



## A St. John's Vocabulary List

Welcome to St. John's. As you're probably aware, the Church has its own vocabulary and way of speaking. One of the nice things about this is that it says quite clearly that once you enter this sacred space, things are different. Unfortunately it can also be confusing to those not familiar with either the Episcopal Church or St. John's. In fact, even those of us who have been around the Church for many years could use a brush up on some of the lingo. We've put together a list of terms that you are most likely to encounter on a regular basis here. There is certainly no need to digest all of this at once. We just offer it to you as a way to become more familiar with the Episcopal Church and our particular parish community.

**Acolyte** Acolytes assist the clergy during services. Among other ceremonial functions, they walk in procession, bear the processional cross, and light and carry candles.

**Administrative Assistant** The person responsible for managing the church office. We're fortunate to have the capable Evelyn Czaja in this position to keep things running smoothly.

**Advent Wreath** A special wreath containing four candles used in churches and homes as a reminder of the four Sundays before Christmas. By tradition one additional candle is lit each Sunday in Advent until the fourth Sunday, when all four candles are lit.

**Advent** The season of preparation for the festival of Christmas that begins with the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day. It also focuses on deepening our awareness of the presence of God throughout our lives and on the coming of Christ to judge and re-create the world at the Last day.

**Alb** The white robe worn by the priest underneath the Chasuble when celebrating Communion.

**All Saints' Day** A feast day in the church in commemoration of all saints, known and unknown, that is celebrated on November 1st.

**Altar Guild** The group of lay people charged with the maintenance and preparation of the altar and its furnishings for worship.

**Altar** The table located in the sanctuary on which the bread and wine are offered in the Holy Eucharist. It is treated with reverence as the place where God's presence meets us. The main altar is often referred to as the "high altar."

**Anglican** A term indicating the English origins of the Episcopal Church. Sometimes seen in the expressions 'Anglican Church' or 'Anglican Communion,' both of which simply indicate any national church that derives from the Church of England.

**Anglican Communion** Refers to the Anglican Church as it exists in countries throughout the world. The Archbishop of Canterbury is the titular head of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

**Sexton** An older English title for the person in charge of the church building. In America the Sexton is commonly the head of maintenance and custodial services. Our gifted, talented, and friendly sexton is Dorothy Manley.

**Stole** A long, narrow strip of cloth, of the appropriate liturgical color, worn around the neck of a priest or left shoulder of a deacon.

**Surplice** A long, flowing white over-garment worn over the black cassock. It is worn by Priests and Deacons at non-Eucharistic services and by acolytes and members of the choir.

**Thayer Room** The parish's "living room" named for the family that built the current stone church. Coffee Hour following the 8:00 am Sunday morning service meets here as do various small group meetings.

**Thurifer** The acolyte specifically designated to carry the incense in procession. It is burned in a small pot called a thurible.

**Tippet** A black scarf worn around the neck by priests and deacons when serving at a non-Eucharistic service such as evensong or morning prayer.

**Torch Bearer** The acolyte who carries a candle in a procession.

**Twelve Days of Christmas** The time from December 25th to January 6th, that is from Christmas Day to Epiphany. The time from the first Sunday in Advent until Christmas Eve is, properly, Advent; the time from December 25th to January 6th is the Christmas season or the "Twelve Days of Christmas."

**Upper Weld Hall** The church's Parish Hall named for the Rev. George Weld, rector during whose time it was built. Coffee Hour takes place here as do various social events.

**Verger** The person who assists the clergy by organizing processions, training acolytes, and generally helping to insure that services are smoothly run. Ours is Tom Daley.

**Vestry** The governing board of a local Episcopal church consisting of lay members. This group makes basic decisions about the church budget, building plans, etc. and is headed by the Senior Warden assisted by the Junior Warden.

**Rector** The head priest of a parish. Our rector is the Rev. Timothy E. Schenck, known around here as Father Tim.

**Rectory** The residence of a rector. Our rector and his family live in the St. John's rectory, the yellow house located next to the church. It was built in 1789.

**Reredos** Refers to any decoration behind or above an altar. Our beautiful Reredos is an intricate wood carving.

**Reserved Sacrament** Bread and wine consecrated by a priest that remains in or near the sanctuary. Its primary purpose is so that Christ is always present in the form of bread and wine in the church building. It is also used for pastoral emergencies when Communion is brought to the sick or homebound. At St. John's it is kept in an Aumbry, the wood cabinet to the left of the Altar.

**Rite One (I)** A portion of the Book of Common Prayer which contains worship services using the older language of the Elizabethan era. We use Rite I at the 8 o'clock service

**Rite Two (II)** A portion of the Book of Common Prayer containing worship services which use more modern language. We use Rite II at the 10:00 am service on Sunday mornings.

**Sacristy** The room in which the Communion vessels and vestments are kept. This is where the Altar Guild does much of their work and ministry.

**Sanctuary** The portion of the church at the head of the chancel that surrounds the Altar. It is marked by the wooden Communion rail.

**Sanctuary Lamp** The candle above the Aumbry that indicates the Sacrament is reserved. It is symbolic of the Light of Christ.

**Seminarian** A student in a seminary, studying for ordained ministry.

**Senior Warden** The lay person who heads the Vestry, or governing board of the parish.

**Sermon** A religious address to the congregation the purpose of which is to expound on the Scripture readings of the day.

**Annual Meeting** A once-per-year parish-wide meeting required by the canons of the Episcopal Church. Ours is typically held in late January or early February.

**Anthem** This refers to any vocal music or hymn sung by the choir but not by the congregation.

**Archbishop of Canterbury** The Presiding Bishop, or primate, of the Church of England who is recognized by Anglicans throughout the world as the spiritual head of the Anglican Communion. National Churches in relationship with Canterbury remain responsible for their own life and work.

**Ash Wednesday** This day marks the beginning of the season of Lent, a period of spiritual discipline, fasting and moderation in preparation for Holy Week and Easter. In the Ash Wednesday service, ashes are imposed on the foreheads of worshippers by the clergy.

**Aumbry** The wooden cabinet to the left of the Altar where the Reserved Sacrament is kept.

**Bishop, Diocesan** The primary bishop of a diocese. The Right Reverend Thomas Shaw is the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts.

**Bishop, Suffragan** A working co-bishop in a diocese but without inherent right of succession when the diocesan bishop retires or resigns. The Bishop Suffragan of Massachusetts is the Right Reverend Roy (Bud) Cederholm, Jr.

**Bishop's Chair** The special seat reserved for a bishop visiting the parish. Ours is placed to the left of the Altar.

**Book of Common Prayer** A collection of prayers, readings, Psalms, devotions, and services used by the Episcopal Church. It is the red book you will find in the pews. The current Prayer Book of 1979 is a subsequent revision of the original 1549 Book of Common Prayer.

**Cassock** The black, red, or blue robe worn by priests, deacons, acolytes, and choir.

**Cathedral** An Episcopal Church which is the official church of the Bishop of a diocese. Cathedrals are usually in the charge of a priest who is referred to as the Dean of the Cathedral. The Cathedral in this diocese is The Cathedral Church of St. Paul on Tremont Street in Boston.

**Catholic** Literally, "universal" or "found everywhere." The Episcopal Church is a catholic church. Catholic churches generally accept the teachings of tradition as well as scripture and usually accept the validity of one or more ancient creeds as the summary of the Christian faith. This term should not be confused with the reference to the Roman Catholic branch of the Church, though the terms are often used synonymously.

**Celebrant** The main priest in a service of Holy Eucharist, the one who performs the consecration of the bread and wine.

**Chalice Bearer** A lay person specially trained and licensed to administer consecrated wine from a chalice during a Communion service.

**Chancel** The portion of the church between the lectern/pulpit and the altar. At St. John's the celebrant sits in the chancel for the liturgy of the Word, prior to Communion.

**Chant** The ecclesiastical singing of the psalms and canticles in the daily offices. "Anglican" chants are harmonized and in strict rhythm. We often sing the psalm to Anglican chant.

**Chasuble** The sleeveless outer garment traditionally worn by the Celebrant at a service of the Holy Eucharist. Its color is dependent upon the Church calendar.

**Choir** A special group of singers who chant or sing during a worship service. Our adult choir is the St. John's Choir; the children's choir is called the St. Gregory Choir.

**Chrism** Holy oil blessed by a bishop that is used to anoint a newly baptized member of the Church.

**Church of England** The name of the Episcopal Church in England.

**Clergy** The group of ordained ministers of a church. In the Episcopal Church this refers to all bishops, priests, and deacons.

**Patronal Festival** The day used by a parish to commemorate the saint or saints for which it has been named.

**Peace, The** A ritual in the Episcopal Church in which members of the congregation, including the clergy, greet one another. The passing of The Peace during worship is an ancient Christian practice.

**Pentecost** The day of Pentecost marks the end of the 50-day long Easter season. It commemorates the sending of the Holy Spirit to the disciples.

**Prayers of the People** The specific portion of the service where the congregation's prayers are offered to God for the Church, the world, the nation, the poor, the sick, and the dead.

**Presiding Bishop** The elected head of the Episcopal Church in America who functions as the chief administrator and spiritual head of the Church. Our current Presiding Bishop is The Most Reverend Katherine Jefferts Schori.

**Priest** Along with deacons and bishops, priests make up the third order or ordained ministers in the Church. Unlike deacons, priests function sacramentally by presiding at the Holy Eucharist and Baptism, by offering blessings in the name of the Church at weddings and funerals, and pronouncing absolution to penitent sinners.

**Procession** The line of choir, clergy, acolytes and others walking into the church to begin a service.

**Processional Cross** The large cross carried by the Crucifer found at the head of any procession into and out of the church.

**Pulpit** A raised platform used for the sermon or homily. Here it is found to the left of the chancel area.

**Reader** Anyone who reads a lesson, psalm or prayer in a service. Lay persons may read any lesson except the Gospel which is always read by a member of the clergy. Also referred to as a lector.

**Liturgy** Literally the word means the "work of the people." It is generally used to refer to a worship service including the full text of the words, the music, and the ritual action involved.

**Lower Weld Hall** The "other" Parish Hall that sits directly underneath Upper Weld Hall. The entrance to the parish kitchen is off Lower Weld Hall, the site of Youth Group and Sunday School meetings as well as large social gatherings.

**Maundy Thursday** The Thursday of Holy Week; the name is from the Latin *mandatum* referring to Christ's commandment concerning foot-washing. It is also the day on which Christ instituted the sacrament of Communion at the Last Supper.

**Memorial Garden** The sunken garden to the right of the church where ashes of deceased parishioner are interred. Outside the side entrance is a plaque containing the names of those buried.

**Morning Prayer** A morning worship service without the celebration of Communion. The sung version of Morning Prayer is referred to as Matins or Mattins.

**Nave** The main part of a church where the congregation sits.

**Offertory** The portion of the service in which bread, wine, and monetary gifts are collected and brought to the Altar.

**Ordination** A special service for inducting a person into holy orders, whether a deacon, priest, or bishop. This service is always performed by a Bishop.

**Organist and Choirmaster** The person responsible for the rehearsing and performance of music during services. We are lucky to have Dr. Fredrick Guzasky serving in this capacity.

**Palm Sunday** Refers to the Sunday before Easter that commemorates Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. In the Episcopal Church, members of the congregation carry real palms during the service and the Story of Christ's crucifixion is read. It is also called the Sunday of the Passion.

**Paschal Candle** A large candle that symbolizes the risen Christ. It is lit at the Easter Vigil service and remains lit during all services during the Easter season. It is also lit at baptisms and funerals.

**Coffee Hour** A time for conversation and fellowship following the Sunday morning services. This takes place in the parish hall (Upper Weld Hall).

**Communion** The Christian sacramental meal of bread and wine instituted by Christ at the Last Supper. It is also referred to as Holy Eucharist, Holy Communion or Mass.

**Convention, General** A gathering every three years of the national Episcopal Church where each diocese is represented by appointed or elected deputies. At General Convention the basic regulations and decisions that govern the church are made.

**Crossing** In church architecture, the main intersection of aisles at the front of the church. If viewed from above, these aisles form a large cross. In a service, crossing refers to a hand gesture of making a cross pattern on one's body.

**Crucifer** The acolyte who bears the cross in a procession.

**Curate** An assisting priest in a congregation. Our curate is the Rev. Anne Emry or Mother Anne.

**Deacon** In the Episcopal Church, the office of deacon is a clerical order. Deacons have special pastoral responsibilities to minister to the sick, poor, and homebound. Their primary liturgical function is to assist the priest during Communion, read the Gospel, and give the dismissal. The Church refers to two types of deacons: permanent ones and transitional deacons. Permanent deacons feel specifically called to the ministry of a deacon. Transitional deacons are those called to the priesthood who spend 6 to 12 months as a deacon before being ordained a priest.

**Diocese** The unit of church organization that is the spiritual domain under a bishop. St. John's is a member of The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts.

**Easter** The feast of Christ's resurrection and one of the principal Holy Days on the Church calendar. It is immediately preceded by Holy Week and the season of Lent. The Easter Season refers to the 50 days following Easter Day, ending with Pentecost.

**Epiphany** A feast day celebrating the visit of the Three Wisemen to the infant Jesus and the sending of the Christian message to the Gentiles, commemorated on January 6th. The Season after the Epiphany ends with the beginning of Lent.

**Episcopal Church** The Anglican Church in America.

**Epistle, The** A reading from the New Testament other than from the Gospels. It may also refer to any reading from the Bible other than the Gospels or Psalms.

**Eucharist** Literally "thanksgiving." In the Episcopal Church the Holy Eucharist refers to the sacrament of Communion.

**Evensong** The sung version of Evening Prayer.

**Father** A familiar or direct way of referring to male priests.

**Flower Guild** Those responsible for ordering and arranging the flowers that surround the Altar on Sunday mornings, for weddings, funerals, and Holy Days.

**Font** A basin of water used in baptism. At St. John's the movable wooden Baptismal font is located on the lectern (right) side of the church and is brought into the middle of the Crossing for baptisms.

**Good Friday** The Friday before Easter where the Church commemorates Christ's crucifixion

**Gospel, The** Any reading from Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John in the New Testament. It also serves as a general reference to the essential message of the Christian faith.

**Holy Week** Covers the period from Palm Sunday through Holy Saturday and immediately precedes Easter Sunday. This most important period of the church year includes many special services.

**Homily** A short sermon often on a single topic of devotion or morality.

**Holy Saturday** The day after Good Friday and before Easter. On this last day of Holy Week, Communion is neither celebrated nor offered.

**Hood** Academic Hoods are traditionally worn by members of the clergy, and others, with advanced degrees during non-Eucharistic services.

**Hymn** A song of praise or adoration of God that is sung by both choir and congregation. We use the blue *Hymnal 1982* found in the pews.

**Incense** A fragrant powder burned in a small dish or pot called a thurible. The use of incense in worship is an ancient and Scripturally-based practice and symbol of prayer that adds dignity and mystery to a service.

**Junior Warden** This lay person sits on the Vestry and assists the Senior Warden.

**Lay Eucharistic Minister** A lay person specially trained and licensed to bring Communion to the sick or homebound with bread and wine previously consecrated by a priest.

**Lay Person** Any non-ordained person in the Episcopal Church.

**Lectern** A raised platform used for reading prayers or Scripture.

**Lectionary** The series of Biblical readings used in the Episcopal Church throughout the Church year.

**Lector** The lay person assigned to read the Lesson at a service.

**Lent** The 40-day period of fasting, sobriety, and meditation from Ash Wednesday to Palm Sunday. The season recalls the period of Christ's fasting and temptation in the wilderness.

**Lesson and Carols** The name of a seasonal worship service, often held in Advent, that includes Scripture readings, choir anthems, and congregational hymns.

**Lesson** Any reading from the Bible except the Gospels or Psalms.

**Liturgical Colors** As the seasons of the Church year change, so do the colors traditionally associated with them. White vestments and Altar hangings are used in Easter and Christmas seasons and for weddings and funerals. Purple is utilized during Lent, blue or purple in Advent, Green on the Sundays following Pentecost and Epiphany, and Red during Holy Week, on the Day of Pentecost, and for the commemoration of martyrs.