

St. Timothy's  
Episcopal Church,  
Danville CA

# Glossary of Episcopal Terms

Worship Commission  
May 2014

---



## ST. TIMOTHY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

### Glossary of Episcopal Terms

**Acolyte:** A lay person who carries the torch into and out of the church and at the reading of the Gospel. Often, acolytes are children or youth.

**Alb:** From the Latin *Albus*, meaning *white*, one of the liturgical vestments of the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, and many Methodist churches, is an ample white garment coming down to the ankles and is usually girdled with a cincture.

**Altar Guild:** A group that takes care of the maintenance and preparation of a church's altar and its furnishings.

**Altar Rail:** The railing around the sanctuary which provides a place for kneeling during the receiving of communion.

**Altar:** The table on which the bread and wine are placed during the celebration of the Eucharist

**Ambo:** The lectern from which the lessons are read and the sermon is preached.

**Anglican Christians:** Christians who are members of churches that have their historical roots in the Church of England

**Anglican Communion:** The churches in countries around the world in association with the Church of England.

**Anglican:** An adjective describing the worldwide communion of autonomous churches in communion with the Church of England. The Episcopal Church is part of that communion. Anglican can also be a noun, a member of the Anglican Communion.

**Anointing:** This is the rite of applying consecrated oil in Baptism, confirmation and ministrations of the sick. Traditionally it signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit and is used in services where an individual is set apart for special reasons.

**Apostolic Succession:** Episcopalians, along with other Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Orthodox and some other Christian bodies, trace their bishops' spiritual heritage in an unbroken line back to the first apostles of Jesus. The importance of the historic episcopate is a major point in ecumenical discussions.

**Archbishop of Canterbury:** the chief bishop of the Church of England and the symbolic head of the Anglican Communion.

**Aumbry:** A cabinet in the wall of a Christian church or in the sacristy which was used to store chalices and other vessels, as well as for the reserved sacrament, the consecrated elements from the Eucharist and consecrated oil.

**Baptism:** One of two sacraments ordained by Jesus Christ. (Holy Communion is the other.) Holy Baptism is the sacrament of spiritual remission and regeneration by water and the Holy Spirit. It is the rite by which persons are admitted into the fellowship of Christ and his church.

**Bishop:** A bishop is a chief minister (servant) or chief pastor (shepherd) in the Episcopal Church, serving a number of local churches that make up a diocese. A large diocese may have more than one bishop. In that case the chief bishop is called the **Diocesan Bishop**.

**Assisting Bishop:** A previously consecrated bishop who is appointed by a diocesan bishop with the consent of the standing committee and diocesan council to provide additional Episcopal services in the diocese for a specific term.

**Assisting Bishops** are usually called **Suffragan Bishops**. An assisting bishop who will succeed the diocesan bishop is a **Bishop Coadjutor**.

The **Presiding Bishop** is the chief pastor to the Episcopal Church globally.

All are addressed as "bishop."

**Book of Common Prayer (BCP):** The official prayer book of a church in the Anglican Communion.

**Burse:** A flat, square, fabric-covered case in which a folded corporal is carried to and from an altar in church. Used in conjunction with the chalice veil.

**Canons:** The written rules governing church policy, structure and procedure. There are national canons and each diocese has its own.

**Cassock:** A long, close-fitting garment worn by members of the clergy or others participating in church services. See vestments and surplice.

**Catechism:** Outline for instruction in the Christian faith presented in a question and answer format. The Catechism appears in the BCP as "An Outline of the Faith" (pp. 845-862). Although the Catechism serves as a commentary on the creeds, it is not intended to be a complete statement of belief and practice. It provides a brief summary of the church's teaching.

**Cathedral:** A diocese's cathedral is the church where the bishop makes his headquarters. The city in which the cathedral is located is the "see city." Some dioceses have no cathedral.

**Catholic:** This word comes from a Greek word meaning "universal" and may, therefore, be used to apply to all Christians. When it is used this way, it usually begins with a little c. Sometimes it is used with a capital C when the writer means the Roman Catholic Church.

***Catholic:*** This word comes from a Greek word meaning "universal" and may, therefore, be used to apply to all Christians. When it is used this way, it usually begins with a little c. Sometimes it is used with a capital C when the writer means the Roman Catholic Church

***Celebrant:*** The priest who officiates at the altar during the celebration of the Eucharist. The celebrant is usually vested (clothed) in a stole and chasuble.

***Chalice Veil:*** A cloth used to cover the chalice, which may be either of the color of the season or white. Used in conjunction with the burse.

***Chalice:*** The cup used to hold the wine that has been consecrated during the Eucharist

***Chancel:*** In classic church design, an area of pews, seats, stalls or prayer desks set apart from the nave, used by the ministers leading services and sometimes used by the choir.

***Chasuble:*** The outermost liturgical vestment worn by clergy for the celebration of the Eucharist. It was simply a roughly oval piece of cloth, with a round hole in the middle through which to pass the head.

Like the stole, it is normally of the liturgical color of the season being celebrated.

***Choir:*** Singers. At St. Timothy's, there are multiple choirs 1) children's choir – Emmaus, 2) Family choir – 9 am musicians who sing and play contemporary music, 3) Jubilate – 11 am musicians who sing traditional music and usually wears blue colored choir robes and sits in the "chancel."

***Cincture:*** A rope, liturgical vestment, worn encircling the body around or above the waist.

***Clerical collar:*** An item of Christian clerical clothing. It is a detachable collar that buttons onto a clergy shirt or rabbat (vest).

***Collect:*** A brief prayer which "collects" the petitions of the people. The Collect, which is said at the beginning of each Eucharistic rite, is a time of collective prayer. The celebrant opens by saying, "Let us pray." Then there is silence as members of the congregation collect all their thoughts and prayers and, in essence, give them to the celebrant, who prays on behalf of all.

"Collect" comes from the Latin, meaning to gather, or a gathering. Collects are found in the Anglican and Roman Catholic, and Lutheran Churches, but are not used in the Greek or Eastern Orthodox, nor in other Protestant churches.

***Communion:*** Relationship between people of faith; the part of the Eucharist where bread and wine are consecrated and shared

***Confirmation:*** A sacrament in which members make a mature commitment to Christ and receive strength from the Holy Spirit.

**Congregation:** The gathered community during worship

**Consecrated:** Set apart for sacred purpose

**Corporal:** A Latin word that means 'body'. It is an additional smaller cloth that is placed at the center front of the altar for the paten and chalice to be placed on. The chalice and paten will hold the Body and Blood of Christ once the words of consecration are prayed at the Eucharist.

**Credence table:** The small table near the altar which holds the chalice and other items needed to prepare the table for communion

**Creed:** A statement of faith or belief

**Crook/Crozier:** A ceremonial stylized staff of office carried by a bishop.

**Crossing:** In cruciform (cross-shaped) churches, the crossing is the junction of the four cross bars of the nave.

**Crucifer:** A lay person who carries the processional cross, holds the gospel book during the reading of the Gospel, and assists the deacon with setting and clearing the altar at Communion.

**Cruets:** The bottles or jugs that hold the water or wine that are carried to the altar at the Preparation of the Gifts.

**Deacon:** One of the four orders of ministry in the Church. A deacon wears a stole that hangs over the left shoulder and across the front and, during the liturgy, reads the Gospel and sets the table (altar) for Communion. A deacon, like a bishop or priest, is an ordained minister. Deacon comes from the Greek word, *diakonos*, meaning servant. Deacons usually serve in local congregations and have a special ministry to the poor, the sick and the troubled. Deacons are addressed as deacon, Mr., Miss, Mrs., etc. according to preference or local custom.

**Diaconate:** A special ministry of servanthood of deacons directly under the Bishop. In the name of Jesus Christ, the diaconate are to serve all people, particularly the poor, the sick and the lonely. The state of being a deacon; also, the life of deacon-like service in the church.

**Diocesan Assessment:** The amount that each congregation pays to the diocese to fund the diocese's annual budget.

**Diocesan Convention:** The decision making body of the Diocese. Normally meeting once a year in November, 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.

**Diocese:** A diocese is made up of several local congregations with a bishop as its chief pastor. Since only a bishop can consecrate other bishops, ordain priests and deacons and confirm, the diocese is the basic local unit of the church. Depending on the number of Episcopalians, a state may have one or several dioceses. The legislative body of the diocese is an annual convention of clergy and lay deputies from each congregation.

**Episcopal:** An adjective derived from the Greek word, *episkopos*, meaning overseer or bishop. Episcopalian is the noun. Episcopalians attend the Episcopal Church.

**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:** From the Greek word for “thanksgiving;” a common name for Holy Communion or the Lord’s Supper

**Evensong/Evening Prayer:** A liturgy in use in the Anglican Communion (and other churches in the Anglican tradition) and celebrated in the late afternoon or evening. It is commonly known as Evensong, especially (but not exclusively) when the service is rendered chorally. Like Morning Prayer (and in contrast to the Eucharist), it may be led by a layperson.

**General Convention:** The General Convention is the highest legislative body of the Episcopal Church. It meets every three years and is made up of a House of Bishops and a House of Deputies. Half the deputies are clergy and half lay persons.

**Gospel:** Greek for “good news”; in the Bible, the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) which are part of the New Testament.

**Grace:** God’s love freely given to humanity for salvation. The word comes from the Latin *gracia*, a “gift or favor freely given.”

**Gradual:** (Latin: *graduale* or *responsorium graduale*) is a chant or hymn in the liturgical celebration of the Eucharist for many Christian denominations.

**Healing chapel:** The area at the back of the nave set aside for prayers for healing during communion.

**Healing team:** Lay persons and clergy who offer prayers for healing during Communion.

**Holy Baptism:** In baptism God makes us his children, members of the church, the Body of Christ. 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.

The Episcopal Church recognizes baptism in other Christian bodies, done with water in the name of the Trinity. In the Holy Eucharist Episcopalians recall the saving acts of God and enter communion with Christ and Christians of all times and places. In this sacrament we are fed spiritually with the Body and Blood of Christ.

**Holy Eucharist:** In the Holy Eucharist Episcopalians recall the saving acts of God and enter communion with Christ and Christians of all times and places. In this sacrament we are fed spiritually with the Body and Blood of Christ.

**Holy Matrimony:** A sacrament in which two people enter a life-long union, receiving the grace and blessing of God to help them fulfill their vows.

**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.

**Lambeth Quadrilateral:** In 1888 the world's Anglican bishops, meeting at Lambeth in England adopted four articles as essentials in any plan of union with other Christian bodies: The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the Apostles' and Nicene creeds, the sacraments of baptism and holy communion, and the historic episcopate (see Apostolic Succession).

**Lay Eucharistic Minister (LEM):** A lay person who administers the chalice (cup) during Communion.

**Lay Eucharistic Visitor (LEV):** A lay person who administers Communion to members of the congregation that are house bound.

**Layperson:** Generally refers to a non-ordained member of a church.

**Lector:** A lay person who reads the lessons from the Old and New Testament

**Liturgy:** The customary public worship "service" done by a specific religious group, according to its particular traditions.

**Minister:** Any baptized member of the church. The term does not refer only to those who are ordained. This is a Latin word, meaning servant. In the Episcopal Church lay persons as well as bishops, priests and deacons are ministers, servants of God, caring for their brothers and sisters in the church and those outside it.

**Mitre/Miter:** From the Greek *mítira*, meaning “headband” or “turban. Liturgical headgear and insignia of bishops and other prelates. It is typically worn by bishops in procession and when pronouncing episcopal blessings. It is removed during prayer, including the Eucharistic canon. The miter is shield-shaped and pointed at the top. It may be made of silk or linen and ornamented with gold embroidery. Two lappets (pendant bands or flaps) hang down the back of the miter. It is often said to represent the tongues of fire that rested on the apostles at Pentecost (Acts 2).

**Morning Prayer (Matins or Mattins):** One of the two main Daily Offices in the churches of the Anglican Communion, prescribed in the various editions of the Book of Common Prayer and other Anglican liturgical texts. Like Evening Prayer (and in contrast to the Eucharist), it may be led by a layperson.

**Narthex:** the room between the main door of the church and the door into the nave.

**Nave:** The pew area of the church building, where the congregation sits, stands or kneels during public worship. The nave is more than an auditorium, where people listen, because worship in the Episcopal Church involves everyone as participants.

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

**Ordination:** A sacrament in which bishops, priests and deacons are made, receiving authority and grace of the Holy Spirit.

**Parochial Report:** Established by our Constitution and Canons is a tool for the collection of data that is intended to assist the Church in planning for mission. The report details membership, attendance, services, stewardship and financial information.

**Paten:** A small plate, usually made of silver or gold, used to hold Eucharistic bread which is to be consecrated.

**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.

**Pew:** The long, bench-like seat used for congregational seating.

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

**Preacher:** A lay or ordained person who gives the sermon. Preaching is only one function of the ordained ministry in the Episcopal Church and so preacher is not an appropriate synonym for bishop, priest or deacon.

**Priest:** One of the four orders of ministry in the Church. A priest wears a stole that hangs around the neck with the ends hanging down in front.

This word comes from a Greek word, *presbyter*, meaning elder. Usually a priest is the chief minister in a local congregation. Forms of address—father, mother, etc.—depend upon the priest's preference and local custom.

**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:** A group of dioceses, usually in the same region, whose bishops and delegates meet in synod annually or in those years when the General Convention does not meet. A province is also a term used for a self-governing church body that belongs to the Anglican Communion, such as the Episcopal Church or the Church of England.

**Purificator:** A cloth that functions like a liturgical serviette. It is used to wipe the lip of the chalice after each person drinks from the chalice. There is always one purificator for each chalice used at a Eucharistic celebration.

**Reconciliation of a Penitent:** A sacrament in which those who repent of their sins may confess them in the presence of a priest and receive assurance of pardon and the grace of absolution.

**Rector:** The priest in charge of a parish, a self-supporting church, is the rector. The rector is elected by the vestry. Assisting priests the rector appoints may be called curate, assistant or associate.

**Reverend:** The Reverend is an appropriate title to precede the full name of a priest or deacon. The Right Reverend is used for a bishop. Reverend is an adjective, not a noun, and is incorrectly used with a last name only, or without the article, the, as in "Reverend Frost."

**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.

**Rite:** A customary form for conducting a service

**Sacrament:** An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace; the two primary sacraments are Holy Baptism and Holy Communion

**Sacristy:** A room for keeping vestments (such as the alb and chasuble) and other church furnishings, sacred vessels, and parish records.

The sacristy is usually located inside the church, but in some cases it is an annex or separate building. In most older churches, a sacristy is near a side altar, or more usually behind or on a side of the main altar.

**Sanctuary lamp:** the lamp that hangs over the aumbry, lit when the aumbry contains reserved sacrament.

**Sanctuary:** The space inside the altar rail, where the clergy and other liturgical ministers sit.

**Scripture:** The collection of texts viewed by Christians as sacred. Often refers to The Bible.

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

**Surplice:** A loose-fitting, broad-sleeved white vestment, worn over the cassock by clergy and choristers. See vestments and cassock.

**Transept:** In a church building shaped like a cross (cruciform), the parts of the building that make up the arms of the cross.

**Unction of the Sick:** A sacrament, the anointing with oil or laying on of hands by which God's grace is given for the healing of spirit, mind and body.

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

**Vestry:** Lay members of the church who are elected at a parish's annual meeting. The vestry handles the parish's business matters and serves as a council of advice for the rector. The rector presides at meetings of the vestry.

**Vicar:** The priest in charge of a mission, supported financially from outside, is the vicar. The vicar is appointed by the bishop.

**Adapted May 16, 2014 from:**

1. Glossary of Liturgical Terms - Liturgy - Episcopal Church
  - [http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/109399\\_79309\\_ENG\\_HTM.htm](http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/109399_79309_ENG_HTM.htm)
2. Wikipedia
  - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>
3. Brief Dictionary of Terms from the Episcopal Church website
  - [www.episcopalchurch.org/page/brief-dictionary-terms](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/brief-dictionary-terms)
4. Trinity Episcopal Church - Glossary – A
  - <http://www.trinityepiscopalonline.org/glossary-a.htm>
5. Episcopal Diocese of New York : Church Terminology
  - <http://www.diocesenyc.org/pages/275-church-terminology>