



On Liturgical Texts

Authorized by the Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa
St. Andrew's Day, 2023

Our liturgy both shapes and reflects who we are as Christians, and, as such, it is desirable that it reflect the common features of our Anglican identity. Consistency in liturgy across our diocese, particularly on Sunday mornings, roots us firmly in a shared spiritual tradition. Such consistency provides a solid foundation from which to seek ongoing liturgical renewal.

At their ordination, every bishop, priest, and deacon declare they “do solemnly promise to conform to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Anglican Church of Canada.” The following directions are intended to assist clergy in the Diocese of Ottawa in fulfilling this promise by clarifying information and addressing common questions regarding liturgical texts.

Please note the use of any other liturgies or parts of liturgies beyond those specified below requires the written permission of our diocesan Bishop.

Sundays and Principal Holy Days

On Sundays and Principal Holy Days parishes are expected to use liturgical texts authorized by the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada or those authorized in writing by the Bishop of Ottawa.

Authorized General Synod liturgical texts can be found here:

<https://www.anglican.ca/about/liturgicaltexts/>

Either the Apostles' Creed or Nicene Creed is required in a eucharistic liturgy on Sundays and Principal Holy Days (noting that at baptisms or confirmations, the Apostles' Creed is contained within the Baptismal Covenant). Parishes are permitted to replace the Creed with Hymn #44 or #46 in *Common Praise*. Parishes are also permitted to use inclusive versions from the English Language Liturgical Consultation found here:

<https://www.englishtexts.org/ellc-texts>

The following are included among the authorized liturgical resources:

- Eight Eucharistic Prayers in the *Book of Alternative Services (BAS)*
- Three *Supplementary Eucharistic Prayers*

- *Alternative Collects for Years A, B & C of the Revised Common Lectionary*
- *Seasonal Prayers over the Gifts and Seasonal Prayers after Communion*
- *Gathering Rites for the Paschal Season (Lent and Easter)*
- *Inclusive Language Liturgical Psalters (2)*
- *Alternate Thanksgiving over Water for Sundays, All Saints Day & Baptism of the Lord*
- *The Book of Occasional Celebrations*
- Authorised French, Chinese, Cree, and Inuktitut translations of authorised texts
- *Supplementary Services of the Word* designed for public worship. (Note that *Pray Without Ceasing: Morning and Evening Prayer for the Seasons of the Church Year and for Ordinary Time* is not designed for public worship but is a good resource for individuals or households who pray the Daily Office throughout the week).

Liturgies Other Than Sundays and Principal Holy Days

For liturgies other than Sundays and Principal Holy Days, parishes are permitted to use liturgical texts authorized by other provinces in the Anglican Communion as well as *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, authorized by our full communion partner, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). Because such rites have their own integrity, the entire rite should normally be used rather than selecting a few elements from it.

If it is the case that a suitable rite cannot be found within this provision, clergy may draw together elements from other Christian sources, shaping them into a liturgy that judiciously balances creativity with Anglican liturgical sensibilities. If there is any uncertainty, the Bishop's office should be consulted.

In all cases, permission must be secured from the publisher before using copyrighted texts.

Pastoral Liturgies

In addition to the pastoral rites found in the *Book of Common Prayer (BCP)*, the *Book of Alternative Services*, and the *Book of Occasional Services*, parishes may use any of the pastoral liturgies authorized by General Synod found here:

<https://www.anglican.ca/about/liturgicaltexts/>

Trial Liturgical Texts

From time to time, General Synod produces "Texts for Trial Use and Feedback" found at <https://www.anglican.ca/about/liturgicaltexts/trialuse/>. Parishes may use these texts if they advise the Bishop's Office and are willing to submit evaluative comments to General Synod's office of Faith, Worship, and Ministry.

Lectionaries and Versions of Scripture

Authorized lectionaries can be found online at www.lectionary.anglican.ca.

The following versions of scripture are approved for regular use in public worship:

- *New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)*
- *Contemporary English Version (CEV)*
- *NRSV Updated Edition (NRSVue)*

The First Nations Version (FNV) of the New Testament is approved for occasional use in public worship.

As mentioned above, alternative Old Testament Readings for Eastertide can be found here: <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/Alternative-Old-Testament-Readings-Easter-Season.pdf>.

Note: English translations of New Testament Scripture which say “the Jews” may be altered to “the Judeans” or “the people” or other sensitive revisions.

Questions People Might Ask

Must we be restricted to the *Book of Alternative Services* and *Book of Common Prayer*?

There is a wide range of worship material authorized for use in the Diocese of Ottawa, both within and beyond the BAS and BCP. See the liturgies mentioned above.

Why can't our parish just come up with our own liturgies?

The benefits of common prayer can be hard to articulate, but they include a sense of spiritual connection with other Anglicans, even those far from where one is worshipping. Common prayer is a significant sign of our communion with one another as well as expressing the doctrine of our church. Therefore, liturgies cannot be altered or replaced without considered due process and episcopal permission.

That being said, it is important for the liturgy to express local need and cultural context through hymns, sermon, and the Prayers of the People as well as symbols; and for liturgical renewal to be sought on both diocesan and national levels. This is one aspect of engaging in contextual mission.

The General Synod's Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee encourages the use of trial liturgical texts as part of the process of revising existing rites as well as developing new texts. Clergy are encouraged to share background material and rationales for trial liturgies to help people understand the theological and liturgical issues and use the rites intelligently as well as to provide useful feedback. The evaluation of trial liturgies is an essential part of the church's discernment.

Under the authority of the Bishop, our diocese is developing new liturgies for inductions, marriage, the last Sunday an incumbent presides in a parish appointment, as well as revising existing liturgies. As they are prepared, parishes will be invited to use these texts on a trial basis and offer their evaluation to the Bishop's Office.

Note: Our Diocese has asked Faith, Worship, and Ministry to develop eucharistic prayers with expansive language (e.g., non-binary language, feminine images for the divine).

May we omit some of the Scripture readings on Sunday morning?

The lectionary is an integral part of the liturgy of the Anglican Church of Canada and is to be used as given. Proclaiming all four readings sets forth to our people the richness of Scripture as a whole and is a foundational way to deepen faith and our understanding of it, therefore it is important none of them be omitted. From time to time, it may be practical to omit a reading other than the Gospel, but this must not become a regular pattern.

Why must we say one of the creeds at a Sunday eucharist?

Although neither creed claims to be the “last word” on our faith, each is a significant link to the church throughout time and space, both the worldwide Anglican Communion as well as churches of many traditions.

The creeds are rooted in the baptismal covenant, are considered core doctrine for our Church, and are a means of handing on the faith. They are also a corrective to congregationalism which focuses on the local at the expense of the global and historical.

They express our inclusion within (or communion with) the Anglican Church of Canada, the Anglican Communion, and the widest ecumenical consensus. (This would also apply to the credal elements in the Baptismal Rite of our church.) Admittedly neither creed says all that can be said about God or our faith, but they do not intend to.

In addition, eucharistic prayers express the Christian faith in the language of prayer, as does the liturgy as a whole. The liturgy, with the creeds, are best thought of in dynamic terms. As individuals who enter the Church sacramentally through baptism and eucharist, we submit ourselves in faith and love to the Church’s thought, discipline, worship, and practice, a process which extends over a lifetime.

Why can’t our priest use the ‘lay form’ of absolution? Aren’t priests “one of us” and also in need for forgiveness?

At every priest’s ordination the Bishop declares they are “to declare God’s forgiveness to penitent sinners.” This is a sacred responsibility that has been entrusted to priests. They must therefore say “you” instead of “us” when declaring absolution. Hearing a declaration directed to the people can be a liberating pastoral experience for worshippers (and the priest who declares absolution also receives it).

Must the Prayers of the People be restricted to the forms on pages 110-130 in the BAS?

Pages 110, 176, and 190 in the BAS make it clear that the litanies and prayers provided are not restricted to those in the BAS. A parish engaged in contextual mission will be

very aware of this need. Indeed, the intercessions and thanksgivings are a place to exercise creativity although care should be taken, so they are neither too long nor offensive to the gathered community.

When designing a litany, use a simple cue phrase/response, and make sure the petitions are not so long the community forgets what the cue/response is. Examples range from the familiar, 'Let us pray to the Lord/Lord, **have mercy**' to 'God of love/**Hear our prayer**' and multiple other options.

Contact the Bishop's Office for suggested alternatives.

May deacons and lay people bring communion to people outside the church?

Yes. Lay people may be trained and authorized by the incumbent to do so, using the provisions found in the BAS and at https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Public-Distribution_201211.pdf.

The invitation to confession on page 185 of the BAS uses masculine language for God. Are there alternatives?

The rubrics say, 'The people are invited to confession in these or similar words.' Options include the simplicity of page 46 in the BAS ("Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbour.") as well as the following: "Dear friends in Christ, God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy, welcoming sinners and inviting them to the heavenly banquet. Let us confess our sins, confident in God's forgiveness." There are myriad other appropriate variations.

"I was dismayed when my rector omitted the reference to females in Eucharistic Prayer #1. As a woman who grew up in a deeply sexist society, that prayer has been profoundly meaningful to me, reminding me I'm made in the image of God. Must all references to women be omitted from the liturgy?"

Although clergy may make judicious minor revisions to authorized liturgies, they are required to carefully consider the pastoral context of their parish before doing so. As this question makes clear, issues regarding liturgical language for humanity are complex.

Sometimes it is preferable to avoid a certain prayer entirely rather than altering it. For instance, it might be better to avoid the use of Eucharistic Prayer #1 rather than omitting "male and female you created us". Some changes are perceived as more minor, such as changing "sons and daughters" to "children" at the end of Eucharistic Prayer #3.

Gendered language for God and human beings is problematic to many people. In addition to revising the invitation to confession (see above) what else can we do?

Accommodating local identity and cultural context in the liturgy is important, especially when engaging in contextual mission. The language in the BAS achieved a milestone by aiming at expansive language as opposed to the language found in the

BCP, however forty years later many Anglicans are looking for further revisions. Our diocese will seek to develop authorized texts which use feminine/alternative/non-traditional images for God. As this process evolves, parishes will want to ensure hymns, sermons, and Prayers of the People reflect a broad range of imagery for the divine as well as being inclusive of all genders.

“For years I have related to God as ‘Father’, finding it to be a comforting and strengthening way to understand God. However, my parish priest says this image is offensive to some people. Is there a place for me in the Anglican Church anymore?”

Christians around the world, including the Anglican Church of Canada, are baptised “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” The prayer Jesus taught is translated in English as, “Our Father...” Clearly, the image of God as Father is deeply rooted in Anglican tradition, and indeed was an expansion of the ancient Old Testament understanding of God. Its use is part of the rich panoply of biblical images for God.

Rather than restricting or reducing the images used to address God, parishes can be encouraged to expand them, using both familiar and new images. In time Anglican liturgies will address and refer to God in many ways, allowing us to value the richness of a plethora of human, political, animal, and natural images for the divine, from both the richness of our historical tradition as well as new developments.

It is vital for the church to be welcoming and hospitable to people of all genders. What is the best way to make this happen?

A key is to build a foundation of sound teaching in sermons, parish groups, and training for parish leaders. Changing the liturgy is not necessarily the best place to begin this process. Holding up the message of God’s love for all people reminds us to reach out to friends and strangers alike with openness, curiosity, and compassion. This is at the heart of doing contextual mission. Relationships will develop through such ministries, which in time will demand to be expressed liturgically.

Note that non-eucharistic liturgies are often much more accessible to those who are unchurched than eucharistic ones are. The latter requires a measure of liturgical catechesis as well as a grounding in the Christian faith itself. Finally, it is important to remember the process of cultural change regarding open hospitality demands patience and persistence as well as compassion and empathy.