ACOLYTE
A person in a simple white vestment, who lights the altar candles and assists the priest in the service.

ALTAR
A table, usually of wood or stone, on which the Eucharist is consecrated.

ALTAR GUILD
A group that takes care of the maintenance and preparation of a church’s altar and its furnishings.

ARCHDEACON
A clergy person appointed by the bishop to provide administrative assistance and other leadership to congregations and church organizations in the diocese.

ASSESSMENT, DIOCESAN (FAIR SHARE)
The amount that each congregation pays to the diocese to fund the diocese’s annual budget.

ASSISTING CLERGY (CURATE, ASSISTANT, ASSOCIATE)
Parish priests selected by the rector, who serve under the authority and direction of the rector.

BAPTISM (HOLY)
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. In the Episcopal Church, anyone who has been baptized may take Communion.

BISHOP
Chief pastor of a diocese and guardian of the faith of the Church.

BISHOP, ASSISTANT
A bishop appointed by the diocesan bishop to assist the diocesan and to serve under the diocesan's direction.

BISHOP, ASSISTING
A bishop appointed by the diocesan bishop to provide short-term assistance with episcopal duties in the diocese.

BISHOP, COADJUTOR
A bishop elected to succeed the diocesan bishop.

BISHOP, DIOCESAN
The primary bishop of the diocese, as described under Bishop above. In the Episcopal Church the diocesan bishop is elected by the Diocesan Convention.

BISHOP, SUFFRAGAN
A bishop elected by the Diocesan Convention to assist the diocesan bishop and to serve under the Diocesan's direction. Unlike a Bishop Coadjutor, a Bishop Suffragan has no automatic right of succession to the diocesan bishop.

BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER
The collection of prayers, readings, psalms, devotions, and services that together make up the official liturgy of the Episcopal Church. Nearly all services in any Episcopal Church are printed in this book. In a church in which there is a wide range of interpretation of doctrine and of liturgical style, the Book of Common Prayer provides a unifying glue that places it at the heart of who we are both as Episcopalians and as part of the wider Anglican Communion. The first English Book of Common Prayer was published in 1549; the classic version, which remained in use in England with minimal changes until well into the 20th century, was completed in 1662.
The Episcopal Church revised its version of the Book of Common Prayer in 1928, and then essentially rewrote it, amid considerable controversy, in 1979. Some services from the 1928 prayer book have been retained in the current prayer book as "Rite I" services. Although each province of the Anglican Communion now has its own Book of Common Prayer, the similarities between them are far greater than their differences.

**Candidate**
The next step beyond postulancy for a person who has been recommended by the Bishop and accepted by the Standing Committee as a Candidate for Holy Orders.

**Canon**
1. An ecclesiastical rule or law adopted by General Convention or by Diocesan Convention.
2. A member of the clergy, or less often a lay person, on the staff of a cathedral or of a bishop

**Canon to the Ordinary**
A canon who is specific to the Bishop's office; a staff officer who performs tasks as assigned by the Ordinary, or Diocesan Bishop.

** Canonical Residence**
The connection with a diocese that a member of the clergy acquires by ordination in and for that diocese or by transfer to the diocese and acceptance by its bishop.

**Catechism**
A commentary on the creeds, printed in the Book of Common Prayer and intended for use by parish priests, deacons, and lay catechists as an outline for instruction. Not meant to be a complete statement of belief and practice, but a point of departure for the teacher. The Catechism also provides a brief summary of the Church's teaching for an inquiring stranger.

**Catholic**
Literally, "universal" or "found everywhere." Usually a reference to the Roman Catholic Church, although the term also includes Anglican, Syrian, Greek, Coptic, Russian and other churches. The Episcopal Church is a catholic church with a small “c.” 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.

**Celebrant**
The bishop or presbyter (priest) who presides at the Eucharist.

**Chalice**
The stemmed cup, usually silver, used to hold the Communion wine. (See Paten)

**Chancel**
The part of a church that is around the altar and between the altar and the nave.

**Chapel**
A house of worship, often small in size, owned by a diocese or by a parish, and removed from the main church. Also, a room or recess in a church for meditation, prayer, and small religious services.

**Chrism**
Consecrated oil used in the administration of Baptism, confirmation, ordination, etc.
**CHURCH OF ENGLAND**
The church that resulted from the split of the English Church from Rome in the 16th Century; also known as the Anglican Church. The formal head of the Church of England is the reigning monarch; its spiritual head is the Archbishop of Canterbury. All other member churches of the Anglican Communion trace their origins to the Church of England. (see also Book of Common Prayer)

**CLERGY**
All individuals in Holy Orders.

**CLERIC**
Any member of the clergy (see above).

**CLERICUS**
A local gathering of clergy.

**COLLECT**
A short form of prayer in three parts- an address to God, a petition (special request), and a conclusion- and associated with specific occasions and liturgical seasons.

**COMMUNION, HOLY**
See Eucharist

**COMMUNICANT**
Anyone, baptized or confirmed, who has communicated (i.e., received Communion) at least three times during the preceding year.

**CONFIRMATION**
The opportunity for those baptized at an early age to make a mature public affirmation of their faith, to commit to the responsibilities of their Baptism, and to receive the laying on of hands by the bishop.

**CONGREGATION**
A parish or a mission. A parish is headed by a rector; a mission differs from a parish: it is normally headed by a vicar or priest-in-charge who is appointed by the Bishop, and has an advisory board instead of a vestry.

**CONVENTION, DIOCESAN**
The decision making body of the Diocese. Normally meeting once a year, its voting members comprise clergy who are canonically resident and ministering within the Diocese, together with between one and five lay delegates from each congregation, depending on the number of each congregation’s communicants-in-good-standing.

**COUNCIL OF THE DIOCESE**
The Council encourages and supports the mission of the Church as it is conducted by the people of the diocese.

**CREEDS**
Ancient and universal statements of Christian faith. Those ordained for use in the Book of Common Prayer are the Apostles Creed (spoken by the congregation in Morning and Evening Prayer) and the Nicene Creed (spoken by the congregation in the Holy Eucharist). Many Anglican churches also include the Athanasian Creed among their statements of faith.
**Curate**
A deacon or other person not fully ordained who receives a fee for working in a small parish; the parish a curate works with is his "cure;" often a curate is the newest assistant to a senior minister at a large parish. Curates generally work under the supervision of a senior minister and do not have full responsibility for their parish.

**Cure**
The spiritual charge of a parish, or the parish itself, formerly called the Cure of Souls.

**Deacon, Vocational**
A cleric ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons or Diaconate, one of the three Holy Orders. Deacons are called to fulfill a vocation, as well as a ministry, in the world under the direction of the bishop. While in the world, a deacon interprets the needs of the world, and then communicates such needs to the bishop and the greater church at large. In turn, a deacon ministers to the world as directed by the bishop. Liturgically, a deacon reads the Gospel, sets the table, leads the Prayers of the People and dismisses the congregation.

**Deacon, Transitional**
A postulant to the priesthood who is ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons as part of the process of progressing to ordination as a priest.

**Dean**
The head of a chapter (i.e. administrative body) in a cathedral, the leader of a seminary, or a designated leader of a group of clergy, such as a clericus.

**Dismissal**
The words said or sung by the deacon (or celebrant) at the conclusion of the Eucharist (see BCP, 339 or 366). The response to the dismissal is "Thanks be to God" (during the Fifty Days of Easter, "Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia.").

**Diocese**
A territorial unit of administration, consisting of a number of individual parishes, under the pastoral oversight of a bishop.

**Epistle**
The lesson at the Eucharist preceding the Gospel taken from one of the Letters of the New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles, or the Book of Revelation; also any reading from the Bible other than the Gospels or Psalms.

**Eucharist**
The central act of Christian worship and commemoration of the central events of Christian faith - also known as The Lord’s Supper, Communion, The Great Thanksgiving, and the Mass - in which bread and wine are consecrated by the celebrant and distributed to the people as the body and blood of Christ.

**Evensong**
Sung Evening Prayer (BCP, 6]ff. or 1]5ff.); an evening worship service; evening prayer; and evening prayer service featuring a choir.

**General Convention**
The national triennial meeting of the Episcopal Church; dioceses send "deputies" or official representatives to General Convention.
**Gospel**
The final lesson in The Word of God taken from one of the four Gospels in the New Testament. It is normally read by a deacon or priest, and as a sign of reverence, the people and assisting ministers stand when the Gospel is proclaimed (see BCP, 326 or 357).

**High Church**
A designation of a church emphasizing theological or liturgical formality; a church with several vested assistants and many fine utensils used in the service; a church that sings or chants its service rather than reading or speaking it; a church that celebrates the Eucharist every Sunday [though most Episcopal Churches do this now]. Such churches sometimes appear to be more "catholic". See also Low Church.

**Holy Orders**
The sacrament of ordination, which marks the entry of the candidate into the ordained ministry. The orders of bishops, priests and deacons are termed Holy Orders.

**Holy Spirit, The**
The third person of the Holy Trinity, also called the Holy Ghost. Jesus promised his followers, the Apostles, that he would send the Holy Spirit after his Crucifixion and Resurrection. The Spirit came to the disciples of Jesus on Pentecost.

**Host**
The consecrated bread in the Eucharist. Literally, a "sacrificial victim."

**House of Bishops**
All the bishops of the Episcopal Church sitting as a legislative and judiciary body of the church.

**House of Deputies**
The lay and presbyter delegates to a general convention sitting as a legislative body.

**Intercession**
To ask for something on someone’s behalf. The Calendar of Intercession is a daily reminder to intercede with the Almighty on behalf of the person or entity on the list and to remember their needs in prayer.

**Interim Pastor**
A priest trained for interim ministry to serve either full-time or part-time while a search for a new rector is being conducted.

**Intinction**
A manner of receiving the Eucharist, in which the Eucharistic bread is dipped into the wine and so administered.

**Laity**
The baptized people or members of a church, as distinct from the clergy.

One of the Communion's four "instruments of unity," it has no binding authority over any province of the Communion.

**Lay Minister**
A person who is not ordained, but who works closely with a church or religious program. Some lay ministers are unpaid volunteers; some are paid staff members of a church.
**Lay Reader**
Any non-ordained person who participates in reading part of a church service.

**Laying On of Hands**
That part of the ordination service in which hands are laid on the head of the ordinand to manifest the giving of the Holy Spirit and empowerment for ministry.

**Lectionary**
The appointed lessons and psalms for use at the Eucharist and Daily Offices. Available online here.

**Lent**
The period of fasting, sobriety and meditation following Ash Wednesday; in the past Lent was widely associated with denial.

**Liturgy**
The prescribed set of forms, and other activities associated with formal worship service.

**Low Church**
A church that is less formal; a church that does not chant or sing its service; a church that alternates Morning Prayer with Eucharist; such churches sometimes appear to be more "protestant."

**Mass**
The Roman Catholic name for the Christian sacramental meal but sometimes used by Anglo-Catholics to refer to Holy Communion or Eucharist; The celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

**Minister**
All members of the Church are ministers: Lay people, bishops, priests and deacons.

**Ministry**
The Christian vocation to serve.

**Mission**
Proclaiming and witnessing to the Kingdom of God.

**Mission, Organized**
A local church that is not a parish. See Congregation.

**Narthex**
A vestibule leading into the nave of a church.

**Nave**
The central part of a church from the narthex to the chancel, flanked by aisles. The congregation sits in the nave during worship services.

**Offertory**
In the Eucharist, the worshippers’ offering of bread, wine, and alms at the altar.

**Ordination to the Diaconate/Priesthood**
The liturgy in which a person is made a deacon or a priest.

**Ordinary**
An ancient and now bemusing term used to refer to the diocesan bishop. Survives most often in the wonderful job title Canon to the Ordinary.

**Parish**
A local congregation that is in union with the diocese.
**Parson**
Now rare in Episcopal usage. Any priest or minister; often a reference to low-church or non-Episcopal clergy. Sometimes a term of affection for an older clergyman especially of rural background.

**Pastor**
A full-time or part-time priest elected by the vestry with the bishop’s approval. A pastor has the full authority of a rector, except tenure. A pastor is in a contractual relationship with the vestry and the bishop. This contract cannot be broken without the consent of two out of the three parties. A pastor is eligible to become rector, pending the bishop’s assessment of the congregation’s ability to support and sustain a tenured priest.

**Paten**
The plate, usually silver, that the hosts are place on for Holy Communion (see Chalice)

**Peace, The**
Also known as Passing the Peace; a ritual in the Episcopal Church in which members of the congregation, including the clergy, greet one another. The priest says, "The Peace of the Lord be always with you." The congregation responds, "And also with you." Immediately after these words people shake hands or speak or sometimes embrace in the church.

**Postulant**
A person admitted by the bishop into the formal preparation for the ordained ministry.

**Presbyter**
See "Priest." The term "priest" is a contraction of the term "presbyter."

**Priest**
A presbyter. A cleric in one of the three orders of ordained ministry. The ministry of a priest is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as pastor to the people; to share with the bishop the overseeing of the Church; to proclaim the Gospel; to administer the sacraments; and to bless and declare pardon in the name of God.

**Priest-in-Charge**
A priest retained full-time or part-time with a contract, by annual appointment of the bishop, who is responsible for liturgy, pastoral care, and administrative tasks as negotiated with the vestry. A Priest-in-Charge is not normally eligible to become the rector unless specified in his or her contract, and serves in a parish that is not actively engaged in a search process. The precise role of the Priest-in-Charge is determined by the contract.

**Presiding Bishop**
The elected episcopal head of the Episcopal Church; the chief administrator and spiritual head of the Episcopal Church. The Episcopal Church does not refer to its head bishop as an archbishop.

**Primate**
The bishop with pastoral and administrative responsibility and authority for a group of dioceses that constitute a Church. A primate is sometimes called a metropolitan. The Presiding Bishop in the case of the Episcopal Church, and the Archbishop of Canterbury in the case of the Church of England and the Anglican Communion.

**Proper**
The part of the Eucharist and daily services that changes according to the festival or ecclesiastical season. The proper includes the collect, Scripture readings, and prefaces of the Communion service.

**Province**
An organizational and geographical unit of the Episcopal Church consisting of several dioceses. The Diocese of New York is part of Province II which also includes the Convocation of American Churches in Europe.
**Reason**
One of the three equal cornerstones of the Anglican Faith, the others being Scripture and Tradition. Anglicans hold that in questions of faith no one of these three holds all of the answers all of the time. The inclusion of Reason here is a distinctly Anglican feature.

**Rector**
A full-time priest elected by a vestry with the bishop's approval, thereby having tenure. The responsibility for the conduct of worship and the spiritual jurisdiction of the parish are vested in the rector, subject to the Rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer, the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church and the diocese, the pastoral direction of the bishop, and the Religious Corporation Laws of the State of New York.

**Rectory**
The residence provided for the rector.

**Rite I**
A portion of the Book of Common Prayer which contains worship services using the older, traditional language of the 1928 edition of the prayer book.

**Rite II**
A portion of the Book of Common Prayer containing worship services which use more modern language.

**Sanctuary**
The part of a church around the altar.

**Scripture**
The Bible - one of the three equal cornerstones of the Anglican faith, the others being Tradition and Reason. Anglicans hold that in questions of faith no one of these three holds all of the answers all of the time.

**See**
The authority, jurisdiction, position, or official seat of a bishop.

**Seminary**
A school or college for the training of ministers.

**Standing Committee**
A committee of clergy and laity elected by the Diocesan Convention to be a council of advice to the bishop, and to carry out canonically defined duties regarding transfers of property, approval of candidates for the ordained ministry, election of bishops, and other matters of diocesan concern.

**Subdeacon**
Traditionally a secondary order of deacons who assisted diocesan deacons in their duties and carried out certain functions at the altar, including reading the epistle of the day. Today the subdeacon is usually a lay person, often a licensed lay reader and chalice bearer, who reads the epistle and may lead the intercessory prayers in the absence of a deacon. The normal liturgical vestments of a subdeacon are an alb and tunicle.

**Supply Clergy**
A priest employed on a per diem basis to officiate at liturgies and to provide limited, specified pastoral care. A priest who serves as supply clergy during an interim period is not eligible to become the rector.

**Tradition**
One of the three equal cornerstones of the Anglican Faith, the others being Scripture and Reason. Anglicans hold that in questions of faith no one of these three holds all of the answers all of the time.

**Transept**
The two wings of a cruciform church.
**TRINITY, THE**
A fundamental symbol of the Christian faith and a very important doctrine in catholic Christianity; refers to the oneness and essential unity of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**VESTMENTS**
The distinctive clothing worn by leaders of liturgy especially priests and deacons.

**VESTRY**
The rector, wardens and vestry members of a parish. The wardens and vestry are the official representatives of the parish in the absence of a rector. The wardens have special roles and need the firm support of their vestry colleagues.

**VICAR**
A priest, serving full-time or part-time, with charge and responsibility for a mission or aided parish, appointed by the bishop for a period of one year, renewable. A vicar is eligible to become rector when the mission becomes a parish, or when the parish becomes financially independent of the diocese for basic expenses. Under the bishop, a vicar has the same responsibilities as a rector, but does not have tenure.

**WARDEN, OR CHURCHWARDEN**
Parish by-laws provide for the election of two wardens. Both wardens are members of the vestry. The wardens are generally ranked "senior" and "junior." the mode of selection and duties of the wardens are determined by state law, diocesan canon, or parish by-laws. The senior warden is usually the primary elected lay leader of the congregation. The senior warden typically presides at vestry meetings in the absence of the rector, and the junior warden presides at vestry meetings if both the rector and the senior warden are absent. In case of clerical vacancy, the senior warden may be the ecclesiastical authority of the parish for certain purposes. In some parishes, the senior warden is known as the 'priest's warden" and the junior warden is known as the "people's warden." historically, one warden is named by the priest and the other chosen by the congregation.