element: not just anyone could call upon God to consecrate the various elements, but only persons who had been appropriately set aside for such a task. An ordained person was substantially different than any other person. Christ himself initially inaugurated said distinction when he ordained the early apostles to distribute his sacraments and to form his Church. Thus the lineage of witness was carried through the Church in an unbroken chain, handed down through a ceremony of laying on of hands from bishop to bishop the Apostolic Succession. It was the bishop who possessed the authority and the power to ordain priests and deacons to fulfill clerical roles within his region. The bishop had apostolic authority, meaning the authority to convey the sacraments and preach the word, over a region. From the very early Church, bishops had come to grow increasingly influential. As the head of regions, the entire community looked to them as their source of authority and leadership in matters of the Church. Bishops were often the first ones to defend the community, or the first ones to lead by example. Martyrs such as Polycarp were lauded for the example that they set for the rest of the community. The legalization of Christianity in the Roman Empire under Emperor Constantine in 313 made the role even more powerful as it intertwined with the power of the Roman State. The Church had been decentralized, spreading from community to community, with the local Bishop having authority over regions. When the Christianity became the official religion of the prominent Roman Empire, the bishops of the five key cities of the Empire rose in power: Rome, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch. The fall of the all of North Africa, and the vast majority of the Eastern part of the Empire to the Islamic offensive in the seventh century, which made its way right to the Iberian Peninsula in modern Europe, left only two powerful Sees operable: Rome and Constantinople. Secular and ecclesiastical political circumstances, notably the fall of the Western Empire to roaming marauders, created a situation that ultimately divided what would become the Roman Catholic Church in the West surrounding Rome, and the Eastern Orthodox Church in the East surrounding following the great schism of 1054, where each Primate excommunicated the other. The See of Rome grew in power under a set of political alliances that the chaos necessitated (notably with the Franks in what is now France), while the See of Constantinople continued to be the established Church of what remained of the Roman Empire (Byzantine Empire) until its fall in the fifteenth century.

It is in the West (much of Europe) that the Roman Catholic Church emerged, and in which the political environment ripened for the Reformation. The Bishop in Rome, the Pope, had become increasingly powerful, and was demanding that all Christians recognize the primacy of the position. Clerics were all under the jurisdiction of the Pope, and the ontological distinction of the Holy Orders ran through its centralized episcopacy. The reformers reaction was not merely liturgical or theological, but a political response to this centralized authority. The reformers balked at the theology of ontological distinction:

clergy were not different than laity. Rather they just had a different function in the community (as does a doctor, or a lawyer). The clergy's responsibility was to approach the sacraments – at this point a much greater emphasis was placed on preaching the word over the Catholic elemental sacramental clerical duties – as any other would approach their vocation, putting their full energies into their responsibility as contributing members of a community. It was the community that set apart individuals to fulfill this functional role, and, if chosen, the ontological distinction was merely functional rather than innate: they simply had a different role, like every other equal member of the priesthood of all believers. This functional ontology emphasized that the sacraments were not consecrated, nor did they receive their power through the conductive nature of the cleric. Rather, God was the sole distributor of the sacraments and they were to be received simply by faith. This de-emphasis of clerical identity stood in sharp contrast to that which had been held by the Church up to that point, and received much opposition from the existing institution, creating a power struggle between the reformers and the established ecclesiastical structure, creating a further dichotomy between the reformers and the Papacy. The response of the Papacy was to firmly establish anti-reformation Roman Catholic identity with the Council of Trent, while the decentralized, grass roots of the nature of the reformation meant that the reformers went in a variety of directions, dependent on the views of their various leaders. Without the pre-existing, centralized structure to provide a systemized methodology and working definition of ordination, the emerging reformed Churches put together a variance of structures, all of which looked to scripture alone as a foundation. What resulted was a cross board de-emphasis of the identity of clergy that ranged from Churches who would meet with no clergy at all, to lower churches that assumed a Presbyterian style structure. At the other end existed the Churches, most notably the Church of England, that aimed to maintain the tradition, practice and vestments of the Roman Catholic Church, incorporated with a reformed theology.

The English reformers followed in the fashion of the continental reformers recognizing that scripture only indicated three positions: Bishop, Priest, and Deacon. More than other practices, the tension of the Via Media meant that neither side was happy with the Anglican perspective on ordination: the early puritans became disillusioned with the Episcopal Church structure in England. An episcopacy that was related to function in hierarchy with the secular authority meant that Bishops were often removed from their relevant tasks of preaching and spiritual guiding in lieu of the status of their position. Bishops were directly related to the monarchical structure of the reformed Church, and the Anglican office, in practice, became caught up with the prelacy that that brought. The puritans contended that the only solution be to enact a Presbyterian style Church. The Catholics argued that by denouncing the doctrines surrounding Holy Communion, and the Catholic doctrine of the Church, the orders were invalid through technicality and by intent. Much later, during the Evangelical movement, Wesley and his following contended that those in office were neglecting their function, focusing far too much on their office. The Spirit, they contended was not related to one's ordination status. On the other side, the Oxford movement supported the necessity of Apostolic Succession, and the ontological distinction. This tension continues to exist today: the Book of Common Prayer offers for the community to be involved in the reciprocity of the ordinand, but stops short of making it an office fully defined by the reformed approach to vocation. It



incorporates a liturgy and practice that emphasizes both identity and function, but falls short of emphasizing either. Richard Hooker described this tension, rooted in the reformation debate over sacrificial versus non-sacrificial Holy Communion, as a priesthood that gave an allusion to the pre-reformation view of the cleric. That is, the cleric was protestant but displayed Catholic understanding: “that which the Gospel had proportional to ancient sacrifices, namely the Communion of the blessed Body and Blood of Christ, although it have properly no new sacrifice”. (Anglicanism, 326) Similar to the debate over the sacrament of the Holy Communion, perhaps the best way forward for the Communion is to move away from discussions surrounding ontological identity, and the differentiation of substance rooted in medieval theology. The Holy Communion is not a sacrament because of the presence of the bread or wine, or even because the priestly ability to consecrate, but because God is offering grace and a community opts to participate in it together. Similarly, the nature of ordination in the Church ought to focus less on the cleric or laypersons identity, but on an intention of obedience to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit does not need to speak through clerics (a mediaeval doctrine) but Jesus opened the door to accessing God for everyone. So then, the cleric in the Body of Christ is not a question of identity with right and wrong liturgical methods ordaining or being ordained, but of one’s ability to function in the particular role of community. God ordains this not in ontology, but in response to the faith of community. Clericalism is a question of functional response rather than being, and therefore all of our actions and doctrines need to reflect this.

(Sources: The Study of Anglicanism, ed. Stephen Sykes et al.)

## 7b. Holy Orders: Vestments

W. Jardine Grisbrooke notes of vestments that it is nearly universal in cultural history that our dress be associated with the emphasis of the occasion: we clothe ourselves keeping in mind the event that we are celebrating. (“Vestments”, *The Study of Liturgy* 543 – most of this comes from her article) Even those communities that eschew formal attire unknowingly adopt their own patterns. Take for instance the low Protestant Churches that adamantly rejected the vestments and liturgical calendar practices of the Roman Catholic Church. Suits, dresses, white shirts and “Sunday best” can be identifiable patterns in a developed intrinsic liturgy. Whatever the reason, dress, whether chosen actively or passively, follows patterns, particularly the dress of those who are performing the task surrounding the event. Uniforms are common culture, and all uniforms have emerged out of trends that were at one point considered ordinary. It is common that what is formal an ordinary in one period continues on as an ecclesiastical vestment long after it has gone out of style. This is as true in the rest of our culture as it is in our Churches. Take for instance the wigs worn by the judicial system in England: once a common trend, but, having long since gone out of style, now exists as a uniform that identifies a persons function; a uniform that helps one identify and feel more comfortable with the profession. Similarly, when one thinks suit, white shirt, tie and bible in hand, one thinks of an evangelist preacher (or without the bible a banker), a uniform that has a more recent history but has currently faded in the mainstream, which adopts a more business casual style.

So too exist the liturgical vestments of worship in the Anglican Church: they are intended not as the primary vehicles of worship, nor are they central to the Eucharist. Rather, they are garb that help identify the various tasks and function of the individual wearing them. Like the wig, and like the full suit, they were once common style, or symbols of rank in the secular world, predominantly from the first six centuries of the Roman Empire, that have long since faded. The emergence of liturgical garb can be easily observed as an evolution: the best and brightest garments were always set aside for the function that was revered the most (like Christmas or Easter Sunday suits and dresses). The fact that these garbs were always the newest, or cleanest, or most vivid, meant that they stood apart from the rest of the common wear (like the suit and polished shoes of the evangelist preacher at the front). This distinction gradually grew until it was no longer style within the secular culture, but because it had so gradually separated, the vestments had worked their way in as common ecclesial wear. At some point, the Church sanctioned these vestments as unique, and set aside as uniforms for the task that they had grown to represent. By the middle ages, the origins of many of these vestments had long been forgotten, but their symbolism continued. Many mediaeval scholars attempted to justify their existence using either biblical, liturgical, or moral representative modes, however, eventually these faded and they became more symbols or ornaments than they were clothes, which created a ridiculous level of decorating and styling that did more to distract from their function than it did provide security and an identifier. Many Protestant Churches rejected the garb in order to reject the papacy and the ideology of clericalism that it represented, but the English reformers opted to keep them in an attempt to create a comfortable *Via Media*. As the Church moves forward, liturgical garb are to be fashioned

with three criteria: worship aesthetic, theological and historical continuance, and function. Ecclesial vestments are not merely functional as they are not merely historical or aesthetic. They incorporate all three of these, changing as the Church moves forward, but continuing to look back at a history that began with Christ and a theology that was inaugurated with him, and in doing so, they exist not to distract, but to enhance the aesthetics for the sake of the community.

## ***Underclothes:***

### **Cassock –**

A long, close fitting garment, the cassock is actually not a vestment for public worship, but the regular street wear of the ordained office, and until the nineteenth century, was the outfit that all Anglican clergy wore outside of the church. The cassock is typically black, but can be a variety of colors, and is worn under other vestments during worship.

### **Alb –**

The alb stands apart as the one garment that early Christians adopted with representational intention from the beginning. The alb was clean and white, and was the undergarment worn by Greeks and Romans around the fourth century, and is derived from the term Latin alba (white). Because of its whiteness, it came to represent the purity and cleansed nature of the Christian following baptism. The alb is worn by both lay and ordained ministers participating in public worship, often underneath other vestments in the case of the latter. Its style varies but is generally a long white garment with narrow sleeves and a high collar or hood and can be girded at the waist.

### **Surplice –**

A shorter, non-girded variation of the alb that can extend anywhere up to the waist, although preferences currently find it slightly below the knees. The surplice has wider sleeves capable of being worn over a fur-lined cassock in colder climates. It likely developed in the colder climates of Northern Europe, eventually making its way down throughout the regions of the Church. Non-ordained persons often wear the surplice, particularly for the purposes of procession. For instance, choirs are often garbed in surplices.

### **Rochette –**

Another variation of the alb, fuller (with or without sleeves) and worn ungirded over the cassock.

## **Overclothes:**

For overclothes see *The Lord's Supper: Elements*

## **Office Insignia:**

### **Mitre –**

The mitre (or miter) is likely derived from the dress of civil authorities in the late empire, and is the pointed hat worn by bishops during procession, or blessings. It is from the Greek word for turban, and is often decorated silk or linen. The back typically has two lapels that flaps that dangle down. The bishop removes the mitre during any prayer.

### **Crozier –**

The bishop has several symbols of his office, including his or her ring and stole, but the most obvious of these is the crozier, which looks like a shepherds crook, which he or she carries in liturgical actions that the bishop performs. The symbolism of the rod is linked to the Bishop's responsibility as authority regarding discipline, liturgy, and doctrine in his or her particular diocese. Their actual origin is unknown, and the likelihood that the original symbolism segued from the shepherds crook is low. Other alternatives of origin include a variation on a common walking stick or staff used at the time, or that it might be taken from rods used by roman diviners in antiquity. In any event, the crozier was used in liturgical settings by at least the fifth century where Pope Celestine I references its use.

### **Collar and Clergy Shirt –**

The clerical collar is detachable as either a tab, or a full collar that wraps around the neck, and is a symbol of ordination. The collar is a recent movement, and began in the late sixteenth century when the Roman clerics would turn down their collar over their priestly garbs, corresponding with the fashion trend of the era. The collar was then covered with a lace and protective covering. Pope Urban VIII banned the lace, and the turned down collar went out of style leaving the protective covering as a symbol of a Roman cleric. The detachable version of the collar was invented in the nineteenth century, and its use was made popular amongst Anglicans by the influence of the Oxford Movement who argued that all priests should wear it at all times in order that they might be a constant representation and be known to be available for priestly duties to the community at large. Evangelicals in the mid twentieth century began rejecting the use of the collar as a representation of a Roman theology of ordination and ontological distinction of the cleric, opting instead for a common shirt and tie. There is no requirement in the canons that clergy wear a collar at any time since it is a later introduction and not consistent throughout the tradition of Anglicanism.

## **Stole –**

The stole is the symbol of an ordained minister, and is a flat, narrow band of material. It is often worn over the alb, and occasionally over the chasuble during liturgical worship. The bishop always wears it uncrossed over both shoulders, while a priest might choose to cross it at the waist. Deacons generally wear it over their left shoulder with it fastened under their right arm, although it is historically known to be unlinked and simply left dangling over the shoulder front and back. Although there is much recorded history of the various use, stylings, and symbolisms of the stole, particularly in the East where its use is recorded as early as the fourth and fifth centuries. It is recorded as early as the sixth and seventh centuries in the West, but much less is known until the ninth century. Because of this, little is known of its origins, evolution, or original intention. It is possible that it started merely as a folded cloth that evolved into its current shape. Most likely it was either an evolution of a deacon's napkin used for the Eucharist, or a neck cloth used by a priest. Alternatively, it could have been created for the sole purpose of being a liturgical symbol. The stole's color changes to reflect the current liturgical season celebrated.

(Sources: *The Study of Liturgy*: Cheslyn Jones et al.; *The Episcopal Dictionary of the Church*, Don Armentrout and Robert Boak Slocum Eds. *Prayer Book Rubrics Expanded*, Byron D. Stuhlman)

## **7c. Holy Orders: Elements**

### **Apostolic Succession –**

Apostolic Succession is the unbroken lineage of authority and teaching handed down from bishop to bishop from the time of the apostles to the present time. This authority is passed along through a liturgical rite such as the laying on of hands, and is a sign, but not a guarantee, of the authority inherent within the episcopacy. Questions of appropriate liturgy, and meaning have plagued the Anglican Church internally, as well as in its external ecumenical dialogue. Who has the authority to choose unto whom authority is bestowed has been a contentious issue with many, particularly through the reformation period, with some Churches not recognizing the authority or lineage of others. The more Protestant faction of the Church, such as John Wesley and the Evangelical movement, focused on the functional aspect of ordination, preferring the reference to authority and priestly ordination to be associated with functional necessity and a broader definition of Church, while the more Catholic oriented faction, such as the Oxford Movement, emphasized appropriate method, and pedigree of candidates. These two movements emphasize the tension of Church discipline, authority, and community, with its function, mission, and inclusivity. With the understanding of Grace as it meets the fellowship of a community, a particularly difficult tension to hold.

The Anglican Church's relationship with Rome has varied from its own orders being recognized by the papacy, and transferable with Roman Clergy, to them being utterly rejected as illegitimate from the beginning. Obviously, dialogue concerning unity requires a degree of charity with respect to the particularity of Apostolic Succession, preferring instead an understanding of the lineage of the body of Christ to continue to operate within the Church at large, who we recognize to be any and all who lay claim to the Lordship of Christ through baptism, confession, and active participation in his kingdom.

### **Bishop –**

The bishop emerged early on as the head of the ruling body of presbyters (elders), which was a continuation of Judaic practice. The Bishop had his deacons to help him in his work preaching, teaching, and overseeing. The bishop had a responsibility to care for the poor and the needy, which was often delegated to the deacons. Under the tutelage of the Roman Emperor Constantine's, Bishops began to obtain a great deal of extra responsibility in their involvement in society, which left them less time for their primary task. The presbyters took on a greater role performing the Bishop's duty in his absence. Eventually these roles parted as the institution of the Church grew. As a leader of the community, the community chooses the role, like the rest of the presbyters.

By the time of the English reformation, bishops had become essential members in the Church structure, according to the reformers one of the three actually mentioned in the New Testament – the other two being the deacon and the priest (although it is arguable whether or not the scripture distinguishes between the role of bishop and priest).

The question of ordination in England, as it began primarily as a political enterprise, was to undoubtedly include bishops and the pre-existing episcopacy. This was upheld by the Elizabethan settlement in 1559, rooting the bishopric into the English Church. However, in the English reformation, this episcopate was subject to the royal throne, and not the Papal See in Rome. Bishops were ministers of the Crown for the spiritual government of the nation. (Anglicanism 334)

This role reduced the trend in the mediaeval Church of bishops being feudal lords, or court officials, instead giving them a preeminence making sure that the Word of God was properly preached, that doctrine was pure, and that the disobedient were punished. While a priest has the full ability to preach the Word and distribute the Sacrament, the bishop was distinguished only in his authority. It was the bishop who had the authority to ordain new priests, and who had ultimate responsibility over his congregations. Discussions between the Protestants and the Catholics in the English Church have, and continue to range between this being a functional distinction, versus an ontological distinction that is given through ordination. Both agree on the actual role.

One disappointing loss that came through the reformation's emphasis on doctrine and Word in its contention with the Catholic Church – the distinction of the Bishop's role as the spiritual authority of the Church, versus the Crown's role as the physical authority – is the de-emphasis of the responsibility of the Bishop, priest, and deacon to the physical needs of the community. The dichotomization of roles has ultimately left an episcopacy whose primary concerns centers around spiritual teachings and precepts, detached from its responsibility to the physical needs of the community, and the practice of the gospel in the world at large – a neutered, lopsided vision from that offered by both the scriptures and the early Church. Further exacerbating this dilemma is that the Crown-Episcopacy bi-structure under which it originated no longer exists, leaving the episcopacy to feebly struggle for a spiritual authority devoid of any tangible partner, creating a faith that is devoid of any practice of works.

## **Deacon –**

Evidence of the diaconate goes back to the New Testament when members of the community were designated roles that looked after the community. The Acts of the Apostles record deacons being assigned the task of feeding the widows with equity, in order that others might have the flexibility to devote to preaching the Word (Acts 6). The scripture emphasizes that both were responsibilities of the Church, and that the designated roles merely emphasized the person's mandate within the greater Church. From the beginning, the deacons would serve in the context of the community, and be subject to its overseers. As bishops rose in primacy and responsibility, they assigned deacons to take care of the various responsibilities within the Church, both service oriented, and helping the bishop with his priestly duties.

During the mediaeval period, the role of deacon was relegated to an inferior ministry, and was treated as a stepping-stone, a training ground for the ordination to the priesthood. Beginning in the ninth century, preparation within the diaconate was required before someone was allowed to become a priest. The ontological distinction of priests, and the elevated theology of the sacraments meant that the specific and special ministries of deacons were lost. Their tasks were less service oriented, and became increasingly the

helpers in sacramental responsibilities. Because of this, the role was seen as merely a lesser sacramental position; one from which one would try to graduate.

The entire mediaeval theology placed an undue emphasis on the sacramental nature of the Church, which continues to be prevalent today. The Edwardian reformers recognized the three distinct offices of the Church, as equal but distinct, diminishing the idea that the deacon primarily had a liturgical responsibility. Rather, the reformers understood the diaconate to be for reaching out to the poor, the sick, and the powerless in the community, as a part of the Church's responsibility. However, within Anglicanism, this was again dashed with the reemergence of the Oxford movement and the renewed interest in sacramental theology. While the Oxford Movement emphasized many important components of liturgy and worship, because of this emphasis, the diaconate continues to be primarily training grounds for the priestly office, and the Church hierarchy by its very nature emphasizes the sacramental and liturgical practice while deemphasizing the essential community responsibility and social participation that goes along with it.

## **Priest –**

The priest, like the bishop, is a form of ruling presbyter, alluded to in the New Testament. Where the Bishop is responsible for the entire community with respect to authority, doctrine and practice, the priest has a smaller role of authority and set of functions, specific to a particular group. Preaching the Word, and preparing the sacraments in the early Church, particularly as Christianity became more popular in the Roman Empire following Emperor Constantine, were roles that were given to particular members of the community – St. Paul's epistles have many references for the characteristics of an individual qualified for the task, as his letters were mainly addressed to emerging home churches with very specific and very basic issues arising.

Following the escalation of clericalism in the mediaeval period, and the great separation of laity from cleric, the role, function, and existence of all roles in the Church were greatly challenged through the reformation period. However, because of the reformation's action, and the Church's subsequent separation into factions, these questions were not dealt with uniformly, and each faction came to their own conclusion. In general, the reformation eschewed the sacrificial ontological identity that the Roman Catholic Church had associated with priestly function. Thomas Cranmer, and the English reformers denied the priest's ontological disposition as mediator of the sacraments and of grace, but rather referred to the role as an administrator of the ultimate sacrifice that Jesus Christ offered in fullness. That is to say that the priest was to administer the Word given by God, and the sacrament (Holy Communion) consecrated by Christ. The reformation urged a greater emphasis on learned, biblical preaching, which had greatly eroded under Catholic practices in lieu of private priestly duties. It reaffirmed the priesthood of all believers, in the context of accessing grace, and spreading the kingdom.

However, the issue did not settle with the original English reformers but was debated between the Puritan and Catholic participants of the Church – the latter emphasizing original Catholic doctrine of ontological distinction, and an emphasis on the pedigree of Apostolic Succession, while the former focusing on function rather than office. John Wesley ignored established routes, denying that a focus on office ignored the



Spirit and did not guarantee pastoral effectiveness, but instead opting to ordain priests himself (bypassing the bishops) for America out of the great necessity of function. The members of the Oxford Movement on the other hand, attempted to answer the question of authority by drawing in mediaeval theology, which created a distinction of office, drawing a lineage between the authority given to the apostle's by Christ, and the Church as it continues to exist as the body of Christ.

The Church continues to deal with the issue of authority and office, with some subscribing to an early reformers model of vocation and mere function within a community, amidst the priesthood of all believers while others subscribe to a Catholic model of the ontological distinction of office mandated through Apostolic Succession. Somewhere, in the midst of this tension, comes a role (whether ontological or functional) that serves as a leader to the community who disciples the Church, through teaching, example, and the distribution of the sacraments.

While other traditions use many different terms, "priest" has become common in the Anglican tradition as the early apologists linked it in reference to the word presbyters in the New Testament, and because the function of priest (whether ontological or functional) gives an allusion to the sacrifice offered by Christ, and therefore calls forward imagery of Old Testament temple sacrifice.

(Sources: Commentary on the American Prayer Book, Marion J. Hatchette; The Study of Anglicanism, Stephen Sykes et al.; The Episcopal Dictionary of the Church, Don Armentrout and Robert Boak Slocum eds.)

## 8. Liturgical Calendar

Like many aspects of our life, we understand that virtue is not simply given, but comes by determination through the actions of our will. Discipline is the action of doing what we do when we don't want to do it in order to train our thoughts through our actions. This is, in part, one of the very basics of liturgy: a set of actions that form our thoughts and our feelings. From the very beginning, the Church recognized this reality. However, they went beyond the liturgy of worship on a Sunday, and moved to incorporate liturgy into something that we all participate in: time. Like the way that Christians would use pagan practices and spaces, sanctifying them for the purposes of Christian worship – with the understanding that the very reality of Christ sanctifies the superstitious and practices and spaces – so too the early Christians adapted time sequences from other cultures, identifying them with the life and actions of Christ himself. By sanctifying time with Christian identity, Christians were able to order their lives around the schedule of the life of Christ, him whom we worship and follow. The calendar itself, time that was once devoted to the feast and worship of other deities and events was adopted to represent the worship and feasts surrounding the events in Christ's life. Like the sins that had been washed away with the baptism of Christ's sacrifice, time had been cleansed of its superstitions and reordered to illuminate God's actions, practiced by those who had been baptized into the kingdom as the Church.

### ***Days of the Week:***

#### **Sunday –**

The Lord's Day is central to the entire calendar. Commonly mistaken for the Sabbath, which falls on Saturday, the seventh day of the Jewish calendar, Sunday, which falls on the first, was chosen by the early Church as the day by which we celebrate the resurrection of Christ. It was on Sunday that Christ rose victorious.

The New Testament is well acquainted with the practice of Christians meeting on Sunday, as it was common practice. The symbolism of Sunday encompasses, newness, creation, resurrection, but it also symbolizes the eighth day, the end of time, the culmination of events, and the re-creation.

Following in the Judaic custom, the early Christian celebration began with sundown on Saturday, and incorporated a vigil anticipating the celebration of the day. Western rites have typically used these vigils, particularly the Easter vigil and Pentecost vigil, to coincide with important events such as ordination or baptism. The English reformers emphasized the practice of baptisms on all Sundays throughout the year, emphasizing the communal component of the action.

The Eucharist, the center of Christian worship, also immediately moved to coincide with this special day. The earliest authors record the mandatory nature of celebrating at the Lord's Table, even under times of incredibly persecution. The reformers pushed the emphasis on Sunday worship and the reduction of Holy Days, as

well as the decrease in weekday Eucharists. Except for the Lutheran and English churches, many even cut out the celebration of Holy Days entirely. Thomas Cranmer intentionally relinked the practice of Eucharist with Sunday, corporate worship, and reinstated Sunday as having primacy of the liturgical week. Because of the nature of the day for Christians, Sundays are typically observed in a celebratory fashion. Early Christians didn't kneel in worship, but stood celebrating victory. The penitent nature of kneeling for Sunday worship entered through the Reformation period with the Prayer Book giving the freedom to the congregation.

### **Sabbath –**

Much of the earliest Church were Jewish, and so there are hints of the continued observance of the Sabbath in the New Testament. Tertullian writes that the Sabbath held a special position, but that it was never to be a day of fasting, except during Passover season. In many places, the Sabbath became a day on which the Eucharist was celebrated, although this is not universal.

### **Wednesday and Friday –**

Wednesday and Friday were the days that the early Christians set-aside as fast days, corresponding with the Judaic custom of fasting on Mondays and Thursdays. These days became associated with the Lord's betrayal and crucifixion and came to be days of self-denial and abstinence. Eventually Wednesday became less practiced except during Lent. The great litany was often sung in mediaeval England during these two days to commemorate their importance, a tradition that Thomas Cranmer continued in the Prayer Book.

### **Major Feast Days –**

The Episcopal Church calendar is organized around principle feast days, which take precedent over any other day (including Sunday) on which they fall. They are days of great celebration for the Church. These principle days of feast are: The Epiphany, Easter Day, Ascension Day, Day of Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, and All Saints' Day.

### **Holy Days –**

The reformers greatly reduced the number of holy days that were in existence in the mediaeval period. Most had emerged out of the Constantine struggle to battle pagan days, a struggle that filled the calendar with holy days. Some reformers completely removed them, while others simply reduced them. Thomas Cranmer retained the primacy of Sunday as the primary feast days, reestablishing its link with the Eucharist. He also greatly reduced the number of holy days in the Prayer Book. The current American Prayer Book focuses on the centrality of Sundays and of the baptismal nature of the Church. The Church currently celebrates a number of special days, which are listed on

page 16-17 of the most recent Prayer Book. These include Days of Special Observance, which are listed from pages 19 –33 of the Prayer Book.

## **Seasons:**

### **Advent –**

The Christian seasonal calendar began with the introduction of the initiation to baptism that surrounded Easter – the greatest and most central season in the Church. In essence, the rest of the year fitted to surround this central event. Where the year had a middle, it needed at beginning, and so arose the season of Advent. The legalization of Christianity under Emperor Constantine, and the influx of people who did not fully convert from paganism meant that the Church was forced to compete with pagan days of worship. Both Christmas and Epiphany arose to challenge the pagan rituals surrounding the winter solstice. Christmas day as a celebration of the incarnation was established as early as the fourth century in lieu of the celebration of the birthday surrounding the Roman god Saturn, which took place on the 21 of December. Epiphany was an event that countered the Egyptian celebration of the sun god that took place on January 6. As Christianity spread, the conversion of these two events meant the transmittal of these celebrations as Christian events, linked to the incarnation, the coming of the Magi, the baptism of Jesus, and the wedding of Cana. In the West, this season came to include an anticipatory period. In the East, Epiphany was used as a baptismal period and so, like Lent, there came to be a period of preparation before it. And so the season of Advent formed in the following centuries that combined these two moods, creating a season of both expectation and preparation, of joyous celebration, and penitence.

Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas, and is marked by an increasing anticipation of Christ's incarnation (and expectant return). This is often done with the lighting of the four candles, one for each week that precedes Christmas day. Each of these candles represents a different theme associated with advent: the first represents hope or prophecy, while the other three vary around the themes emphasized by the local church. The third, or fourth candle is often pink and represents the joy of the imminent birth of Christ. The Christ candle, which is typically white, is lit on Christmas Eve, or Christmas day and represents Christ's presence. Much of the evergreen used in the season is taken from pagan traditions, and while it has a significant aesthetic purpose, can also represent the ever presence of God's love.

### **Easter –**

The Easter season is not a single day, nor does it simply consist of Holy Week. Easter itself lasts from the Sunday commemorating Christ's resurrection until the day of Pentecost fifty days later. The preparation for Easter, inclusively called Lent, includes the forty days (excluding Sundays) preceding Easter. Within that period exists the Holy Week, which is the week before Easter.

Easter emerged as a Christian Passover (noted in the second century): a single event that commemorated the death and resurrection of Christ. It is the earliest and most central Christian celebration having apostolic roots. We know this because unlike all of

the other festivals Easter is determined by the Judaic lunar calendar, representative of the Judaic nature of the early Church and occurs around the time of the Passover, which falls on the fourteenth of Nisan. To figure out the day that Jesus died, the Church determined that the last supper in which Jesus supped with his disciples was the Passover meal, placing his death the day after the Pasch. However, since the fourteenth of Nisan could fall on any day of the week, to be consistent with the dominant practice, the Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.) determined that Easter should be celebrated on the Sunday following the Pasch. However, the Council failed to make specific the methodology of calculating the date, and two different methods emerged. The Eastern Church and the Western Church, while trying to adhere to the Council, adopted separate calendars – the Julian versus the Semitic respectively – which places the date of Easter separately. In the West, Easter Sunday currently falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after spring equinox (ecclesiastically determined as March 21), which places the date anytime between late March and late April. The Eastern Church determines March 21 using the Gregorian calendar, which places the date of Easter sometime in early April to early May. As the principle celebration of the Church, the liturgical year revolves around Easter and the Holy Week, being the climax of Jesus' teaching and actions.

### **Lent –**

Lent is the forty days that precedes Easter Sunday. It excludes the Sundays in the period, which are the Lord's days, and are therefore always to be celebrated as victorious. It is a time of reflection, penitence, and abstention through fasting. In the act of sacrifice, attention is called to Jesus' own sacrifice, traveling with him through the events and trials that lead up to his death. It is associated with the forty days that he spent in the wilderness, although its length is more arbitrary, emerging from a variance of early practices which included extending fasting period beyond the Holy Week. As the Church once used the Easter vigil as the primary day for the baptism of new initiates, Lent was the period that the initiate would reflect and pray on the upcoming event. This practice became to disappear with the prominence of infant baptism, leaving lent as a period of reflection and sacrifice in the Church calendar.

### **Holy Week –**

Holy week is the essential week that leads up to Easter, and includes Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Eve. This is the pinnacle of the Church year with the climax occurring on Easter Sunday with the celebration of Christ's victory and resurrection.

#### **Palm Sunday –**

Palm Sunday anticipates the week, imagining Jesus' own entrance as an exalted King into Jerusalem. It developed out of a celebration emerging in Jerusalem as early as the fourth century, which surrounded the sites related to the events. A Eucharist was celebrated, after which the participants went home for a quick meal. Following that, the congregation would participate in a procession including hymns and antiphons moving from sacred site to sacred site, reenacting the entry with its conclusion at the Lord's tomb.

The English reformers aversion to the practice of blessing palms reduced the service to a set of related readings and hymns occurring the Sunday before Easter. It wasn't until the 1928 Prayer Book that some of the traditional services were reintroduced as optional. The liturgy is intended to reenact the exuberance with which Jesus was welcomed into Jerusalem, preferring full sized palm branches and locations other than the Church.

### **Maundy Thursday –**

The drastic change in tone by the end of the week, leaves a complex Maundy Thursday, which commemorates the Last Supper, and gives allusion to Jesus' preparation for death with the stripping of the altar, and often includes a sacramental element by washing each other's feet. This action follows Jesus' direct command to his disciples during the last supper.

The celebration emerged out of a practice of observing the location of Christ's death in Jerusalem as early as the fourth century. A Eucharist was followed by a celebration by the supposed location of the crucifixion. Hymns and antiphons were sung all day to anticipate Good Friday, while the Gospel would be read in the evening. A procession followed moving from through the actions of the day with appropriate readings until early Friday morning, when they would be dismissed until the Good Friday Service.

This day commemorated the institution of the Eucharist and washing of feet to commemorate the new commandment to love one another. Abbots would wash the feet of monks, and Kings the feet of peasants; while the early English reformers drastically cut the liturgy of the day, the practice of washing feet continued into the time of Elizabeth, with the Queen washing the feet of poor women. The option for this rite was reintroduced in the 1662 Prayer Book.

### **Good Friday –**

Good Friday commemorates Jesus' death, and is the one Holy day where the Eucharist is celebrated from the reserve sacrament, with the sacrament being prepared on Maundy Thursday. While the earliest traditions made no distinction in celebrating Christ's death and resurrection, the two events separated with the purported discovery of the True Cross by Emperor Constantine's mother. Special rites surrounding the cross developed, and spread as more Churches acquired a piece of it. Eventually, the rite became common despite the fact that most churches had no claim to possess a piece of the relic. Liturgy developed in the West venerating the actions of Christ in relation to the cross. The practice of taking the sacrament on this day developed out of the tradition that Eucharist was not to be taken of days of fasting. Despite this, the liturgy began to include taking from the reserve sacrament on Friday (and many other days in the East), but having it come from the reserve sacrament which was traditionally set aside for congregants to take with them on Sunday to be able to take the sacrament in their homes during the week. The 1979 Prayer Book is the first in the Anglican tradition to ban the practice of celebrating the Eucharist on Good Friday, insisting that the elements be taken from the reserve sacrament. Until the most recent edition, the practice had been fairly common throughout much of the Anglican tradition, despite its non-adherence to tradition.

### **Holy Saturday –**

There is no Eucharist held at all on Saturday. For the first six or seven centuries there was no liturgy held at all during the day, but the day was set aside as a day of fasting. While

there is allowance for a Saturday liturgy, it does not come from any traditional practice surrounding Easter.

### **Easter Vigil–**

The vigil, which begins at sundown, is “the mother of all vigils” (Liturgy, 462) according to St. Augustine with the whole history of salvation revealed in it. Its practice goes back to at least the second century, if not to the Apostles themselves. The vigil was the primary time for candidates to be baptized, with the actual immersion occurring at sunrise on Sunday. While the candidates fasted on both Friday and Saturday, the Easter Vigil was spent listening to instruction and preparing for the entrance to the tradition. With the first sign of sunrise, the water and oil was blessed, and the candidates renounced Satan, promising to contribute their lives to Christ. They were baptized in water; all the while they recited their beliefs (from which the Creeds emerged). Once done, they were anointed and brought in to celebrate the Eucharist with the rest of the Christians. This practice faded with the popularity of infant baptism, and the tradition of lighting the paschal candle and blessing of the new fire.

The English reformers discarded much of the mediaeval traditions surrounding lights, opting for an Easter day celebration that incorporated elements from the Passover and components of the baptism celebrated in the vigil. The practice of baptizing new initiates on the Sunday of Easter was emphasized. It is with the most recent edition of the Prayer Book that the vigil is reinstated. The emphasis on the lighting and blessing of the Paschal candle gives allusion to the cloud and pillar of fire that led the Israelites out of Egypt. The tradition is likely Celtic in origin, and was eventually added to the Western rite. The light, which can either be a single candle or many candles held by the congregation as originally lit by the single candle, emphasizes the baptismal nature of the day and emphasizes the light of Christ and his sacrifice.

### **Pentecost (Whitsunday) –**

The fifty days of Easter, which include the day celebrating Christ’s ascension and the Jewish day surrounding Pentecost (Greek for the festival of Shavuot) on which the Holy Spirit was given to the apostles, constitutes the oldest, and most important season in the Church Calendar. The early Church fathers commemorate this period as fifty days of Sundays, in which no fasting or kneeling was allowed. Originally, the ascension was celebrated on Easter day. However, by the fourth century it was a separate day, forty days into Easter. Pentecost itself celebrates the third person of the trinity.

The Vigil of Pentecost as it exists currently resembles a simplified version of the Easter vigil and is historically associated with baptism. It is one of the five days set aside in the Prayer Book as essential baptismal days. The early Church used Pentecost as a day of baptism for candidates who had prepared for an Easter baptism, but for whatever reason were unable to be baptized on that day.

The Gospel of Luke, who is the same author as the Acts of the Apostles, ends the gospel with Jesus telling the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the arrival of the Holy Spirit, and it is on this occasion that the Church was born. It is on this occasion that the Church looks to its own inaugurated mission on the Earth as Christ ordained it. It is the hope of the joyful future, and a celebration of the body of Christ as being members of it.

The period following Pentecost measures the ordinary (Proper) time of the Church, which continues until the Advent of the New Year.

### **Daily Office –**

The daily office developed out of the idea of dedicating times in the day to focusing on prayer. Judaic tradition marked times of the day with public services and the devout included times of private prayer. By as early as the second century, Christians had adopted the practice, with morning and evening services for those who could make it, and private prayers and worship for those who could not. Quickly the day became further subdivided, including 9am, 12 noons, and 3 pm which were associated with Jesus' passion, as well as the descent of the spirit. Midnight, and a dawn were also added. By doing this, the early Christians were identifying the days themselves to be associated with the story of Christ, dividing it liturgically to become associated with worship. The legalization of Christianity within the Roman Empire made these events more formal, and services developed around them. As well, the proliferations of monasticism, meant people were dedicating themselves to the practice of participating in these daily services. The clericalism that emerged in the mediaeval period created a shift from corporate worship to a type of monastic responsibility: it became the duty of monks and clerics to perform the offices, petitioning the corporate prayers and worship on behalf of the Church and the world. Liturgies developed surrounding this responsibility, with a reduction in a focus on reading the Word, and an increase in prayers. The reformers drastically cut the weekday services, and the prevalence of the office, opting for the importance of corporate Sunday worship. The daily office was kept, but reduced, with much of the liturgical flourish removed. Cranmer's original edit focused on morning and evening prayer and emphasized the lessons: the Psalter were to be read through once a month, the vast majority of the old testament and apocrypha once a year, and the new testament three times a year.

The daily office continues to be an essential teaching and participatory element in the Episcopal Church's liturgy. The current Prayer Book continues to emphasize the importance of morning and evening prayer, offered in both modern and classic language, as well as providing an order for the optional noonday, and compline services. It also includes an Order of Worship for the Evening, which uses candles and light to create an aesthetic worship atmosphere.

### **Colors –**

Colors are used to decorate various elements within the Church in order to emphasize the liturgy of the season. The use of colors enhances the visual component of worship, enriching the liturgy into a multi-sensory experience surrounding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. By the time of the fourth century, the only sanctioned color used by the Church was white, which emphasized many of the characteristics surrounding the risen Christ and the cleansed nature of the new Christian. In the thirteenth century, Pope Innocent III was amongst the first to use distinct liturgical colors to emphasize the various liturgical season, introducing red, green, black, and violet. Blue and yellow appeared over the next four centuries.



While there are traditional colors associated with traditional events, the color used by any church is related to that church's ultimate preference. Purple and White are themes in coloring, with purple very often being used for Advent and Lent, as well as Easter Sunday. White is a colour long used by the Church, and is used surrounding the holiest days, which can include Christmas day and Easter. Gold is often used as an alternative to white. Green commemorates Epiphany, although white or gold can be substituted. Perhaps the most powerful uses of color is in its stark absence during Holy Week, when the altar and sanctuary is stripped of all colors until the celebration of Easter, leaving the front bare through Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

(Sources: Ancient-Future: Time, Robert E. Webber; Peter G. Cobb "The History of the Christian Year," The Study of Liturgy, Cheslyn Jones, et al. eds.; [www.newadvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org); Commentary on the American Prayer Book, Marion J. Hatchett)