

¶ General

- 1 Any reference in authorized provision to the use of hymns shall be construed as including the use of texts described as songs, chants, canticles.
- 2 If occasion requires, hymns may be sung at points other than those indicated in particular forms of service. Silence may be kept at points other than those indicated in particular forms of service.
- 3 Where rubrics indicate that a text is to be 'said' this must be understood to include 'or sung' and vice versa.
- 4 Where parts of a service make use of well-known and traditional texts, other translations or versions, particularly when used in musical compositions, may be used.
- 5 Local custom may be established and followed in respect of posture but regard should be had to indications in Notes attached to authorized forms of service that a particular posture is appropriate for some parts of that form of service.
- 6 On any occasion when the text of an alternative service authorized under the provisions of Canon B 2 provides for the Lord's Prayer to be said or sung, it may be used in the form included in *The Book of Common Prayer* or in either of the two other forms included in services in *Common Worship*. The further text included in Prayers for Various Occasions ([here](#)) may be used on suitable occasions.
- 7 Normally on any occasion only one Collect is used.
- 8 At Baptisms, Confirmations, Ordinations and Marriages which take place on Principal Feasts, other Principal Holy Days and on Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter, within the Celebration of the Holy Communion, the Readings of the day are used and the Collect of the Day is said, unless the bishop directs otherwise.
- 9 The Collects and Lectionary in *Common Worship* may, optionally, be used in conjunction with the days included in the Calendar of *The Book of Common Prayer*, notwithstanding any difference in the title or name of a Sunday, Holy Day or other observance included in both Calendars.

¶ Rules to Order the Christian Year

For a Table of Transferences, see [here](#).

Sundays

All Sundays celebrate the paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of the Lord. Nevertheless, they also reflect the character of the seasons

in which they are set.

At Evening Prayer on Saturdays other than Easter Eve, Christmas Eve or Principal Feasts or Festivals, the Collect appointed for the ensuing Sunday shall be used.

When a Festival occurs on the First or Second Sunday of Christmas, a Sunday of Epiphany, a Sunday before Lent, a Sunday after Trinity or on the Fourth, Third or Second Sundays before Advent, it is always to be observed but may be celebrated either on the Sunday or on the first available day thereafter. Festivals may not be celebrated on Sundays in Advent, Lent or Eastertide.

In a year when there are 23 Sundays after Trinity before the Fourth Sunday before Advent, the Collect and Post Communion for the Last Sunday after Trinity shall be used on the 23rd Sunday after Trinity and the Collect and Post Communion for the 3rd Sunday before Lent shall be used on the 22nd Sunday after Trinity.

Principal Feasts

The Principal Feasts which are to be observed are:

Christmas Day

The Epiphany

The Presentation of Christ in the Temple

The Annunciation of Our Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary

Easter Day

Ascension Day

Pentecost (Whit Sunday)

Trinity Sunday

All Saints' Day

On these days the Holy Communion is celebrated in every cathedral and parish church, and this celebration, required by Canon B 14, may only be dispensed with in accordance with the provision of Canon B 14A.

These days, and the liturgical provision for them, may not be displaced by any other celebration, except that the Annunciation, falling on a Sunday, is transferred to the Monday following or, falling between Palm Sunday and the Second Sunday of Easter inclusive, is transferred to the Monday after the Second Sunday of Easter.

Except in the case of Christmas Day and Easter Day, the celebration of the Feast begins with Evening Prayer on the day before the Feast, and the Collect at that Evening Prayer is that of the Feast. In the case of Christmas Eve and Easter Eve, there is proper liturgical provision, including a Collect, for the Eve, and this is used at both Morning and Evening Prayer.

If the Epiphany (6 January) falls on a weekday it may, for pastoral reasons, be celebrated on the Sunday falling between 2 and 8 January inclusive.

The Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas) is celebrated either on 2 February or on the Sunday falling between 28 January and 3 February.

All Saints' Day is celebrated on either 1 November or the Sunday falling between 30 October and 5 November; if the latter there may be a secondary celebration on 1 November.

Other Principal Holy Days

Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday are Principal Holy Days. These days, and the liturgical provision for them, may not be displaced by any other celebration.

On Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday the Holy Communion is celebrated in every cathedral and parish church, except where there is dispensation under Canon B 14A.

Eastertide

The paschal character of the Great Fifty Days of Easter, from Easter Day to Pentecost, should be celebrated throughout the season, and should not be displaced by other celebrations. Except for a Patronal or Dedication Festival, no Festival may displace the celebration of Sunday as a memorial of the resurrection, and no saint's day may be celebrated in Easter Week.

The paschal character of the season should be retained on those weekdays when saints' days are celebrated.

Rogation Days are the three days before Ascension Day, when prayer is offered for God's blessing on the fruits of the earth and on human labour.

The nine days after Ascension Day until Pentecost are days of prayer and preparation to celebrate the outpouring of the Spirit.

Festivals

The Festivals are:

The Naming and Circumcision of Jesus *(1 January)*

The Baptism of Christ

(Epiphany 1 or, when 6 January is a Sunday, Epiphany 2)

The Conversion of Paul *(25 January)*

Joseph of Nazareth *(19 March)*

George, Martyr, Patron of England *(23 April)*

Mark the Evangelist *(25 April)*

Philip and James, Apostles *(1 May)*

Matthias the Apostle *(14 May)*

The Visit of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth *(31 May)*

Barnabas the Apostle *(11 June)*

The Birth of John the Baptist *(24 June)*

Peter and Paul, Apostles *(29 June)*

Thomas the Apostle *(3 July)*

Mary Magdalene *(22 July)*

James the Apostle *(25 July)*

The Transfiguration of Our Lord *(6 August)*

The Blessed Virgin Mary *(15 August)*

Bartholomew the Apostle(24 August)

Holy Cross Day (14 September)

Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist (21 September)

Michael and All Angels (29 September)

Luke the Evangelist (18 October)

Simon and Jude, Apostles (28 October)

Christ the King (Sunday next before Advent)

Andrew the Apostle (30 November)

Stephen, Deacon, First Martyr (26 December)

John, Apostle and Evangelist (27 December)

The Holy Innocents (28 December)

These days, and the liturgical provision for them, are not usually displaced. For each day there is full liturgical provision for the Holy Communion and for Morning and Evening Prayer.

Provision is also made for a first Evening Prayer on the day before the Festival where this is required. When Evening Prayer on the day before a Festival makes use of the lessons relating to that Festival, the Collect of that Festival shall be used.

Festivals falling on a Sunday are to be kept on that day or transferred to the Monday (or, at the discretion of the minister, to the next suitable weekday). But a Festival may not be celebrated on Sundays in Advent, Lent or Eastertide. Festivals coinciding with a Principal Feast or Principal Holy Day are transferred to the first available day.

The Baptism of Christ is celebrated on the Second Sunday of Epiphany (13 January) when 6 January is a Sunday. If, for pastoral reasons, the Epiphany is celebrated on Sunday 7 or 8 January, The Baptism of Christ is transferred to Monday 8 or 9 January.

When St Joseph's Day falls between Palm Sunday and the Second Sunday of Easter inclusive, it is transferred to the Monday after the Second Sunday of Easter or, if the Annunciation has already been moved to that date, to the first available day thereafter.

When St George's Day or St Mark's Day falls between Palm Sunday and the Second Sunday of Easter inclusive, it is transferred to the Monday after the Second Sunday of Easter. If both fall in this period, St George's Day is transferred to the Monday and St Mark's Day to the Tuesday. When the Festivals of George and Mark both occur in the week following Easter and are transferred in accordance with these Rules in a place where the calendar of *The Book of Common Prayer* is followed, the Festival of Mark shall be observed on the second available day so that it will be observed on the same day as in places following alternative authorized Calendars, where George will have been transferred to the first available free day.

The Thursday after Trinity Sunday may be observed as the Day of Thanksgiving for the Holy Communion (sometimes known as Corpus Christi), and may be kept as a Festival. Where the Thursday following Trinity Sunday is observed as a Festival to commemorate the Institution of the Holy Communion and that day falls on a date which is also a Festival, the commemoration of the Institution of Holy Communion shall be observed on that Thursday and the other occurring Festival shall be transferred to the first available day.

The Festival of the Blessed Virgin Mary (15 August) may, for pastoral reasons, be celebrated instead on 8 September.

Christ the King is never transferred.

Local Celebrations

The celebration of the patron saint or the title of a church is kept either as a Festival or as a Principal Feast.

The Dedication Festival of a church is the anniversary of the date of its dedication or consecration. This is kept either as a Festival or as a Principal Feast.

When the date of dedication is unknown, the Dedication Festival may be observed on the first Sunday in October, or on the Last Sunday after Trinity, or on a suitable date chosen locally.

When kept as Principal Feasts, the Patronal and Dedication Festivals may be transferred to the nearest Sunday, unless that day is already a Principal Feast or one of the following days: the First Sunday of Advent, the Baptism of Christ, the First Sunday of Lent, the Fifth Sunday of Lent or Palm Sunday.

Harvest Thanksgiving may be celebrated on a Sunday and may replace the provision for that day, provided it does not supersede any Principal Feast or Festival.

In the Calendar of the Saints, diocesan and other local provision may be made to supplement the national Calendar.

Lesser Festivals

Lesser Festivals, which are listed in the Calendar, are observed at the level appropriate to a particular church. Each is provided with a Collect, Psalm and Readings, which may supersede the Collect of the week and the daily eucharistic lectionary. The daily Psalms and Readings at Morning and Evening Prayer are not usually superseded by those for Lesser Festivals, but at the minister's discretion Psalms and Readings provided on these days for the Holy Communion may be used at Morning and Evening Prayer.

The minister may be selective in the Lesser Festivals that are observed, and may also keep some or all of them as commemorations.

When a Lesser Festival falls on a Principal Feast or Holy Day, on a Festival, on a Sunday, or on weekdays between Palm Sunday and the Second Sunday of Easter, its celebration is normally omitted for that year, but, where there is sufficient reason, it may, at the discretion of the minister, be celebrated on the nearest available day.

If the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day) falls on a Sunday, it may be celebrated on Monday 3 November instead of the Lesser Festival of Richard Hooker.

Commemorations

Commemorations, which are listed in the Calendar, are made by a mention in prayers of intercession and thanksgiving. They are not provided with Collect, Psalm and Readings, and do not replace the usual weekday provision at either the Holy Communion or Morning and Evening Prayer.

The minister may be selective in the Commemorations that are made.

A Commemoration may be observed as a Lesser Festival, with liturgical provision from the common material for holy men and women, only where there is an established celebration in the wider church or where the day has a special local significance. In designating a Commemoration as a Lesser Festival, the minister must remember the need not to lose the spirit of the season, especially of Advent and Lent, by too many celebrations that detract from its character.

Days of Discipline and Self Denial

The weekdays of Lent and every Friday in the year are days of discipline and self denial, except all Principal Feasts and Festivals outside Lent and Fridays from Easter Day to Pentecost.

The eves of Principal Feasts are also appropriately kept as days of discipline and self denial in preparation for the Feast.

Ember Days

Ember Days should be kept, under the bishop's directions, in the week before an ordination as days of prayer for those to be made deacon or priest.

Ember Days may also be kept even when there is no ordination in the diocese as more general days of prayer for those who serve the Church in its various ministries, both ordained and lay, and for vocations.

Traditionally they have been observed on the Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays within the weeks before the Third Sunday of Advent, the Second Sunday of Lent and the Sundays nearest to 29 June and 29 September.

Ordinary Time

Ordinary Time is the period after the Feast of the Presentation of Christ until Shrove Tuesday, and from the day after the Feast of Pentecost until the day before the First Sunday of Advent. During Ordinary Time there is no seasonal emphasis, except that the period between All Saints' Day and the First Sunday of Advent is observed as a time to celebrate and reflect upon the reign of Christ in earth and heaven.

Liturgical Colours

Appropriate liturgical colours are suggested (adjacent to each Collect [here](#)): they are not mandatory and traditional or local use may be followed. The colour for a particular service should reflect the predominant theme. If the Collect, Readings, etc. on a Lesser Festival are those of the saint, then either red (for a martyr) or white is used; otherwise, the colour of the season is retained.

White is the colour for the festal periods from Christmas Day to the Presentation and from Easter Day to the Eve of Pentecost, for Trinity Sunday, for Festivals of Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin Mary, for All Saints' Day, and for the Festivals of those saints not venerated as martyrs, for the Feast of Dedication of a church, at Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday and in thanksgiving for Holy Communion and Holy Baptism. It is used for Marriages, and is suitable for Baptism, Confirmation and Ordination, though red may be preferred. It may be used in preference to purple or black for Funerals, and should be used at the Funeral of a child. Where a church has two sets of white, one may be kept for great Festivals indicated as 'gold or white'.

Red is used during Holy Week (except at Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday), on the Feast of Pentecost, may be used between All Saints' Day and the First Sunday of Advent (except where other provision is made) and is used for the Feasts of those saints venerated as martyrs. It is appropriate for any services which focus on the gift of the Holy Spirit, and is therefore suitable for Baptism, Confirmation and Ordination. Coloured hangings are traditionally removed for Good Friday and Easter Eve, but red is the colour for the liturgy on Good Friday.

Purple (which may vary from 'Roman purple' to violet, with blue as an alternative) is the colour for Advent and from Ash Wednesday until the day

before Palm Sunday. It is recommended for Funerals and for the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed, although either black or white may be preferred. A Lent array of unbleached linen is sometimes used as an alternative to purple, but only from Ash Wednesday until the day before Palm Sunday. Rose-colour is sometimes used as an alternative on the Third Sunday of Advent and the Fourth Sunday of Lent.

Green is used from the day after the Presentation until Shrove Tuesday, and from the day after Pentecost until the eve of All Saints' Day, except when other provision is made. It may also be used, rather than red, between All Saints' Day and the First Sunday of Advent.

A Table of Transferences

required, permitted or excluded by the Rules

Principal Feasts and Principal Holy Days

Epiphany may be celebrated on the Sunday falling between 2 and 8 January inclusive

Candlemas may be celebrated on the Sunday falling between 28 January and 3 February

The Annunciation falling on a Sunday must be transferred

All Saints' Day may be celebrated on the Sunday falling between 30 October and 5 November

All other Principal Feasts and Principal Holy Days may not be transferred

Festivals

The Baptism of Christ must be transferred if Epiphany is celebrated on Sunday 7 or 8 January but otherwise may not be transferred

St Joseph, St George or St Mark falling between Palm Sunday and the Second Sunday of Easter inclusive must be transferred

A Festival falling on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday is transferred if Corpus Christi is celebrated as a Festival

Christ the King may not be transferred

A Festival falling on a Sunday in Advent, Lent or Eastertide must be transferred

A Festival (except the Baptism of Christ and Christ the King) falling on another Sunday may be transferred

A Festival falling on a Principal Feast or Principal Holy Day must be transferred

Local Celebrations

The Dedication or Patronal Festival of a church, kept as a Principal Feast or Festival falling on a Principal Feast or Principal Holy Day or the First Sunday of Advent, Baptism of Christ, First Sunday of Lent, Fifth Sunday of Lent, or Palm Sunday must be transferred

The Dedication or Patronal Festival of a church, kept as a Principal Feast or Festival falling on any other Sunday is observed as a Principal Feast or may be transferred as a Festival

Harvest Thanksgiving may not be observed on a Sunday so as to displace a Principal Feast or Festival

Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England, material from which is included here, is copyright © [The Archbishops' Council](#) 2000 and published by [Church House Publishing](#).



Related Resources



Buy the Book

[Times and Seasons](#) is available from [Church House Publishing](#)

Download the Common Worship Lectionary app



Source URL: <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/churchs-year/rules>