

# GLOSSARY

**acolyte.** Assisting minister who serves roles such as crucifer, torchbearer, banner bearer, book bearer, candlelighter, and server.

**Advent.** Season of the church year beginning four Sundays before December 25; a time of preparation for celebrating the birth of Christ.

**Advent wreath.** A wreath with four candles, used during the four weeks of Advent.

**affirmation of baptism.** Rite in which previously baptized persons make public affirmation of their baptismal promises and the church affirms God's baptismal gift.

**alb.** White robe worn by liturgical leaders; may be worn by newly baptized.

**alms basin.** Large plate or basket in which the smaller offering plates or baskets are received and carried in the offering procession.

**altar, altar-table.** A principal furnishing in the worship space, the altar is the table and place where communion is celebrated and around which God's baptized family gathers to share this meal.

**ambo.** Single reading stand for the proclamation of the readings and preaching.

**amice** (AH-miss). White linen cloth resembling a collar, which may be worn with an alb.

**anointing.** Marking the head or body with oil.

**antependium.** Parament for pulpit and lectern.

**ashes.** Symbol of repentance and mortality used in the Ash Wednesday liturgy; made by burning palms from previous year.

**assembly.** The people gathered for worship.

**assisting minister.** Liturgical leader who assists the assembly in worship, preferably a layperson.

**baptism.** The sacrament of water and the Holy Spirit, in which we are joined to Christ's death and resurrection and initiated into the church.

**baptismal font.** See **font**.

**baptismal garment.** White robe with which the newly baptized may be clothed; see also **alb**.

**baptistery.** The area in which the baptismal font is located.

**blue.** Liturgical color for Advent; symbolizes hope.

**bobeche** (BOH-besh). White plastic or cardboard drip protector for a candle.

**brazier.** A container for holding fire, especially the "new fire" at the Vigil of Easter.

**burse.** Square fabric-covered case in which the communion linens are often carried to and from the altar.

**candlelighter.** Long-handled device used to light and extinguish candles.

**candlestick.** Ornamental base holder for candle.

**cassock.** Full-length black “undergarment” worn under surplice or cotta.

**catechumen** (cat-eh-CUE-men). Youth or adult preparing for baptism and first communion.

**catechumenate** (cat-eh-CUE-men-ut). Process through which youth or adults may prepare for baptism and first communion.

**censer.** Vessel in which incense is burned; also called a *thurible*.

**cercloth** (SEAR-kloth). Traditionally, with stone altars, the first cloth placed on the mensa; usually made of wax-treated linen.

**chalice** (CHAL-iss). See **cup**.

**chancel.** Section of the worship space where altar-table, ambo/pulpit, and leaders’ chairs are located.

**chasuble** (CHA-zuh-bul). Poncho-like vestment often worn over an alb and stole by presiding minister at the communion service.

**chrism** (krizm). Oil used for anointing at baptism.

**Christmas.** A twelve-day time of rejoicing over the birth of Christ; also the Nativity of Our Lord (December 25) and its vigil, Christmas Eve (December 24), which begin the Christmas season.

**ciborium** (sih-BOR-ee-um). Tall, covered vessel that holds wafers for holy communion.

**cincture** (SINK-chur). Rope belt worn with an alb.

**columbarium** (KOLL-um-BARR-ee-um). Wall or other structure with niches for burial of ashes from cremation.

**commemorations.** Days on the calendar celebrating persons or events, sometimes distinguished from the more important lesser festivals.

**compline** (COM-plun). See **night prayer**.

**confirmation.** See **affirmation of baptism**.

**cope.** Long cape worn by worship leader for certain processions and ceremonial occasions.

**corporal.** Square white linen cloth placed on the center of the fair linen on the mensa, on which the communion vessels are placed.

**corpus.** Carved figure of Christ attached to a cross; together, cross and corpus are a crucifix.

**cotta** (KOTT-ah). Short white vestment worn over cassock by acolytes and choir (unless albs are worn).

**credence** (KREE-dentz). Shelf or table at chancel wall, which holds sacramental vessels and offering plates.

**crozier** (KROH-zher). Crook-shaped staff often carried by a bishop in his or her own synod as a sign of shepherding authority.

**crucifer.** The acolyte who carries the processional cross.

**crucifix.** Cross with a corpus attached.

**cruet.** Glass vessel containing wine for holy communion, oil for anointing, or water for the lavabo.

**cup.** Primary vessel used for serving the wine of holy communion.

**daily prayer.** A form of prayer service, originating in monastic worship, including morning prayer (matins), evening prayer (vespers), and night prayer (compline, prayer at the close of the day).

**dalmatic** (dal-MAH-tik). Eucharistic vestment sometimes worn over the alb by the principal assisting minister during festive celebrations of holy communion.

**Easter.** A fifty-day time of rejoicing over the resurrection of Christ; also the festival of the Resurrection of Our Lord, the beginning of Easter.

**Easter Vigil.** See **Vigil of Easter.**

**elements.** The earthly elements used in the celebration of the sacraments: bread and wine in holy communion, and water in holy baptism.

**Epiphany.** Festival of Christ's incarnation on January 6.

**eucharist** (YOO-ca-rist). From the Greek for "thanksgiving"; a name for holy communion; the celebration of the word of God and the eucharistic meal.

**evening prayer.** A form of daily prayer designed for and prayed in the evening, traditionally near sunset; vespers.

**ewer** (YOO-er). A pitcher used for carrying water to the baptismal font.

**fair linen.** Top white linen cloth covering the mensa of the altar and thus serving as the tablecloth for the Lord's supper.

**fall.** Old term sometimes used for paraments on altar-table, pulpit, and lectern.

**feast.** A day on which Christ's death and resurrection is celebrated; includes every Sunday as well as principal and lesser festivals of the church year.

**festivals.** See **feast**; also, particular celebrations of God's saving action in Christ, often focused on events in the life of Christ or on the lives and witnesses of apostles and other followers.

**flagon** (FLAG-un). Pitcher-like vessel from which wine is poured into the chalice for holy communion.

**font.** The basin or pool of water where the sacrament of holy baptism takes place; one of the principal furnishings of a worship space.

**freestanding altar.** An altar-table that is not attached to the wall, and behind which the ministers stand (facing the assembly) for the celebration of holy communion.

**frontal.** Parament that covers the entire front of the altar-table, from the top edge of the mensa down to the floor; see also **Laudian frontal.**

**frontlet.** Narrow altar-table parament usually hung in pairs and extending only partway to the floor; not now commonly used.

**funeral pall.** A large covering draped over a coffin while it is in the church; if an urn is used for ashes, a small white cloth is used to cover it.

**gold.** Liturgical color for the Vigil of Easter and Easter Day.

**Greek cross.** Ancient form of the cross in which the four arms are of equal length.

**green.** Liturgical color for the time after Epiphany and the time after Pentecost.

**Holy Week.** The week between the Sunday of the Passion (Palm Sunday) and Easter.

**host.** Wafer made of unleavened bread.

**host box.** Short, round, covered container that holds the supply of hosts for communion; see also **pyx**.

**incense.** Mixture of resins for ceremonial burning, symbolic of our prayers rising to God.

**intinction.** Method of distributing communion in which the bread is dipped into the wine and then eaten.

**Laudian frontal.** A type of frontal that entirely covers the top and all sides (to the floor) of a freestanding altar.

**lavabo bowl** (lah-VAH-boh). Bowl used for the act of cleansing the minister's hands before the great thanksgiving or after the imposition of ashes.

**lectern.** Reading stand, sometimes distinguished from pulpit; see also **ambo**.

**lectionary.** Set of three scripture readings and a psalm appointed for each Sunday and principal festival of the church year; or a book containing these readings; see also **Revised Common Lectionary**.

**lector.** See also **reader**.

**Lent.** The season of the church year beginning with Ash Wednesday and concluding with the Three Days (or Maundy Thursday).

**lesser festivals.** Days in the church year that fall in importance between the principal festivals, such as Christmas, Ascension, and Pentecost, and commemorations.

**linens.** Refers to three groups of white linen cloths: altar linens (cerecloth, protector linen, and fair linen), communion linens (corporal, pall, purificators, and veil), and other linens (lavabo towel and baptismal towel).

**liturgy.** The patterns, words, and actions that form the worship of the Christian assembly; in some settings, used interchangeably with *worship*.

**lucernarium** (loo-cher-NAHR-eeum). From the Latin for "light"; the service of light at the beginning of evening prayer.

**matins.** See **morning prayer**.

**memorial garden.** Usually a courtyard garden on church property in which ashes are mixed with the soil for interment after cremation.

**mensa.** From the Latin for "table"; the top surface of the altar.

**missal stand.** Stand or cushion on the altar-table on which the leaders book or ritual book is placed.

**miter** (MY-ter). A liturgical hat worn by a bishop.

**morning prayer.** A form of daily prayer designed for and prayed in the morning; matins.

**morse.** The clasp used to fasten a cope.

**narthex.** Gathering space, foyer, entryway to the worship space.

**nave.** Main section of the worship space, where the assembly is located.

**new fire.** The bonfire kindled at the beginning of the Easter Vigil.

**night prayer.** Daily prayer service for use at the end of the day, just prior to retiring for the night; compline; prayer at the close of the day.

**order.** Way in which the parts of the service are arranged; a section within a full service, such as order for baptism, order for gathering; rite.

**ordinary.** In traditional communion liturgy forms, the unchanging parts, e.g., Kyrie, “Glory to God,” creed; sometimes refers to the “green Sundays” as those in “ordinary time,” meaning numbered or counted Sundays.

**pall.** Linen-covered square placed atop a communion cup when it is not in use; see also **funeral pall**.

**Palm Sunday.** See **Sunday of the Passion**.

**paraments.** Cloth hangings of various seasonal liturgical colors used to adorn the altar-table and ambo/pulpit.

**paschal** (PAS-kul). In Christian use, the passage of Jesus Christ from death to life.

**paschal candle.** Tall, white candle lit at the Easter Vigil, during the Easter season, and at baptisms and funerals.

**paten** (PAT-un). See **plate**.

**pectoral cross.** A cross on a chain, worn around the neck by a bishop.

**Pentecost.** The third of the great festivals of the church year, celebrating the giving of the Holy Spirit; occurs fifty days after Easter Sunday and is the last day of Easter.

**piscina.** A special drain in the sacristy that goes directly into the ground, used for disposal of wine remaining in the communion cup.

**plate.** Vessel often used to hold communion bread for distribution; paten.

**Prayer at the close of the day.** See **night prayer**.

**Presiding minister.** The ordained minister who presides and preaches at the communion service.

**prie-dieu** (pree-DYOO). French term for “prayer desk”; used in the chancel for daily prayer services and weddings as well as by ministers at other times when kneeling for prayer is desired.

**processional cross.** A cross or crucifix on a tall staff used to lead processions.

**processional torch.** See **torch**.

**propers.** The liturgical texts appointed for a given day, e.g., readings, prayer of the day, gospel acclamation.

**protector linen.** White linen cloth placed on the mensa between the cerecloth and the fair linen, to which the parament may be attached.

**pulpit.** Reading stand, sometimes distinguished from lectern and used for preaching; see also **ambo**.

**purificator.** Square linen napkin used to cleanse the rim of the cup during the distribution of holy communion.

**purple.** Liturgical color for Lent.

**pyx** (piks). An alternative container for distributing the bread of communion, usually taking the form of a small, cylindrical, covered box; see also **host box**.

**reader.** The assisting minister or other person, usually lay, appointed to read from scripture in worship.

**readings.** The scripture texts appointed for public reading in the liturgy.

**red.** Liturgical color used for the Day of Pentecost and festivals associated with the Holy Spirit; also used for days celebrating events in the church, such as Reformation.

**responsive prayer.** Brief liturgical order of versicles and responses.

**retable** (REE-tay-bel). A step or shelf at the rear of the mensa of an east-wall altar, on which cross, candlesticks, and flowers are placed.

**Revised Common Lectionary (RCL).** Three-year set of Sunday and festival readings for worship shared (with some variations) among many church bodies worldwide.

**rite.** Liturgical orders or sections that take place within a full assembly service, e.g., baptism rite, ordination rite, gathering rite; may be used synonymously with *order*.

**ritual.** A symbolic action or grouping of actions, with or without words.

**rubric.** A direction for the conduct of a worship service; notes on the service.

**sacrament.** The physical sign of an unseen promise; rites of the church that convey God's forgiveness, life, and salvation through words and physical means; baptism and communion.

**sacristy.** A room used for storage and preparation of items needed in worship; also used for vesting before services.

**sanctuary.** Technically, the area immediately surrounding the altar.

**sanctuary lamp.** A constantly burning candle sometimes suspended from the ceiling or mounted on the chancel wall.

**scarlet.** The deep red liturgical color used from the Sunday of the Passion (Palm Sunday) through Maundy Thursday.

**service.** Full liturgical order; communion service, baptism service, service of morning prayer.

**sign of the cross.** Tracing the cross on the forehead or over the body.

**spoon.** Perforated utensil sometimes used to remove foreign particles from wine in the communion cup; also used with granular incense.

**stole.** Long fabric band worn by ordained ministers over the shoulders.

**stripping of the altar.** Ceremony at the conclusion of the Maundy Thursday liturgy in which all appointments, linens, and paraments are removed from the altar-table and chancel.

**Sunday of the Passion.** Beginning of Holy Week and last Sunday in Lent; often called Palm Sunday because of the entrance with palms traditionally used on that day.

**superfrontal.** Short parament that hangs over the front of the mensa of an east-wall altar; now rarely used.

**surplice.** White vestment worn over the cassock; used especially for daily prayer services.

**thanksgiving at the font.** Prayer at holy baptism preceding the baptism of a candidate.

**thanksgiving at the table.** Prayer at holy communion that includes Jesus' words of institution; often also includes thanksgiving to God for acts of salvation and prayer to the Holy Spirit; eucharistic prayer.

**thanksgiving for baptism.** Service element, often part of the gathering rite in the communion service, that may include a prayer of thanksgiving for baptism coupled with a visible reminder of baptism.

**Three Days, the.** The three days of Holy Week that focus intensely on Christ's passage from death to life: Maundy Thursday (evening) through the Resurrection of Our Lord (Easter Day, sometimes including evening); triduum.

**thurible.** Censer; vessel in which incense is burned.

**thurifer.** The person who carries the thurible.

**time after Epiphany.** Variable number of weeks after the Epiphany of Our Lord (January 6) and before Ash Wednesday.

**time after Pentecost.** Variable number of weeks after the Day of Pentecost and before the first Sunday of Advent.

**torch.** Large candle on a staff carried in processions.

**torchbearer.** An acolyte who carries a processional torch.

**triduum** (TRIH-doo-um). See **Three Days, the.**

**tunicle.** Eucharistic vestment less ornate than a dalmatic; may be worn over the alb by an assisting minister during festive celebrations of holy communion.

**urn.** Small container holding the remains after a cremation.

**veil.** A cloth placed over the communion vessels before and after the communion service.

**versicle.** A short verse or sentence said or sung by a leader, followed by a response by the assembly.

**vespers.** See **evening prayer.**

**vigil.** A liturgical service on the eve of a festival, such as the Easter Vigil.

**Vigil of Easter.** Celebration of the resurrection on the night before Easter; first celebration of Easter.

**white.** Liturgical color used for festivals of Christ, the weeks of Christmas and Easter, Holy Trinity, All Saints, and certain other days.

**worship.** The primary gathering for Christians in which we encounter God; see liturgy, service.

**worship space.** Entire area in which the assembly worships; may encompass chancel, nave, and gathering space.