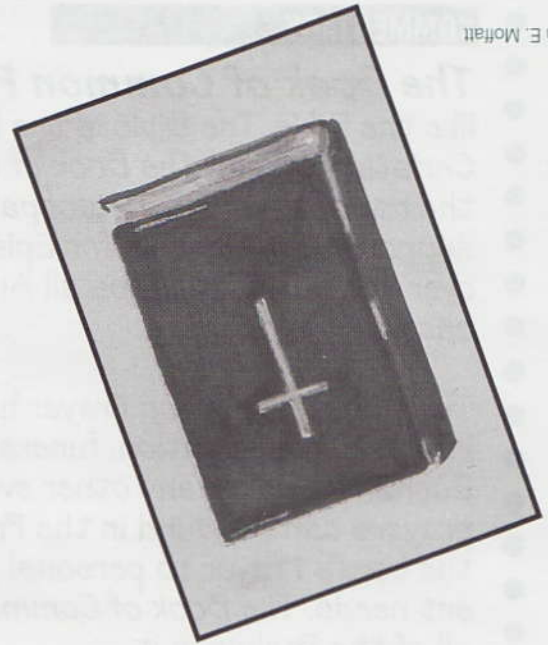


The Episcopal Church Year





come, let us worship and
bow down, let us kneel
before the Lord, our Maker!
—Psalm 95:6

O

SESSION 1

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH YEAR

The Book of Common Prayer: Episcopal Identity



words to remember

Make a joyful noise to the Lord,
all the earth.
Worship the Lord with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.

—Psalm 100:1-2

prayer Almighty and ever-
living God, ruler of
all things in heaven and earth, hear
our prayers for this parish family.
Strengthen the faithful, arouse the
careless, and restore the penitent.
Grant us all things necessary for our
common life, and bring us all to be of
one heart and mind within your holy
Church; through Jesus Christ our
Lord. *Amen.*

For the Parish
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 817

COMMENTARY

*The Book of Common Prayer is a lot like the Bible. The Bible is the backbone of Christianity, and *The Book of Common Prayer* is the backbone of the Episcopal faith. It provides support and strength for Episcopal people all over the world and gives all Anglicans at least one thing in common.*

*The Book of Common Prayer has services for baptism, confirmation, funerals, the Holy Eucharist, and many other events. All sorts of prayers can be found in the Prayer Book, from the Lord's Prayer to personal prayers for different needs. *The Book of Common Prayer* also has all of the Psalms in it.*

*What would happen if we didn't have *The Book of Common Prayer*? What would we do in church? How would we worship? Would we sing all the time, or listen to long sermons? *The Book of Common Prayer* gives us a way to worship together.*

—Michael, Grade 7

Youth prayer

Dear God, Thank you for *The Book of Common Prayer*. Thank you for giving us a book which so unites us in our faith. Thank you for giving us this great tool so that we can properly worship you. *Amen*

—Michael, Grade 7

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—II Kings 17:27-28

Tuesday—I Chronicles 16:29-31

Wednesday—Isaiah 29:13-14

Thursday—John 4:23-24

Friday—Hebrews 12:28-29

Saturday—Revelations 15:3-4

voices



There is no great future for any people whose faith has burned out.

Rufus Jones

God reveals Himself unfailingly to the thoughtful seeker.

Honoré de Balzac

Every [church] service. . . “works” best—when, through long familiarity, we don't have to think about it. As long as you notice, and have to count, the steps, you are not yet dancing but only learning to dance. . . The perfect church service would be the one we were almost unaware of; our attention would have been on God.

C. S. Lewis

Thank you, God, for bringing together so many people who love you. Help us to pray and sing as if with one voice and to lose our differences in remembering you.

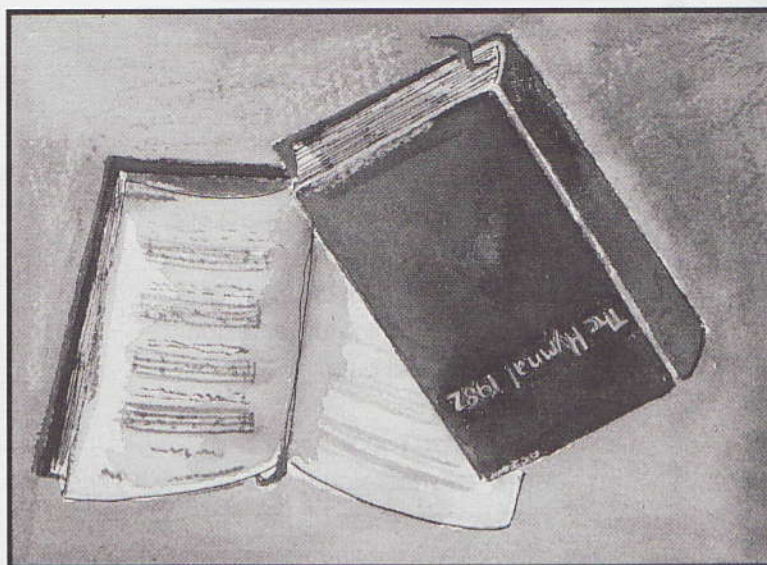
Avery Brooke



—Colossians 3:16b

and with gratitude
in your hearts sing
psalms, hymns, and
spiritual songs to God.

...a



SESSION 2

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH YEAR

The Hymnal: Songs for Worship



words to remember

O sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord, bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.

—Psalm 96:1-2

prayer O God, whom saints and angels delight to worship in heaven: Be ever present with your servants who seek through art and music to perfect the praises offered by your people on earth; and grant to them even now glimpses of your beauty, and make them worthy at length to behold it unveiled for evermore; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For Church Musicians and Artists
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 819

COMMENTARY

The heavy wooden doors close.
My heart sinks within me.
I have been shut out.
I do not know if God shut me out,
or the church itself.
God, church—what does it matter?
Why should I care?
I ask myself these stupid questions
To postpone the feeling of isolation
When shutting God out.

I walk away—don't look back!
You don't know what you might see, fear, know.
I walk, faster now, when I hear it.
A beautiful choir of voices singing.
Singing of God's love—a love that is not marred in any way.
A love that will never falter.
A love that is greater than my pride.

I run—throw open the wooden doors!
Join the singing! Join the choir rejoicing in alleluias!
Join the church!
Open my heart to God!

—Nancy, Grade 8

Youth prayer

Most merciful God, give us
the grace to sing your praise:
the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Give us the joy to praise your name.
Amen.

—Leila, Grade 6

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Exodus 15:20-21

Tuesday—I Chronicles 16:8-10

Wednesday—Psalm 28:6-7

Thursday—Judith 16:13-14

Friday—Ephesians 5:17-20

Saturday—James 5:13-14

voices



The one who sings prays twice.

Augustine

I sing because I'm happy; and I
sing because I'm free.

Mahaila Jackson

Music is one of the closest link-ups
with God that we can probably
experience. I think it's a common
vibrating tone of the musical notes
that hold all life together.

Martin Gaye

I sing as I arise today!

I call on my Creator's might:

The will of God to be my guide,

The eye of God to be my sight,

The word of God to be my speech,

The hands of God to be my stay,

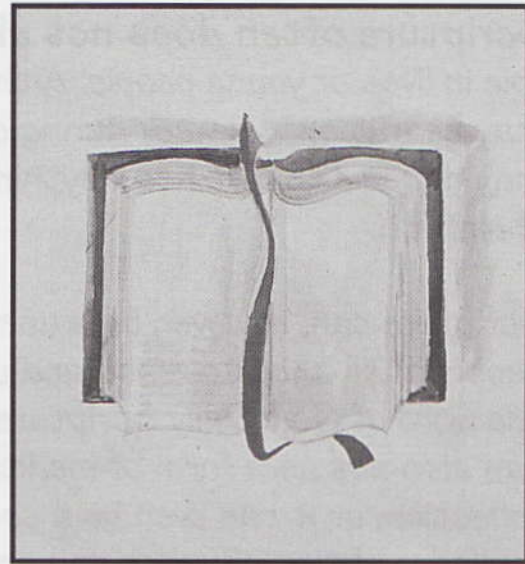
The shield of God to be my

strength,

The path of God to be my way.

Patrick of Ireland





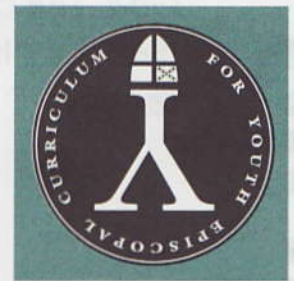
our word is a lamp to my
feet and a light to my path.
—Psalm 119:105



SESSION 3

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH YEAR

Lectionary: Bible in the Church



words to remember

All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

—II Timothy 3:16-17

prayer Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen*

Proper 28

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 236

COMMENTARY

Scripture often does not play a large role in lives of young people. Although they may hear it once a week during church, they may not see that it has anything to do with their lives.

Scripture can, however, be a useful tool for people of all ages to reach and understand the word of God. Daily Scripture readings can also act as a form of meditation or reflection, or it can even be a constant reminder of the influence and presence of God. The Bible can play a larger role in people's lives if they take the time to really read it.

—John, Grade 9

Youth prayer

Dear God and Heavenly Father— Please help us use your Word as a light for our lives. Show us the right path to go on. As you already know, O Lord, we have suffered already. Keep us on the right path so we don't stray from your Word. Amen.

—Sara, Grade 7

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Deuteronomy 8:2-3

Tuesday—Psalm 33:4-5

Wednesday—Psalm 119:65-67

Thursday—Matthew 15:6-9

Friday—Acts 13:47-49

Saturday—Ephesians 6:16-17

voices



It is a belief in the Bible . . . which has served me as the guide of my moral and literary life.

Johann Wolfgang van Goethe

I consider an intimate knowledge of the Bible an indispensable qualification of a well-educated [person].

Robert A. Millikan

In all my perplexities and distresses, the Bible has never failed to give me light and strength.

Robert E. Lee

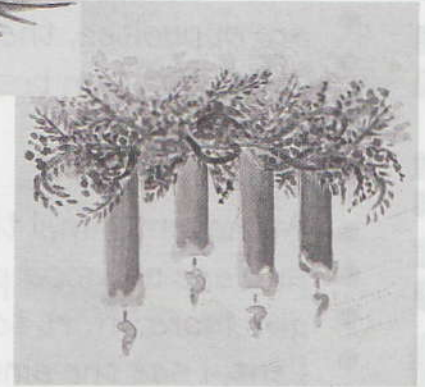
Whatever achievement of my life there is to be commended, the credit is due to my kind parents in instilling into my mind an early love of the Scriptures.

Daniel Webster



—Matthew 3:2

[John the Baptist said,]
“Repent, for the
kingdom of heaven
has come near.”



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH YEAR
SESSION 4

Advent & Lent: Seasons of Preparation



words to remember

Therefore prepare your minds for
action; discipline yourselves; set all
your hope on the grace that Jesus
Christ will bring you when he is
revealed.

—1 Peter 1:13

prayer

Almighty and most merciful God, kin-
dle within us the fire of love, that by
its cleansing flame we may be
purged of all our sins and made wor-
thy to worship you in spirit and in
truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Lent Collect, Order for Evening
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 111

COMMENTARY

Advent and Lent are both times of preparation. Advent prepares for the birth of Jesus, and Lent prepares for the death and resurrection of Jesus. Although they are opposites, they have a similar effect on me. I see them both as a time of rebirth for me.

At Advent, I feel that I should look at myself and see my good points, be thankful, and give more effort to the community. During Lent, I see the sins I have committed, and I try to be a better person to make up for the bad things I have done.

I believe that both Advent and Lent are very inspirational times of the year.

—Yuri, Grade 7

Youth prayer

Almighty God, Father of heaven and earth, give us the inspiration to honor the holy times of your son, our savior, Jesus Christ, at his birth and death. Let us rejoice during Advent while we prepare for the coming of Christ. Let us repent during Lent when we acknowledge that Jesus sacrificed himself so that we may live. *Amen.*

—Yuri, Grade 7

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Isaiah 57:14-16

Tuesday—Amos 4:12-13

Wednesday—Malachi 3:1-3

Thursday—Luke 1:76-77

Friday—Luke 3:3-6

Saturday—Acts 3:19-21

voices



A person should hear a little music, read a little poetry and see a fine picture every day in order that worldly cares may not obliterate the sense of the beautiful that God has implanted in the human soul.

Johann Wolfgang van Goethe

Forgiveness is a catalyst creating the atmosphere necessary for a fresh start and a new beginning. It is the lifting of a burden or the canceling of a debt.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

When I opened my eyes
this morning,
The day belonged to me.
The sky was mine and the sun,
And my feet got up dancing.
The marmalade was mine and the
squares of the sidewalk
And all the birds in the trees.
So I stood and I considered
Stopping the world right there,
Making today go on forever.
But I decided not to.
I let the world spin on and
I went to school.
I almost did it, but then,
I said to myself,
“Who knows what you might be
missing tomorrow?”

Jean Little



When Jesus told his disciples,
“If any want to become my
followers, let them deny
themselves and take up their
cross and follow me.”
—Matthew 16:24



SESSION 5

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH YEAR

Fasting: Days of Self Denial



words to remember

Yet even now, says the Lord,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
rend your hearts and not your clothing.
Return to the Lord, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
and relents from punishing.

—Joel 2:12-13

prayer Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Ash Wednesday
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 217

COMMENTARY

Fasting and other types of self denial have been popular throughout the ages, as well as in many religions. By fasting we show our love of God by giving up something that keeps us from him. We give up earthly things knowing that we will be compensated by his love.

—Chapin, Grade 7

Youth prayer

Dear Lord, we ask that you guide us in our time of fasting. Give to us the strength to keep on going, as well as the knowledge that you will see our attempts to become closer to you. *Amen.*

—Chapin, Grade 7

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Leviticus 23:27-29
Tuesday—Ezra 8:21-23
Wednesday—Isaiah 58:5-7

Thursday—Matthew 4:1-2
Friday—Matthew 16:24-26
Saturday—Acts 13:2-3

voices



Self discipline never means giving up anything, for giving up is a loss. Our Lord did not ask us to give up the things of earth, but to exchange them for better things.

Fulton J. Sheen

When the stomach is full, it is easy to talk of fasting.

Jerome

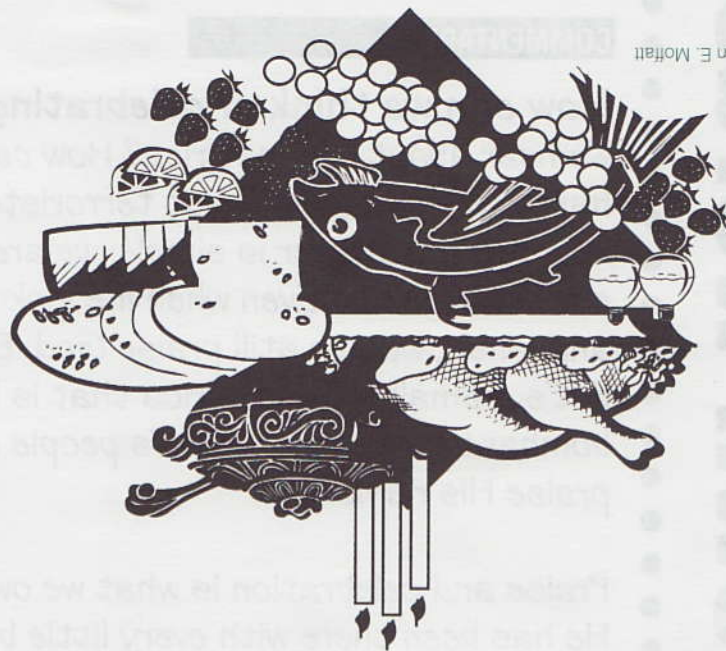
It would be more sincere as well as more religious to eat a full dinner in a spirit of gratitude than to make some picayune sacrifice of part of it, with the feeling that one is suffering martyrdom.

Thomas Merton

There is a really deep well inside me. And in it dwells God. Sometimes I am there too. But more often stones and grit block the well, and God is buried beneath. Then God must be dug out again.

Etty Hillesum





Let them praise the name of
the Lord, for his name alone
is exalted; his glory is above
earth and heaven.
—Psalm 148:13

SESSION 6

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH YEAR



Celebration: The Feasts

words to remember

Look! On the mountains the feet of one
who brings good tidings,
who proclaims peace!
Celebrate your festivals, O Judah,
fulfill your vows,
for never again shall the wicked
invade you;
they are utterly cut off.

—Nahum 1:15

prayer O God, by the
leading of a star
you manifested your only Son to
the peoples of the earth: Lead us,
who know you now by faith, to your
presence, where we may see your
glory face to face; through Jesus
Christ our Lord, who lives and
reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
One God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Epiphany
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 214

COMMENTARY

How can we think of celebrating when we hear about war in Africa? How can we be happy when we hear about terrorists in Ireland? The answer is simple: we are celebrating God. Even when life looks sad and lonely, we can still praise God. Even if it's a small town in Africa that is being bombarded by troops, God's people can still praise His name.

Praise and celebration is what we owe God. He has been there with every little boy playing his first T-ball game and every little girl in her first dance recital. He is even with those fighting the wars. Everyone has had hard times that God has helped him or her face. During the feasts we remember God's presence and praise His name.

—Sara, Grade 7

Youth prayer

Dear Father—

Let us keep praising you until the day we die. Let us praise you wherever we are and whatever the time of day. No matter who we are—teens or kings—help us to praise your name. In your heavenly name, *Amen*.

—Sara, Grade 7

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Joel 2:28-29

Tuesday—II Esdras 2:42-47

Wednesday—Matthew 2:9-11

Thursday—Matthew 28:1-6

Friday—II Corinthians 13:11-14

Saturday—Titus 3:4-7

voices



We ring the bells and
we raise the strain,
We hang up garlands everywhere,
And bid the taper twinkle fair,
And feast and frolic—
and then we go
Back to the same old lives again
Susan Coolidge

Endure, and keep yourselves for
days of happiness.

Virgil

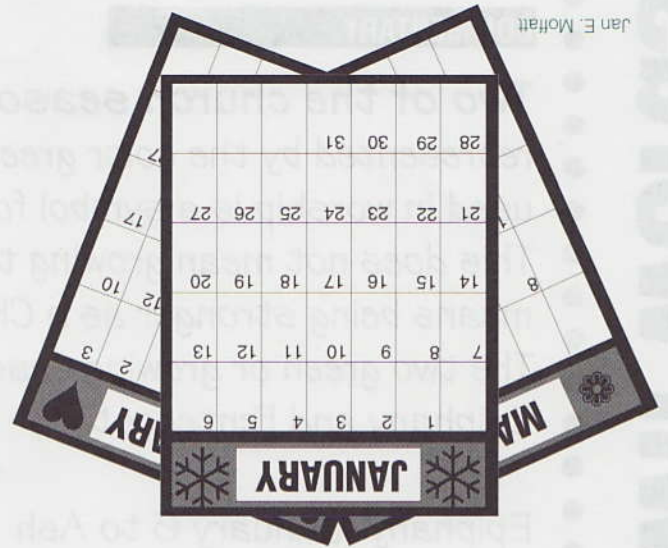
I praise Thee while my days go on;
I love Thee while my days go on:
Through dark and dearth, through
fire and frost,
With emptied arms and
treasure lost,
I thank Thee while my days go on.
Elizabeth Barrett Browning



—*Philippians 1:10b-11*

of God.
Christ for the glory and praise
that comes through Jesus
the harvest of righteousness
blameless, having produced
you may be pure and
o that in the day of Christ

...S



SESSION 8
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH YEAR

Epiphany & Pentecost: The Green Seasons



words to remember

Then [Jesus] said to his disciples,
“The harvest is plentiful, but the
laborers are few; therefore ask the
Lord of the harvest to send out
laborers into his harvest.”

—*Matthew 9:37-38*

prayer Grant, O Lord, that
the course of this
world may be peaceably governed by
your providence; and that your
Church may joyfully serve you in
confidence and serenity; through
Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and
reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Proper 3

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 229

COMMENTARY

Two of the church seasons are represented by the color green. Green used in worship is a symbol for growth. This does not mean growing taller; it means being stronger as a Christian. The two green or growing seasons are Epiphany and Pentecost.

Epiphany (January 6 to Ash Wednesday) is the season in which we proclaim Jesus as our savior. Pentecost (Pentecost Sunday to the first Sunday of Advent) explores the significance of the Church as the sign of Christ and of his presence in our daily life.

—Molly, Grade 9

Youth prayer

Most merciful God, we pray for ourselves that we may grow as Christians. Help us to see Jesus, your son, in our daily lives. Also help others find their faith and love of you and the Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

—Molly, Grade 9

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Isaiah 44:6-8

Tuesday—Ezekiel 33:7-9

Wednesday—Matthew 9:35-36

Thursday—Mark 3:9-12

Friday—Ephesians 4:1-3

Saturday—I John 1:1-4

voices



The holy spirit of the Spring
Is working silently.

George Macdonald

Christian community . . . is a gift of
God which we cannot claim. . . .
The more thankfully we daily
receive what is given to us, the
more surely and steadily will fel-
lowship increase and grow from
day to day as God pleases.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Lord, give me freedom
to rejoice in your gifts of life
and love,
to be present in all that I do,
and to praise you with all
my strength.

Robert Raines

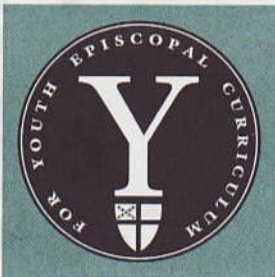


prayer Almighty God, you
have knit together
your elect in one communion and
fellowship in the mystical body of your
Son Christ our Lord: Give us grace so to
follow your blessed saints in all virtuous
and godly living, that we may come to
those ineffable joys that you have
prepared for those who truly love you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with
you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns,
one God, in glory everlasting. *Amen.*
All Saints' Day
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 245

—Sirach 44:1-2

Let us now sing the praises of famous men,
our ancestors in their generations.
The Lord apportioned to them great glory,
his majesty from the beginning.

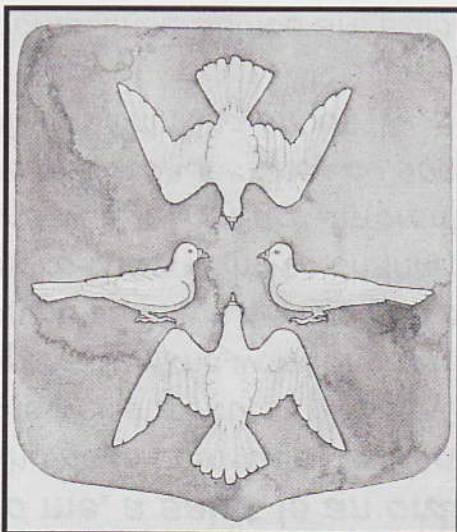
Words to remember



Saints: Recognizing Devotion

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH YEAR

SESSION 9



Bobbi Tull

f or we heard of your faith
in Christ Jesus and
of the love that you
have for all the saints...

—Colossians 1:4

COMMENTARY

To me, a saint is an ordinary person who does something extraordinary to make the world a better place by somehow spreading the word of God. I think that some saints have unusual experiences that make them want to change something in the world. They are different from other people because they do something instead of just thinking about it.

Sometimes saints are exiled or killed because of how they feel and what they do. Others, like all of us, can serve God without fear of punishment.

—Sara, Grade 7

Youth prayer

Dear God, thank you for those saints and martyrs who gave their lives and earthly things for the love of God. Help us remember that we are also saints for the love of God. *Amen.*

—Sara, Grade 7

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Deuteronomy 18:15-18

Tuesday—Isaiah 61:1-2

Wednesday—Micah 6:6-8

Thursday—Sirach 2:10-11

Friday—Ephesians 6:18-20

Saturday—Hebrews 12:1-2

voices



Many of the insights of the saints stem from [their] experience as sinners.

Eric Hoffer

A saint is one who makes goodness attractive.

Laurence Houseman

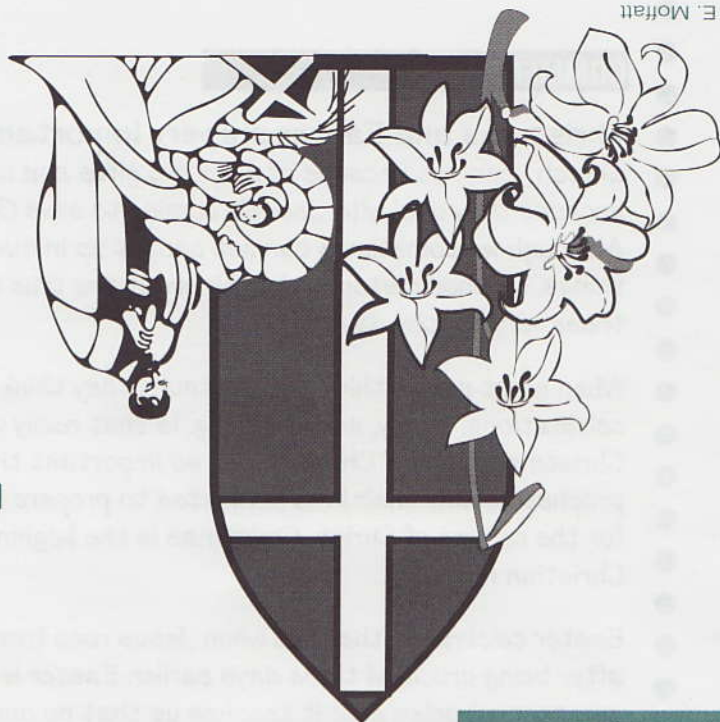
We die when we refuse to stand up for that which is right. We die when we refuse to take a stand for that which is true. So we are going to stand up right here. . . letting the world know that we are determined to be free.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

. . . while Christendom is divided about the rationality, and even the lawfulness, of praying to the saints, we are all agreed about praying with them.

C. S. Lewis





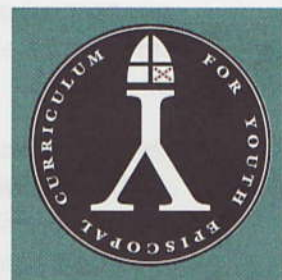
and every tongue
should confess that Jesus
Christ is Lord, to the glory of
God the Father.
—*Philippians 2:11*



SESSION 7

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH YEAR

Christmas & Easter: Celebrating the Seasons



words to remember

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

—*Micah 5:2*

prayer O God, whose Son
Jesus is the good
shepherd of your people: Grant that
when we hear his voice we may know
him who calls us each by name, and
follow where he leads; who, with you
and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns,
one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Collect for Fourth Sunday of Easter
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 225

COMMENTARY

Christmas and Easter are very important in the Church year, not because of all of the gifts and candy, but because they deal with Jesus's coming to save God's people. Although we sometimes can get caught up in material things, we should stop and think about the true meaning of these very special days.

When most people think of Christmas, they think of gifts, celebrations, family, and shopping. Is that really what Christmas means? Christmas is so important that prophets spent their lives dedicated to prepare the people for the coming of Christ. Christmas is the beginning of the Christian religion.

Easter celebrates the time when Jesus rose from the dead after being crucified three days earlier. Easter is one of the greatest miracles ever. It teaches us that no matter what happens, we should never turn away from God or lose faith in God.

Christmas and Easter are times for spiritual celebration in our hearts. We should be thinking about what made these holidays possible, and we should thank God for his greatest gift of all, Jesus.

—Kate, Grade 7

Youth prayer

God Almighty, please help us to see the true meaning of Christmas and Easter, and help us to understand why they are important to the Church year. Help us to avoid getting caught up in all of the gifts during the holidays. Please help us to follow the example of Jesus and to see him in everyone. Thank you for all of the wonderful gifts you have given to us and especially for Jesus, your Son. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

—Kate, Grade 7

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Psalm 148:13-14

Tuesday—Isaiah 51:9-11

Wednesday—Zechariah 2:10-13

Thursday—John 3:31-36

Friday—John 20:19-23

Saturday—I John 4:7-16

voices



God expects from [people] that their Easter devotions will in some measure come up to their Easter dress.

Robert Smith

Christmas cards in general and the whole vast commercial drive called "Xmas" are one of my pet abominations; I wish they could die away and leave the Christmas feast unentangled.

C. S. Lewis

Why do we celebrate your birth but not your life? . . . Thank you, Christ, on the occasion of Christmas and always, for giving us life in the midst of death, life, life, with you.

Malcolm Boyd

He became like us that we might become like him.

Athanasius

