



ACNA West Board of Examining Chaplains [www.acnawest.org](http://www.acnawest.org)  
And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge  
and understanding. Jeremiah 3:15

## ACNA West Presbyteral Exam Liturgy Essay Study Guide

### Liturgics

---

The canonical area of Liturgics focuses on Christian corporate worship as it has developed and is now expressed through the Anglican Prayer Book tradition. Liturgics includes the theology and history of worship, as well as the practice and leadership of public worship.

In the Liturgy Essay set, candidates for ordination will be asked to write two reflective essay questions. In one of the questions will focus on the how and what of liturgy and in the second question the candidates will focus in greater depth on the WHY of liturgy.

Candidates will also be expected to demonstrate proficiency in planning and presiding at the Anglican offices such as the Daily Office, the Pastoral Offices and the Holy Eucharist.

### Recommended Reading

---

The basic liturgical texts of the Anglican Church in North America are found in the *Book of Common Prayer* 2019. Candidates should be thoroughly familiar with the contents of the Prayer Book. Candidates should also have some familiarity with the history of the Prayer Book. The ACNA constitution states: "We receive The Book of Common Prayer as set forth by the Church of England in 1662, together with the Ordinal attached to the same, as a standard for Anglican doctrine and discipline, and, with the Books which preceded it, as the standard for the Anglican tradition of worship." - *The Constitution of the Anglican Church in North America*, Article 1.6.

### Resources

---

There are many books available regarding corporate worship in the Anglican tradition. For a basic introduction to worship and the Prayer Book we recommend:

- *Worship* by Evelyn Underhill
- *The Spirit of the Liturgy* by Joseph Ratzinger
- *Introduction to Christian Worship (3rd edition)* by James F. White
- *The Book of Common Prayer: A Biography* by Alan Jacobs
- *The Book of Common Prayer* 2019

For copies of all the historic versions of *The Book of Common Prayer* see <http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/>

## Areas of Liturgics

---

**History of Christian Worship** Corporate worship among the earliest Christians was grounded in historic Jewish practice: praying the Psalms, reading and teaching Scripture in the synagogue, and the daily and yearly patterns of prayer and sacrifice at the Temple. Many Jewish followers of Jesus continued to participate in synagogue and Temple worship. However, they also began to gather on the first day of the week, “the Lord’s day,” in remembrance of Christ’s resurrection. The centerpiece of their worship was the Eucharist, or Lord’s Supper, which Jesus instituted before his crucifixion.

Following the gradual separation of Christianity from rabbinic Judaism, and the increased inclusion of Gentile converts, variations of the basic Christian pattern of worship emerged in different communities. Greater uniformity came after the end of persecutions in the early fourth century. Throughout the medieval period, liturgies continued to develop regional varieties, though there were also recurring efforts to maintain consistency and establish unity. Eucharistic worship remained central, even as the piety and practices surrounding it shifted in various ways.

In sixteenth century England the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, gathered resources from a variety of rites and practices and reworked them in the production of a *Book of Common Prayer*. This provided a comprehensive order for corporate worship for English Christians in their own language. Though this book underwent several updates and changes, both in England and (after the American Revolution) in the United States and elsewhere, it remained the basic pattern and rule for worship for all Anglican Christians.

The twentieth century saw a “liturgical renewal” movement that simultaneously looked back to ancient sources and sought greater ecumenical collaboration and unity in practice. This had a major impact on Anglican liturgical revisions from the 1960s onward, including the US 1979 Prayer Book and England’s *Common Worship* in the early 2000s. The *Book of Common Prayer* 2019

seeks to restore the historic Anglican pattern while also drawing on recent scholarship and honoring ecumenical relationships.

Candidates should be familiar with the history and development of the *Book of Common Prayer* in both England and America. A basic understanding of the ancient and ecumenical influences that have shaped the Prayer Book tradition is also desirable.

**Content and use of The Book of Common Prayer** Thomas Cranmer's introduction to the first *Book of Common Prayer* (1549) underscores the purposes for which it was prepared: to restore the centrality of Scripture in worship, to provide an "order for prayer" consistent with early Christian worship, to simplify medieval practice and make the book easier to understand and use, and to establish unity of practice across the English Church (see the *Book of Common Prayer* 2019, page 794). Central to this project was worship in English, a language understood by the people (*Articles of Religion* 24). In the long run, this was a book that could be used not only by clergy or in the church building, but also in the home--especially the Daily Office. It provided a holistic spiritual system, a grammar for prayer, and a pattern for Christian practice. Finally, it offered a fundamental statement of Anglican theology.

Candidates will be expected to have read through the *Book of Common Prayer* 2019, observing not only what the prayers say, but also how the liturgies are to be conducted, according to the rubrics and "Additional Directions" to various rites.

**Daily Office** The Daily Office includes Morning and Evening Prayer. These services are based on early and medieval Christian practice, tracing back to ancient Israel's hours of daily worship. At the time of the English Reformation, Thomas Cranmer condensed and simplified the eight-fold Benedictine pattern into two offices, Morning and Evening Prayer, which were appropriate for lay as well as monastic use (see *Monasticism & its role in the development of our liturgy*). Historically, all clergy were required to say Morning and Evening Prayer every day. In the twentieth century, Midday Prayer and Compline were added back into some Anglican Prayer Books for optional use.

In the Daily Office, as the Catechism states, "we confess our sins and receive absolution, hear God's Word and praise him with Psalms, and offer the Church's thanksgivings and prayers." These liturgies are strongly Scriptural; they offer an

“objective” rather than merely “subjective” language for prayer, rooted in the objective reality and character of God. They include the full range of aspects of prayer, rather than focusing on just one or two, as private prayer so easily does. They also help develop a fuller understanding of the self, sin, and redemption. In other words, these prayers invite the full participation of the person; but they are not merely personal. Those who pray the Office join others around the world and throughout time in the common prayers of the Church. As Evelyn Underhill once wrote, “The real significance of the divine office is that in its recitation the individual or group enters the ancient cycle of prayer, by which day by day and hour by hour the Church in the name of all creation adores and implores the eternal God.”

Candidates are expected to pray the Daily Office, and know how to lead others in praying it.

**Corporate and Private Prayer** The Prayer Book structures and orders the corporate prayers of the Church: not only the [Daily Office](#), but also the sacramental rites, pastoral liturgies, and other acts of intercession and thanksgiving. The first English liturgy prepared by Thomas Cranmer, however, was a version of the Great Litany, in which the Church prays for her own life and members, for the national and social order, and for the world at large. It is a comprehensive act of intercession. Historically, the Great Litany was required to be used throughout the year on Sundays and certain weekdays as well. In contemporary practice it is most frequently used in Lent and Advent, especially on the first Sundays of these seasons.

It is important to recognize that all these liturgies and intercessions—even the Daily Office when it is said alone—are basically forms of corporate prayer. They enact the “royal priesthood” that the Church exercises in union with Christ’s own priesthood. However, these corporate prayers are also meant to shape within individual believers a language and capacity for private prayer and devotion, which can be adapted and developed as part of extemporaneous prayer as well. The Prayer Book includes a number of resources for such private prayer, particularly in the Occasional Prayers section, as well as in brief sections following the Healing Rites and Family Prayers. These resources are also extremely valuable for pastoral practice, bringing the life of the Church to bear on various aspects of everyday life.

Candidates are expected to be familiar with the Great Litany and the Occasional Prayers provided in the *Book of Common Prayer* 2019. Candidates are also encouraged to think about which Psalms and prayers might be most appropriate for common pastoral situations.

**Sacramental Theology** According to the Catechism, “A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. God gives us the sign as a means by which we receive that grace, and as a tangible assurance that we do in fact receive it.” Such signs, therefore, are not “empty.” God uses them to accomplish his work. In the words of the *Articles of Religion*, the sacraments are “sure witnesses” in which we can have utter confidence, because their effectiveness rests upon Christ’s faithfulness and promise.

Anglicans, along with other traditions following the Reformation, place a particular emphasis on two sacraments, sometimes called “sacraments of the Gospel,” which were ordained by Christ himself: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper (Eucharist). As the Catechism explains, these sacraments are “generally necessary for salvation.” The Catechism also identifies five “other rites and institutions commonly called sacraments,” which “include confirmation, ordination, marriage, absolution, and the anointing of the sick. These are sometimes called ‘sacraments of the Church.’” They are different from the “sacraments of the Gospel”; they “were not ordained by Christ as necessary to salvation, but arose from the practices of the apostles and the early Church, or were blessed by God in Scripture.” Nevertheless, as the Prayer Book expresses and the Catechism states, “God clearly uses them as means of grace.”

The logic of sacramental theology is grounded in the divine acts of creation and incarnation. From the beginning, created things have reflected God’s nature, expressed his love, and become means of his self-revelation to his people. This pattern reaches its fullness in the incarnation, when created human nature is joined to God’s own nature in the person of Jesus Christ. In him, God is perfectly made known as a creature: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life” (1 John 1:1). In him, as the Exsultet proclaims at the Great Vigil of Easter, “earth and heaven are joined, and Man is reconciled to God.” In him, risen and ascended, the physical creation of our

embodied humanity is taken to the very right hand of the Father. In him, creation becomes what it was always meant to be: God's dwelling place, saturated with his glory. This twofold pattern, the revelation of God through creation and the drawing up of creation into God, is the foundation for all sacraments, and for all sacramental theology.

Candidates must demonstrate a thorough knowledge of what both the *Articles of Religion* and the Catechism teach about the Sacraments. They should also be prepared to explain the theology implicit in the various sacramental liturgies of the Prayer Book. Finally, they ought to understand what the sacramental worldview is and why it matters to Anglicans.

**The Holy Eucharist** The historic pattern of Christian worship on the Lord's Day, from the New Testament onward, has two main parts: Word and Sacrament. This remains the pattern for the liturgy of Holy Communion today. The first part focuses on the reading of Holy Scripture, preaching, and the prayers of the congregation. The second part focuses on the prayer of thanksgiving (to which the word "Eucharist" refers), the breaking of the bread, and the reception of Holy Communion. The liturgy of Holy Communion (also called Eucharist or the Mass) is the normative Christian service for Sundays and major feast days. It must be presided over by a bishop or presbyter.

Christian baptism is a non-negotiable prerequisite for anyone who desires to receive Holy Communion in the Anglican Church in North America. As the liturgy itself makes clear, it is also essential that those who receive this sacrament repent of their sins and seek to live in love and charity with their neighbors (page 112).

Candidates should understand each part of the Eucharistic liturgy and what it contributes to Christian worship. They should also know how to lead a congregation in praying this liturgy. They are therefore expected to read not only the main text but also the rubrics, "Additional Directions," and other supplementary material in this part of the Prayer Book with particular care and attention.

**Baptism and Confirmation** In the sacrament of Holy Baptism, "the outward and visible sign is water, in which candidates are baptized 'in the Name of the Father

and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' (Matthew 28:19). The inward and spiritual grace is death to sin and new birth to righteousness, through union with Christ in his death and resurrection (Romans 6:1-11)" (*Book of Common Prayer* 2019, page 160). It is not just something believers do in response to God's grace; rather, it is primarily a work of God himself, through his Church, which we receive through faith.

In the Anglican tradition, we baptize both the infants and children of believing parents and those who can speak for themselves. Baptism is ideally by full immersion, but may also be done by pouring or sprinkling of water.

Because baptism is not only a cleansing of sin and incorporation into the church but also the beginning of a whole new life, serious preparation is required. This includes instruction in the Catechism for those who are of sufficient age to understand it, and thorough instruction of the godparents and parents of those who are not yet of sufficient age. In order that those who are baptized may continue faithfully in their new life in Christ, appropriate follow-up and ongoing discipleship are essential.

Confirmation continues the New Testament practice of the apostolic laying on of hands, with prayer that the person being confirmed may be equipped and empowered by the Holy Spirit for work in the world. It is therefore, like baptism, a sign of God's action through his Church. It is also an occasion for human action: the liturgical opportunity for a mature, public declaration of faith in Jesus Christ. Like baptism, it should be preceded by thorough instruction in the Catechism and other basics of Christian faith and practice. In the Anglican Church in North America, only a Bishop can confirm. It is expected that those who are baptized either as infants or as adults will make a public profession of faith and receive this apostolic laying on of hands.

Candidates for ordination must have received Christian baptism. They must also have received Confirmation from a bishop in apostolic succession. They should understand and be able to explain clearly the theology of baptism expressed in the Prayer Book and stated in the Catechism, and they should be prepared to offer appropriate instruction to those who seek baptism (for themselves or their children) or confirmation.

**Marriage and Children** According to the *Book of Common Prayer*, “Marriage is a lifelong covenant between a man and a woman, binding both to self-giving love and exclusive fidelity. The rite of Holy Matrimony is a worship service of the Church, in which the couple exchanges vows to uphold this covenant” (page 198). The Prayer Book rite of Holy Matrimony places marriage in its biblical and theological context, and outlines the purposes for which marriage was ordained by God: “for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord; for mutual joy, and for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; to maintain purity, so that husbands and wives, with all the household of God, might serve as holy and undefiled members of the Body of Christ; and for the upbuilding of Christ’s kingdom in family, church, and society, to the praise of his holy Name” (pages 201-202). All those who seek to be married in the Anglican Church of North America are required to sign a “Declaration of Intention” affirming their acceptance of this understanding of Christian marriage, and their commitment to abide by it. The canons also require that both members of the couple have received Christian Baptism prior to being married. If either of them has previously been married and their former spouse is still alive, the bishop’s written permission must be obtained before any new marriage is allowed.

Because of the seriousness of Holy Matrimony, and because many people (even those with a Christian background) may not fully understand Christian teaching about marriage, thorough preparation is essential. The homily may provide an appropriate opportunity to help others who gather to understand the vision and meaning of Christian marriage, as well. In addition to preparing the bride and groom, and offering appropriate guidance for others involved in the service, the priest in charge is responsible to make sure that all elements of the liturgy itself, including the music, are appropriate for a service of Christian worship.

When God blesses a married couple with children, the Prayer Book offers a rite of “Thanksgiving for the Birth or Adoption of a Child,” which may be used in public worship, in the home, or at a hospital or place of birth, as appropriate. In historic Prayer Books, the related rite was called “The Churching of Women,” which gave thanks to God for bringing a mother safely through the dangers of childbirth. This, too, can be an appropriate pastoral use of this liturgy.

Candidates are expected to have read and be able to explain the provincial and diocesan canons related to Holy Matrimony, as well as the liturgy and related

material in the Prayer Book and Catechism. They should also be prepared to provide instruction for a couple seeking to be married. Finally, they should consider the pastoral opportunities and complexities that may arise in using the rite of Thanksgiving for the Birth or Adoption of a Child.

**Rites of Healing** Healing was a central part of Jesus' public ministry in the Gospels. It was both a sign of the Kingdom's presence in him, and a foretaste of that Kingdom's full arrival. His work of healing was both physical and spiritual, deliverance not only from disease but also from the power of sin and demonic oppression. After his resurrection, Jesus gave his apostles authority to forgive sins in his name, and commissioned them to exercise ministries of physical and spiritual healing. In our Anglican tradition, Jesus' healing ministry is continued in three historic rites: sacramental confession to a priest, anointing of the sick, and Communion for those unable to attend public worship. (Ministry of exorcism should be preceded by consultation with the bishop.)

Corporate confession of sin is practiced in the Daily Office and the liturgy for Holy Eucharist, but private confession in the presence of a priest is also available. This rite offers the opportunity to name sins specifically and honestly, to hear assurance of forgiveness, to receive guidance in recognizing patterns of sin and learning to resist them, and to obtain the grace of absolution. Early Prayer Books required priests to ask those who were sick or dying to examine their consciences and encourage them to confess any known sin, and this remains an especially appropriate context for confession. It is also particularly appropriate for those who have committed grave sin, who are returning to the faith, who struggle with feelings of guilt and shame, or who are about to enter into a new stage of Christian life (through marriage, ordination, etc.). In the Anglican tradition, no one is required to make private confession to a priest, but all are welcome to do so.

Anointing of the sick may be made available in both public liturgies and private settings, using Oil of the Sick (*Oleum Infirmorum*) previously blessed by the bishop. Communion for those unable to attend public worship is provided using elements previously consecrated at a liturgy of Holy Eucharist.

Because all presbyters are called to share in Jesus' ministry of healing, candidates should familiarize themselves with these Prayer Book rites and be prepared to use them.

**Death and Burial** All cultures have ways to deal with death. Anglican Christians do so with the aid of liturgies that express both grief over the loss of a loved one and hope for resurrection of the body through Jesus Christ. The first is Ministry to the Dying, which provides pastoral care for baptized Christians as they near the point of death. This may include prayers, confession and absolution, anointing with Oil of the Sick (Oil of Unction, Oleum Infirmorum), and Holy Communion.

The second rite is Prayers for a Vigil at or following a death. This liturgy provides pastoral ministry for family and friends of the deceased, whether at their home, at a funeral home or viewing of the body, or at the church prior to the Burial Office.

The principal Anglican liturgy for a Christian who has died is the rite for Burial of the Dead, which proclaims our Gospel hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. As a service of Christian worship, its primary focus is not on the person who has died; rather, we commend that person into the hands of a faithful God. Both the music and homily should therefore direct those gathered toward faith and hope in the risen Lord. While there may be circumstances where a brief approved eulogy is permissible, remembrances by family and friends can more appropriately be offered at a reception or gathering after the liturgy. The Prayer Book rite also includes a committal for burial of the body or disposition of remains.

Candidates should be prepared to minister to the dying and those who love them using these liturgies. Candidates should also take time to think and pray about preparing for their own death as followers of Jesus.

**Sanctification of Time** The Christian conviction is that all of time has been transformed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ: as Christians, we live already in the time between the times, knowing that the Kingdom has been inaugurated and looking for the dawning of the age to come. Liturgy, spiritual disciplines, and the calendar of the Christian year all serve as catechetical tools, retraining the Christian's imagination and helping us fulfill the commandment to "redeem the time" (Eph. 5:16). Rites like Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Matrimony,

Thanksgiving for the Birth or Adoption of a Child, and Burial mark key points of transition in the Christian's life. The [Daily Office](#) frames daily activity, sunrise and sunset. Compline makes every night an opportunity to recall our hope that, with Christ, we will be brought through death to rise again at the dawn of the last great day. The faithful practice of weekly worship on the Lord's Day establishes a basic rhythm of work and rest every seven days. Finally, the Old Testament feasts of Passover and Weeks find their fulfillment in the Christian feasts of Easter (preceded by Lent and Holy Week) and Pentecost (preceded by the Ascension and followed by Trinity Sunday). Christmas (nine months after the Annunciation and followed by Epiphany), establishes a second pattern. These two cycles, centered on the Incarnation and Resurrection, work in tandem to reorder the entire year to its true function as an expression and enactment of the story of salvation; and they invite us, again and again, to let that story become our own. Throughout the year, we also commemorate the lives of men and women through whom God's grace has been revealed. Their witness likewise calls us continually to renewal and transformation of life.

Candidates are expected to be familiar with the Calendar of the Christian Year, including the various seasons (Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, etc.) and their appointed themes and colors, as well as the days of feasting, fasting, intercession, and thanksgiving which the Prayer Book commends for Christian practice. Candidates should also be able to explain the spiritual principles of "Sabbath" and the importance of Sabbath practice in the life of every Christian.

**Sanctification of Space** Because all creation belongs to God and proclaims his glory (Psalm 19:1), Christians through the centuries have sought a variety of ways to glorify him through physical spaces and objects. One early house-turned-church in Syria contains a room that was obviously used for baptisms; the walls are covered with artwork depicting biblical events related to water. Likewise, Christian catacombs were marked with images like the shepherd and lamb. The Eucharist was often celebrated on altars built where martyrs had been buried, and surrounded by graves of the Christian dead, physically enacting the communion of saints proclaimed by the creeds. Later, when buildings were built specifically for worship, they often took a cruciform shape. Many had a baptismal font at the entrance, thus portraying that Christians enter the common life of the church

through baptism; from there the entire liturgy was a journey to encounter their Lord at the altar or holy table. Carvings, paintings, mosaics, icons, or stained glass windows retold biblical stories, proclaimed theological doctrines, and recalled the lives of holy men and women. Bells called the people to worship; musical instruments added beauty; song aided attention and memory (see [Liturgy and Music](#)). Clergy wore vestments as a source of beauty and a way of honoring the holy work God called them to. And, following the pattern of the Old Testament temple as well as the heavenly temple in the Revelation to John, many churches used incense as a physical representation of the prayers of God's people.

Of course, some people worried that these things could become a distraction. The medieval Cistercian movement sought beauty in visual simplicity, and some forms of Reformation Protestantism rejected physical adornment almost entirely. The historic *Book of Common Prayer* allowed only the use of such vestments as were used in the time of Edward VI—but nineteenth century Anglicans found themselves debating what was or was not included in that rubric. Nineteenth century England saw fierce disagreement over placing candles on the altar for Holy Communion. Most Anglicans today would accept that there is a certain range of appropriate practice; however, the phrase from the Psalms remains a touchstone for Anglicans of all sorts, as we strive to “worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.”

Because our bodies are spiritually significant, Christians over the centuries have also sought to consecrate them to God. This includes bodily spiritual disciplines like fasting and acts of mercy. It also includes physical actions like kneeling, bowing, raising hands, or making the sign of the cross (a practice that Tertullian and other early authors, as well as Medieval and Reformation figures like Martin Luther, describe, explain, and commend). Worship that appeals to all the senses—not only hearing, but also sight and touch and smell and taste—reminds us that we pray with our bodies as well as our minds and spirits.

Candidates are expected to be able to identify and explain the proper function of physical objects used in Christian worship in the Anglican tradition, including processional crosses, candles, and the vessels and other articles used in the celebration of Holy Communion. They should know the names of various parts of the Christian worship space (the nave, the chancel, the sanctuary, etc.). They must know the colors associated with various seasons of the church year and their significance, as well as the names of different vestments and how to wear them

properly. They should be familiar with appropriate “manual acts” traditionally used by priests celebrating the Eucharist or officiating at other liturgies—especially those required or implied by the rubrics of the Prayer Book. Finally, candidates should have at least some awareness of the range of physical acts of devotion (bowing, genuflection, making the sign of the cross) that are found in various streams of the Anglican tradition, and possess a basic understanding of the significance of such actions.

**Liturgy and Music** From the New Testament onward, “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” have played a part in Christian worship. While the primary hymn-collection of the Church has always been the Psalter, there are other forms of music, both ancient and modern, which help Christians to glorify and praise God. Singing aids memory and meditation, as well as lifting the heart to God. Saint Augustine famously wrote that “the one who sings, prays twice.”

In the Anglican tradition, there is a long history of chanting the Psalms. There is also a distinctive and beautiful tradition of chanting the Daily Office, especially Evensong. Portions of the Eucharistic liturgy have received many wonderful arrangements through the centuries, and continue to be adapted by contemporary musicians. In more recent centuries, other hymns and songs of praise have been introduced to Anglican practice as well. Translators like John Mason Neale retrieved a wealth of ancient and medieval Greek and Latin hymnody, even as Charles Wesley and his heirs contributed a variety of new hymns. Recent years have seen many old hymns set to new tunes, making them available to another generation of Christians.

Priests in charge of a congregation are responsible for all music that is used in worship. Hymns and songs are chosen based on the Scripture readings assigned for the day, and on the liturgical season. (For example, a song full of “alleluias” is not appropriate in Lent; a hymn of expectation for the return of Christ might be particularly suitable to Advent.) All lyrics must be theologically sound as well as musically appropriate. It is particularly important that the selected music encourages the participation of the congregation. At the same time, the ultimate point is not the effect music or singing has on us. Rather, its purpose—like all worship—is to please God.

Candidates should be prepared to exercise priestly oversight by familiarizing themselves with a wide range of hymns and other songs. They should also seek to

cultivate at least basic knowledge of Anglican chant, including the chanting of Psalms, of the Daily Office, and of appropriate portions of the Eucharist.

### Recommended Reading & Watching

---

Important hymnals in the Anglican tradition include the *Hymnal 1940*, the *Hymnal 1982*, and the 2017 *Book of Common Praise*

*Music Ministry in the Anglican Tradition* by Fr. Eric Zolner

[\*Music Ministry in the Anglican Church\*](#)

**Liturgy and Mission** The liturgy of the church and the mission of the church are not two separate activities in which we engage, but two sides of the same coin. At the center of the cosmos is the worship of the Triune God (Revelation 4, 7). In the liturgy of the church we make an ordered response of worship to the Word of God, while in the mission of the church we join with God in bringing all creation into that ordered worship, offering the world back to God. The Post-Communion Prayer in the “Renewed Ancient Rite” of the 2019 Prayer Book captures both sides of this twofold work, as we thank God for feeding and uniting us to himself through Jesus Christ, and then pray that the Father will “send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.” Similarly, both Morning and Evening Prayer include a “Prayer for Mission” near the end of the rite, inviting us to prayerful participation in God’s missional work. The Great Litany, the Solemn Collects in the Good Friday liturgy, and various Occasional Prayers (especially numbers 16-20) further underscore this missional focus. At the same time, the goal of mission does not end “out there” in the world, but in drawing new believers to full discipleship through catechesis, baptism, repentance, and sacramental participation in the life of Christ. Historic Anglican liturgy thus draws us, both individually and as a covenant people, into the very nature of the Triune God, so that we are formed by God’s missional concerns for the whole creation, and can invite the world to conversion and newness of life within the worshiping body.

While the liturgy drives and empowers mission, it always remains primarily oriented toward God. The Eucharist, in particular, is not a “seeker service” in the contemporary sense; the intended participant is a baptized Christian. In fact, in the

early days, catechumens were invited to leave midway through the liturgy, before the “holy mysteries” began. All are welcome to attend most Anglican services; but this orientation toward God—and emphasis on the kind of worshiper God desires—serves as a continual reminder that there is a process of ongoing transformation (discipleship) to which the liturgy calls us, and calls us to invite others.

Candidates for ordination should understand and be able to articulate how liturgy shapes us to engage in God’s mission and how that mission draws all creation into worship of the Triune God.