Have you got some burning questions regarding church-life and practice? This adapted article from Cecil K. Dewars, has many answers.

Anglican Traditions

Many of us come to church each week, take part in the worship and fellowship, and become part of the church community. However, many times we realize that we don't know why certain things are the way they are in the church. For example, some might wonder about some part of the liturgy. Others might be interested in the significance of the vestments that the priests wear. A few might like to better understand the structure of the Eucharist.

In response to many questions posed to the clergy, a series of questions and answers, relative to our services and other Anglican customs and traditions, has been published from various sources over the years. Below is an amalgamation from various parish magazines and online sources:

Our Anglican Church

The Liturgy

The Vestments

Why are vestments worn by the Priest during worship? Also, why do choir members and servers have to wear robes in some churches?

There are several answers to these questions.

Vestments and robes add to the dignity of the worship offered to God.

ii. They save the worshippers from being distracted by the passion fashions of street dress.

ii. They emphasize the official character of those who lead worship, thereby lessening the effect of the individual personalities.

v. In addition to these above, vestments have a symbolic value – they represent something in our faith, which is further addressed below.

What is the significance of the vestments worn by a Priest during worship?

In many churches you will see Eucharistic vestments worn by the celebrant at the Eucharist. Every one of these vestments has a meaning which is related to Christ's crucifixion.

The Alb is a white linen garment which covers the entire body. The alb represents the purple robe put on Christ in mockery, but is white to symbolize His innocence. It reminds us of the purity and innocence which is required to approach God. Alb comes from a Latin word which means white.

ii. The Stole and the Girdle (or Cincture). The Stole is a long scarf which is crossed over the chest and held in place by the Girdle which looks very much like a white rope. The Stole and Girdle symbolize the ropes used to tie Christ to the pillar when he was scourged. Furthermore, the stole for a priest is like a badge for a policeman, it tells us that the person who wears it has a special job to do. The Priest's work is to be God's representative to us. And just as important, the Priest is our representative before God.

ii. The Chasuble is a large oval garment made of linen or silk. It is sleeveless and has a hole in the center to slip over the Priest's head. It falls straight from the shoulders. The Chasuble reminds us of the seamless robe put on Christ before He was lead away to the cross. It is a sign of Christ's love for us. It also represents love in reference to St. Paul's injunction, "above all things put on love" (Col 3:14).

Why do servers wear robes?

In some other traditions those who serve the assembly simply wear common dress. This is in order to assert that those serving are normal people. One problem with this approach is that it can devalue the purpose for the assembly gathering together in the first place. We come together as the Body of Christ, those who have been drawn from all walks of life into Christ's presence to focus upon his goodness and grow together in his love and praise. Wearing our own fashions can devalue our togetherness by highlighting our difference and make our assembly appear disordered or chaotic. In the Anglican tradition servers wear robes (white albs or cottas) in order to overcome division, bring uniformity and show respect and reverence for the God whom they are serving at his Altar. This is also a central

practice in the other main Apostolic traditions (those who can authentically trace their formation in a direct unbroken line through their bishops from the Apostles) such as the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church. Our focus in church should always be on God. We don't come to make ourselves feel better, even though that may well be the outcome. We really come to learn how to live more in tune with God's desire for his world. This all begins with us recognising his sovereignty over our lives and awareness of his ultimate goodness – that which drives creation forward. So, we come in the first instance in devotion and reverence so that we may leave more aware of the goodness we are called to bear on the world in his name – we should leave ready to be God's conduits in the world. Those who generously give their time to God and his people each week by acting as servers wear robes in order that their presence may not be a distraction from that greater aim. The robes are white, because white is a symbol of purity. It doesn't matter what the person is like underneath, whether they are liked or disliked by others, whether they have sinned or not during the week, by wearing the white robe their personalities cease to be a distraction because they symbolise something greater than themselves. We are told in scripture that the heavenly host are apparelled in radiant white – the servers, then, draw us towards heaven where true goodness is to be found – they draw our attentions towards the God who is with all and in all, whose mercies never come to an end. The God who leads us away from the perils of this world into his marvellous light surrounded by those who serve him in heaven, the heavenly host dressed in the splendour of the kingdom.

Liturgical Colours

The earliest definite knowledge of the use of specific colour in the service of the Church is Clement of Alexandria' recommendation of white as suitable to all Christians. The Canons of Hippolytus assign white to the clergy as becoming their office. The medieval development of colour symbolism may be examined in the Rationale Divinorum Officiorum of Durandus. This 13th Century prelate explains the meaning of all colours but, interestingly enough, knows of no such thing as either a standard Use or a standard meaning.

The ancient Use of liturgical colours was very simple: the best vestments, second best, ordinary and, in some places, black. The Eastern Orthodox Church still adheres to this practice. Insofar as "the best" is concerned, it is still required by the Dominican Order's Rule to be worn on the highest feasts irrespective of its colour.

In the middle ages each Cathedral had its own Use, and although Use was by no means binding on the Diocese involved, it was inevitable that some sequences should become popular and that, ultimately, certain Cathedral Uses should grow wider even than diocesan in their influence. It must be noted, however, that on an Ascension Day in the 16th Century, one could have seen "the best" vestments in Salisbury, white in Westminster, blue in the College of St. Bernard, yellow in Prague, red in Utrecht, and green in Soissons.

The Use of Salisbury Cathedral (Old Sarum) has always had wide popularity; therefore it should be noted that the ancient Westminster Use, which was predominately white, red and black, has always had considerable appeal.

The Best: Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Ascension, Whitsunday, Trinity, Dedication, Patronal Festival, All Saints', Thanksgiving.
2nd Best: Weekday in Epiphanytide, Trinitytide (if red not used).

The colour sequence of the Roman Catholic Church (generally adopted by the Anglican Church) is now very largely that common to the Court of Rome in the 16th Century. It is often referred to as the Western Use. It is as listed below:

White: Christmas and days of Octave ending with Circumcision (Jan. 1), Epiphany and Octave, Easter Even through the 5th Sunday after Easter, Ascension Eve through the Vigil of Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, Transfiguration, Christ the King, All Saints. Depicts joyfulness.

Red: Pentecost and Octave, Apostles and Evangelists (except John, whose feast is a white one). Red has become increasingly used during Holy Week. Depicts the colour of blood, and used to commemorate all martyrs and for the Holy Spirit.

Purple (Violet): Lent, Advent (or blue). Depicts penitence

Green: The Sundays (and Ferias) after the Octave of Epiphany through to the Eve of Septuagesima or, more often now. to Ash Wednesday, the Sundays after Pentecost (or after Trinity) through to Advent. Depicts patient growth.

Black: Good Friday, All Souls', Requiems

Rose: The 3rd Sunday in Advent, the 4th Sunday in Lent.

Use of Candles

Why do we use candles during the liturgy?

Our Lord is the light of the world (John 8:12). At baptism we are made one with him; we join his family and are ourselves 'to shine as lights in the world to the glory of God.' The symbol of a lighted candle, then, has an obvious meaning; this is why we present one to the newly baptized, one that has been lit from the Paschal Candle that stands near the font.

On Easter Eve a large candle– the Paschal Candle– is carried into the darkened church, with the joyful announcement, 'the light of Christ!' This candle burns during services throughout Eastertide, after which it is placed near the font. One thing we learn from this is that we are enabled to shine as lights in the world only in and through the light of Christ himself.

Candles are also found on altars to remind us of the presence of Christ; they are usually in an even number (2, 4 or 6); this may serve to remind us that Jesus is both true God and true man.

The Eucharist is made more dignified and solemn by the carrying of candles by servers called acolytes or torch-bearers. Candles have been used at the holy communion from the very earliest times.

The Sign of the Cross

I see members of the Parish make the sign of the cross at different times in the liturgy. Would you please tell me how the sign of the cross is made? When are the appropriate times to make the sign of the cross on oneself?

Customs, furnishings and symbols vary greatly; it is no exaggeration to say that no two churches are exactly the same. In some churches the celebrant at Eucharist wears traditional vestments: chasuble, etc.; in others he wears an alb and large stole; in others a surplice. Some churches use incense; some do not. Some altars have

six candles, some none. And so on. In some Anglican churches there are just a few people that cross themselves; in other Anglican churches most people cross themselves.

Perhaps this very diversity serves to remind us how important ceremonial is — and yet how secondary. Our faith is in the living person of Jesus Christ, not in a set of things and buildings. Jesus would still be Lord if every cathedral and parish church were destroyed tomorrow. Yet all these external signs and symbols, properly used, serve to increase our understanding of worship and, in the end, our faith in him. Now to answer the two questions. I use the word 'ceremonial' to mean an action, something done by a worshiper during a service. The sign of the cross is ceremonial. People who see the point of this ceremony are sometimes shy of making it or uncertain how to do it. A safe way (however, certainly not the only one) is to make the cross with one's outstretched hand, from the forehead, then touching the chest, then the shoulders, from left to right. When you were baptized, you were given the sign of the cross as a symbol of your faith, as the badge, the distinguishing mark of a Christian. It was made upon your forehead. Now you make it for yourself. When?

During worship, the sign of the cross is by custom made at certain times. At the Eucharist these are as follows:

when the priest says, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" etc. at the beginning of the service.

ii. if the priest says, "in the name of the Father" etc. before and/or after the sermon.

ii. at the absolution when the priest makes the sign of the cross over the congregation after the general confession.

v. at the blessing at the end when he also makes the sign over the people.

When the Gospel is announced, we sign (with the thumb) forehead, lips, and breast, to show that we will take the words to our mind, speak the words with our lips, and keep the words in our hearts.

At Morning Prayer and Evensong the sign of the cross is used as follows: on our lips with the thumb at the words "O Lord open our lips"; in the usual way at "O God make

speed to save us"; at the beginning of the gospel canticles — the Benedictus, the Magnificat, Nunc Dimittis — and at the end if the Grace is said.

It is worth mentioning that you will from time to time no doubt be making the sign of the cross at other points in the service, for example, at the end of the prayer "may the souls of the faithful…" or "rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them", at the end of the creed, or just before receiving Holy Communion. This is because not so very long ago it was the rule to make the sign of the cross much more frequently during the Eucharist than it is now. Many people have kept to these habits and are not to be criticized for so doing.

The Cross as 'Sign' – The symbol of the Cross is common to Christians of all traditions, and has been since the beginning of Christian history. It is to be seen in art, in and on our Churches, and as ornaments on our bodies. All of this is appropriate for Christians, because the sign of the Cross constantly reminds us of what Christ did for us all.

When we make the sign of the Cross, we are reminding ourselves of this. We are also reminding ourselves that what Christ did on the Cross 'He did for me', personally!

In making the sign of the Cross, we 'glory in the Cross of Christ' (Gal 6:14) , and we 'take up our Cross'. When we 'take up our Cross' we must be prepared to say to God 'not what I will, but your will be done'. 'Not I, but thou!'

The Cross as 'Prayer' – Very often when we make the sign of the Cross, we do it to accompany another prayer. For example, we make the sign of the Cross when we say the words "In the name of the Rather … etc." In this case, the 3 points of the Cross may remind us of the Trinity. Making the sign of the Cross is also a prayer itself: a prayer without words.

It is fitting that when we come together in worship, we should worship with all our being. We are to worship with our minds, our souls and also our bodies, for our bodies are the "Temple of the Holy Spirit". Making the sign of the Cross is nothing less than worshipping with our bodies, for what is more fitting for the body than movement and gesture?

When we use words to pray, we are using only one form of language. The body has its own language also, in which making the sign of the Cross is an eloquent

expression. One small gesture can speak volumes of words.

The Peace

What is the purpose of the Peace during the Eucharist? There's lots of talking and visiting during the Peace and this distracts from the service. Often it takes me a long time to get my mind back into worshipping following the Peace because of this talking between Parishioners. Would you please address this concern?

When the celebrant says, "The Peace of the Lord be always with you", we respond, "and also with you". In the early church each person turned to his neighbour and kissed him on the cheek. This ceremony is enacted today by a handclasp. This is to show the unity of the Body of Christ. Since the times of Saint Paul, the unity of the worshippers has been considered the very essence of the service itself (see 1 Cor 16:20, 2 Cor 13:12, 1 Peter 5:14 and Eph 4:3-4).

It's important to note that the peace comes after the confession and the absolution and before the prayer of consecration and the receiving of communion. This is intentional! We must be at peace with our God and with our neighbour before receiving the body of Christ.

The peace is not the time to talk about events of the past week nor our plans for the coming week. So the peace (in the early church it was the known as the kiss of peace, also pax) is the mutual greeting of the faithful as a sign of our love and unity. Let's enjoy it but let's not get carried away by unnecessary talking. Let's be sensitive to maintaining the reverence of our worship during the peace.

Significance of Incense

Christmas is coming and we may use incense in the service. Can you talk a little about incense?

Incense signifies prayer and sacrifice and is also a sign of honor and respect. The Bible contains many references to incense in worship, perhaps the most notable being

in St. Luke, chapter 1, verses 8 to 12. Also the psalmist writes, “let my prayer be set forth as the incense, and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice” (Psalm 141:2). During the days of persecution in the early church, attempts were often made to force Christians to burn incense in front of a statue of the Roman Emperor. To do so, of course, was to turn one’s back on Christ. It is not surprising, therefore, that it eventually became common practice for Christians to use incense in their worship to acknowledge Christ as their divine Ruler. The server who looks after the incense is called the thurifer; the vessel he carries containing burning charcoal, is the thurible. He has the incense in a container called a boat, which may be carried by a ‘boat boy’, usually a small server.

During the Eucharist incense may appear at any or all of the following times: at the head of the procession from the sacristy to the altar; at the head of major processions both inside and outside the church; at the altar, which may be censed at the beginning of the service; during the Gospel; at the offertory; and at the elevations of the host and chalice. If the congregation is censed at the offertory, the people bow to the thurifer before and after being censed; we are all involved in the sacrifice and we are a ‘holy people’.

NAVE

Where is the nave? Where does the word come from?

The nave is the part of the church in which the congregation sits. It generally has an aisle on each side and an aisle up the center. It comes from the Latin word ‘navis’, meaning a ship. So the church is sometimes referred to as a ship, where we can retreat for refuge as we journey through the seas and storms of life. Great imagery, isn’t it?

NARTHEX

What is the origin of the word narthex?

Narthex comes from the Greek word narthex, meaning enclosure. Narthex is the antechamber of the nave, from which it is separated by columns, rails, or a wall. In the early church, the

	catechumens, which were the candidates for baptism, and penitents sat in the narthex.
TABERNACLE/ AUMBRY	***What is the difference between the tabernacle and an aumbry?*** On or near an altar there may be a receptacle. If this is on the altar it is known as a tabernacle. If set into the wall it is known as an aumbry. An aumbry is usually a small locked safe that contains the blessed sacrament – the consecrated bread from the Eucharist. It is reserved so that Holy Communion can be taken to the sick or shut-ins at short notice and is available for the focus of prayer. The area of the church that has the sacrament reserved (consecrated bread and wine) generally has a more holy and prayerful feel to it. It may also contain holy oil that is used at baptisms and for the Sacrament of Holy Unction and the Laying On of Hands.

Definitions

LITURGY	***When I was young I never heard the word Liturgy. It was always the Eucharist of Holy Communion. Where did the word Liturgy come from?*** One of the names most frequently used nowadays for the Eucharist or Holy Communion service is the “Liturgy”. This word derives from two Greek words which may be translated “the people’s work”. This is a helpful definition of worship as applied to the Christian Church. We, the people of God, have a job to do. We are sent – sent out into the world to be the salt of the earth, the leaven in the lump. Part of our work is worship; and the principal act of worship is the holy Eucharist, the Lord’s Supper, the Liturgy. So our work becomes our delight!
APOSTLES/ DISCIPLES	***What is the difference between an apostle and a disciple?*** Good question! Depending on the theologian, the answer may vary. However, this is what I believe.

An apostle is one of the twelve disciples chosen directly by Christ and sent to preach the gospel to all the world. Apostle comes from the Greek work signifying 'sent'. Jesus sent the twelve with the commission to teach and to act in His name and with His authority. Paul maintained that he was an apostle too, on a par with the twelve, by direct appointment by the risen Christ. So the designation apostle is reserved for the Twelve and Paul. These men were unique. A disciple is a believer in the thought and the teaching of Jesus. In short, they are followers. You and I would be considered disciples of Christ.

In conclusion, every apostle was a disciple, but not every disciple is an apostle.

ALLELUIA/ AMEN

What is the meaning of the words Alleluia and Amen?

Alleluia comes from the Hebrew word meaning 'praise the Lord'. So, it is a liturgical expression of praise. It occurs in the bible (e.g. in pss. 111-117) and it was taken early into the liturgy of the Church. In the Western Churches it is omitted from the Liturgy during Lent. As an expression of joy, it is used frequently during the period of Eastertide. Did you know that in the Eastern Churches, Alleluias occur with special frequency during the Lenten services?

Amen is a Hebrew word meaning 'verily' or 'truly'. It is used at the end of prayers and creeds as an expression of our agreement or assent. Did you know that Amen is the name given to our Lord in the Book of Revelation? (3:14)

PAUL and the GOSPELS

What is the time frame when Paul was writing his letters? How do they relate to the gospels:

Paul probably wrote his letters in the period between 51 and 63 A.D. (He was martyred about 64 A.D.) They were written for the instruction and encouragement of new Christian Churches.

The gospels came later, when the Church realized that the second coming of Christ wasn't happening as soon as expected. Mark's was the first to be written, around 70 A.D. The Church gave the gospels the most honoured place as witnessing to Jesus' life and teachings, His death and resurrection, while treasuring Paul's letters as an inspired exposition of the Christian faith.

The Holy Days of Easter

What is the significance of Palm Sunday? And what does Hosanna mean?

PALM SUNDAY and HOSANNA

Palm Sunday is the 6th Sunday in Lent (the Sunday before Easter) which commemorates the entry of our Lord into Jerusalem, when people strewed the way with palm branches and cried "Hosanna". It is an old custom on this festival to decorate the church with palms, to carry them in procession, and to distribute blessed palms to the congregation.

Hosanna is the Greek form of the Hebrew petition 'save we beseech Thee', a song of praise to God.

HOLY WEEK

The rites of Holy Week are ancient and by nature different from the liturgical celebrations of the rest of the Church Year. They are meant to be different in order to focus the attention of the people on the mysteries being celebrated in this sacred time.

Therefore, it is important that the priest and all who assist in the Holy Week rites be well prepared and familiar with what is happening. You cannot over-plan for Holy Week. The extra time spent in preparation and the extra attention given to details will contribute substantially to a liturgical flow that will enable the people to participate fully in these rites and will also avoid confusion.

THE HOLY TRIDUUM

The Holy Triduum is the pinnacle of the Church's year. It is the three days from Maundy Thursday to Easter Day and encompasses the entire passion of our Lord. The services for which are laid out below.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

The liturgy of this evening should convey the strength of solemnity and restraint so that the actions may speak for themselves. For indeed, it is the beginning of the sacred 3 days of the celebration of the Passion and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ. It initiates a time of watching, waiting and contemplating, as we enter into the commemoration of the mystery of our redemption. The gift of love in the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood is the focus; the demonstration of self-giving in the washing of feet is a fitting symbol; the watch through the night and the continuation of this liturgy in that of Good Friday is the timelessness of silence, the silence of God. On this night we celebrate the Great Thanksgiving with the powerful knowledge that:

When the hour had come for him to be glorified by you, his heavenly Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end; at supper with them he took bread…After supper he took the cup of wine…Father, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption (BCP,374).

THE WATCH

Technically, a vigil is *any* period of watchfulness or wakefulness that is kept through the night. It was quite common for the Early Church to have nocturnal services of prayer, often ending with the Eucharist. For example, the main celebration of Easter, the Paschal Vigil Service, was observed during the night of Holy Saturday/Easter Sunday.

Traditionally, after the Mass (and Evensong) of Maundy Thursday, it is appropriate that a Watch be kept throughout the night before the Reserved Sacrament at the altar of

repose. (Thus the term “The Watch” to symbolize first the account of the Agony in the Garden, Mt. 26:36-46, then Judas’ betrayal, followed by Peter’s denial). After the Maundy Thursday Eucharist, the Reserved Sacrament shall be removed from the aumbry and placed upon the altar until the completion of Compline. Following Compline, the Blessed Sacrament shall then be taken from the altar and placed at the back of the Church for the continuation of the Watch.

The Watch can be a very meaningful devotion. We pray that it will be for many of you.

GOOD FRIDAY

The Solemn Liturgy of the Passion and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ should be celebrated in the afternoon or early evening hours. It is a continuation of the Maundy Thursday Liturgy and begins in silence as the night before ended in silence.

In order that the solemnity of this day be maintained, careful planning and preparation are necessary. Nothing should detract from the total participation of all the people in the celebration of this liturgy.

Before the liturgy begins, the place of Reservation should be darkened so that all attention may be focused on the action in the sanctuary. A single lamp should be kept burning, signifying the sacramental presence, but all other candles should be extinguished.

The main altar is bare, without linens or frontals. There are no candles. If possible, all crosses should be removed until the 3rd part of the liturgy.

THE GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER

The Great Vigil of Easter is the culmination of the sacred celebration of Holy Week and the beginning of the celebration of the Lord’s Resurrection. It is the climax of the Christian Year and unfolds in Scripture, psalm, Sacrament and liturgy the story of

redemption. It begins in darkness and proceeds to a joyous burst of light. It begins in silence and proceeds to the glorious proclamation of the Paschal Alleluia.

It is the Christian Passover, for it celebrates the passing from death to life, from sin to grace. The story of the Exodus is central to the Liturgy of the Word; Baptism is the means of the full realization of redemption; Holy Communion is the promise of the glory that shall be ours with our Risen Lord.

This liturgy moves with austere solemnity from one part to the next, as we watch and wait for the Lord's Resurrection. It is not to be rushed through, for time is suspended as we recount the story of creation, celebrate the glory of the New Creation in the waters of Baptism, and profess our faith in the perfection of all creation in the fullness of time, in the glory of God.

Of all the celebrations of the Church Year, the Great Vigil of Easter is pre-eminent, for it alone vividly and dramatically portrays all that was, that is, and that ever shall be in the drama of our redemption:

Christ yesterday and today, the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and Omega. His are the times and ages and to him be glory and dominion through all the ages of eternity

<u>Liturgy of God's Holy Word</u>

(The basis of our Liturgy in keeping with the Early Church)

The Introit Psalm	During the period A.D. 422-432, the custom developed of beginning the Eucharistic Liturgy with a Psalm (the Psalter is the hymn book of Judaism with which our Lord was familiar).

The Lord's Prayer	and the **Collect for Purity** are all that remain from the priest's preliminary preparation with his assistants appointed to be said before the Mass in the Sarum Missal used in Salisbury, England, in 1237.
The Decalogue	(Exodus 20:1-17) or Christ's **Summary of the Law** (Matthew 22:37-40) were added in place of the 9-fold Kyrie in 1552 and 1789 respectively.
The Kyrie	as a response can be traced back to the fourth century in the Eastern Orthodox Liturgies.
The Gloria in Excelsis	In the Orthodox Liturgies of St. Basil and St. John Chrysostom, a familiar and popular hymn was sung at the beginning of the rite (except in Advent and Lent). Since the 4th century, the most popular hymn has been the Gloria in Excelsis.
The Salutation	This ancient greeting initiates the major portions of the Eucharist – The Liturgy of the Word (Bible Readings) and the Liturgy of the Altar Table.
The Collect of the Day	Beginning in the 5th century, the Egyptian Prayer Book of Serapion introduced a prayer related to the lessons which follow.
The Three Lessons	The early Christian Church read the Jewish scriptures (Old Testament) and added Christian writings which, by the year A.D.

	382, had been compiled into the New Testament by the Church. Soon the tradition was fixed of reading 3 Lessons (Old Testament, Acts or Epistle, and Gospel), some of those lessons being 2 or 3 chapters in length. In the Middle Ages, the Roman Rite reduced the readings to 2 short lessons.
The Psalms	The use of a Psalm after the Old Testament reading can be documented as early as A.D. 350 and represents the oldest use of Hymnology (psalms) in the Liturgy. As early as the "Martyrdom of Matthew" (3rd Century), Alleluias were sung in anticipation of the Gospel reading. The Roman Rite dropped the Alleluias in Lent.
Sequence Hymn	The use of a Sequence Hymn appears in the 9th century.
The Reading of the Gospel	The reading of the Gospel has attracted special ceremonies since the 4th century. The Gospel Book came to be carried into Church accompanied by incense and candles, and placed on the Altar until the Gospel procession. The reading of the Gospel and the Book itself symbolized the presence of Christ in the Liturgy of the Word, just as the Eucharistic Prayer and the elements of bread and wine are the focal points of Christ's presence in the Liturgy of the Table.
The Nicene Creed	In the first centuries, the Eucharistic Prayer of Consecration was understood as being the Creed in which the people heard their faith proclaimed over the bread and wine and gave their assent in acclamations and "Amen". The Nicene Creed originated in the Eastern Churches as a baptismal profession of faith with a

	structure modelled on Matthew 28:19 and an emphasis on oneness that reflects Ephesians 4:4. Amplified by the Council of Nicaea (A.D.325), the Nicene Creed was introduced into the Western Church at the council of Toledo in Spain in A.D. 589. *(see also the special section on the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds.)*
The Preparation of the Table and the Presentation of Offerings	The action of worship now moves from the pulpit (lessons and sermon), the piece of furniture and symbolizes Christ's presence in the world, to the Altar, the Table which is the centre of His presence in the Sacrament. Soon after Constantine legalized Christianity (A.D. 313) it became customary for a psalm or hymn to be sung during the presentation of the gifts of bread, wine and money. "Let all mortal flesh keep silence" was the most popular hymn in the Eastern Church. The new American Prayer Book of 1979 lists places where incense is used. In the "Commentary" thereon, the following explanation is offered: "In the ancient Jewish Temple an incense offering was burned by the priest every morning and evening (Exodus 30:1-10; Luke 1:8-23). Incense was a worthy, expensive gift offered to God (Matthew 2:11; Philippians 4:18; Revelation 18:13), and signified the ascent of the prayers of people to God (Psalm 151:2; Revelation 5:8 and 8:3-4). The smoke of incense is seen in both the Old and New Testaments as the manifestation of God's glory (1 Kings 8:10-11; Isaiah 6:6-8 and Revelation 15:8)."
The Intercessions	By the end of the 4th century in the Eastern Church, these prayers had become a Litany with biddings by the Deacon to which the people responded "Kyrie eleison". In the new Liturgies, the Intercession is restored to its earlier position before the Offertory.

The General Confession	A general confession of sin by the whole congregation was an innovation of the 16th century. Earlier, the Lord's Prayer, which concluded the Prayer of Consecration and contained the phrase "forgive us as we forgive" sufficed. No absolution was included for one of the benefits of Communion was understood to be the forgiveness of sins.
Thanksgiving over the Bread and Wine (the Prayer of Consecration)	For the first several centuries the text of this prayer was not fixed. By the 4th century in the East, the Eucharistic Prayer had developed a formalized Trinitarian pattern (like the Creed); God the Father was blessed for Creation and Redemption, the Redemptive work of Christ was recalled and the benefits of the Spirit were invoked.
The Lord's Prayer	By A.D. 400 the Lord's Prayer was used as a devotion preparatory to receiving Holy Communion, e.g., "give us this day our daily bread". In 590 Gregory the Great placed it immediately after the Amen of the Eucharistic Prayer. During the 16th century it came to be said after Holy Communion, but is now universally being restored to its original position in the Liturgy.
Prayer of Humble Access	This was added in the 16th century and is not included in most new Liturgies.
Holy Communion	The traditional posture for Christians receiving Communion is standing, a tradition the Eastern Churches have always maintained. In the late Middle Ages, the custom developed in the West of kneeling to receive Communion. The Words "The

	Body of Christ" and "The Blood of Christ" were sentences of administration from the earliest times which constituted a profession of faith to which the communicant answered "Amen".
The Post Communion Prayer	Until the 4th century the rite ended with Communion. Gradually a dismissal was added which included a formal prayer and an act of sending people on their way to go about the Lord's business, acting out in the world what they had just celebrated.
The Blessing	There is no evidence of a blessing at the end of the Eucharist in the Early Church. By the Middle Ages the Bishop said a blessing over the people as he walked through the Church, and in the 16th century this blessing came to be said in many places at the Altar. Many new rites omit the blessing, considering it to be superfluous to the act of Communion.

<u>Today's Eucharist</u>

PROPERS	Question:	What are the Propers and what is the origin of the word? Propers come from the word Proper. Together the Collect, the Old Testament Reading, the Psalm, the Epistle, the Gospel and the Preface are called the Propers. They are fitting or *Proper* for our 3-year calendar.
COLLECTS	Question:	What are the Collects? Who prepares them? Do they change from year to year? The Collect (from the word collect, meaning to gather) is a prayer where we ask God, the Holy Spirit, to collect (to

		gather) our thoughts for the readings that follow. The Collects follow a 1-year cycle for all Sundays of the Liturgical year. There are special Collects for festivals, saints' days and holy days. The Collects are prepared by liturgical experts to follow the Church calendar.
GOSPEL	Question:	How is the Gospel reading different from the rest of the New Testament? The first 4 books of the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, are the accounts of the life, death, resurrection and teachings of Jesus. They are called *Gospels* from the old English word *godspell*, meaning "good news". At every Eucharist the reading from one of the Gospels is the climax of the readings and is given special honour.
BELLS	Question:	What is the significance of the bells during the Eucharist? When the Sanctus bells are used, they are rung 3 times at the words Holy, Holy, Holy. The bells announce that the most sacred part of the service (the Prayer of Consecration) is starting. Their use is ancient. It is said that originally the Church bell was used so that the peasants in the fields (who could not attend the service) would know when the most sacred parts of the service were taking place. They could then join with the congregation by offering personal devotions. The Sanctus bells are rung again, after the consecration of the bread, announcing that Christ is present in the bread. Again, they are rung after the consecration of the wine, announcing that Christ is now present in the wine.
OFFERTORY	Question:	What is the Offertory?

The Offertory is the part of the Eucharist in which the offering takes place. It includes the collection of money (alms), its presentation to God, the placing of the elements, bread and wine upon the altar, and whatever is said or sung at that time. These signify the presentation of the worshippers themselves. The collection of money is only one part of the Offertory.

The Nicene and Apostles' Creeds

NICENE CREED

Where does the Nicene Creed come from?

The Nicene Creed is the great Creed of the Church, so called from a town named Nicaea, in Asia Minor, where it was drawn up in 325. It was drawn up to defend the orthodox faith against Arianism. This heresy denied the full divinity of Christ, and was named after its author Arius. Arius held the view that the Son of God was not eternal but created by the Father from nothing as an instrument for the Creation of the world. He was therefore not God by nature, but a creature susceptible of change, even though he differed from other creatures in being the one direct creation of God.

APOSTLES' CREED

Where does the Apostles' Creed come from?

The Apostles' Creed comes from the summary of the doctrine taught by the Apostles.

It is the oldest form of creed in existence in the Church.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CREEDS

What is the difference between the Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed?

The Apostles' Creed is different from the Nicene Creed.

The Apostles' Creed was not written by the Apostles but it is a summary of the doctrine taught by the Apostles. It is a statement of faith used in the

Western Church. It has three sections: One dealing with God the Father; the second dealing with Jesus Christ; and the third dealing with the Holy Spirit. It is a much shorter form of our belief and was originally used in the early Church for the preparation of candidates for baptism. By the 7th and 9th centuries it was used regularly in the daily offices.

The Nicene Creed, as stated in the above answer, was written and used as a standard of orthodoxy. It is a much longer statement of our faith because it was written to clarify and to respond to heresies that were creeping into Church doctrine. The practice of reciting the Nicene Creed started in the Eastern Church in the 5th century. It was not adopted in the West until the early 11th century.

Therefore, the Apostles' Creed is a summary of important points in Christian doctrine. The Nicene Creed clarifies and elaborates our Christian beliefs.

USING ONE INSTEAD OF THE OTHER

Why do we use the Nicene Creed instead of the Apostles' Creed?

It was in the Eucharistic Prayer, rather than in the Creed, that the ancient church gave primary expression to its faith when it celebrated the Eucharist. However, because of the Arian controversy in the late 3rd and early 4th century, the Nicene Creed replaced the Eucharistic Prayer as a means of handing on the faith of the church in the Eucharistic Liturgy. It is suggested by our tradition that the Nicene Creed be used on all major festivals and it or the Apostle's Creed may be used on Sundays. Most churches use the Nicene Creed on Sundays because it is considered the great Creed of our faith and because it is more complete in Trinitarian and Christological doctrine. Also, the fact that the Nicene Creed is placed before the Apostle's Creed (pages 188 – 190 in the BAS) as an option in Sunday liturgy gives it priority.

Much material taken from:

www.memorialchurchanglican.com/pdf/Anglican%20Traditions%20for%20the%20Congregation.pdf