

"CHURCH JARGON"



GLOSSARY

ACOLYTE

An Acolyte is a worship leader (often a child or youth) who lights the candles used in worship at the beginning of the service, and extinguishes them at the end.

ALTAR

The Altar is at the very front of our sanctuary, upon which sits our worship candles, a Bible, and a cross. Some traditions encourage genuflecting when approaching the Altar; we welcome all kinds of approaches!

BAPTISM

Baptism is a sacrament that publicly celebrates and claims a person's identity as a beloved child of God. We baptize people of all ages, usually during a special ceremony in worship.

CONFESSION

This is a prayer in worship during which we reflect on the ways we've sinned in our lives, and prayerfully re-orient ourselves towards God and God's love.

COMMUNION

Communion is a sacrament through which we celebrate Jesus teaching us that the way to salvation is through radical, abundant love. We celebrate an "open table" communion, meaning ALL are welcome to partake.

INTROIT

An introit is a piece of music, usually a solo or instrumental, that is played at the beginning of a worship service (not to be confused with a prelude, which happens BEFORE the service!)

DOXOLOGY

The Doxology is a song of praise and gratitude. We join in this song together after the offering collection.

LECTERN

The lectern is the podium from which our liturgists read scripture and present the offering invitation. It's on the right side of the sanctuary if you are facing the chancel.

NARTHEX

The narthex is the very back of the sanctuary; in some churches this area is separated from the rest of the sanctuary by doors or a partition.

PASSING THE PEACE

When we "pass the peace", we intentionally greet one another with messages of peace and hospitality. Some folks choose to hug, others shake hands, wave, fist-bump, or bow!

PULPIT

This is the podium from which our preacher offers their sermon. It's higher than the lectern, and on the left side of the sanctuary if you're facing the chancel.

SACRAMENT

A sacrament is a sacred ritual or ceremony during which we invoke the Holy Spirit to bless the proceedings. At United Parish, we celebrate two sacraments: Communion, and Baptism.

Whether you find these terms funny or familiar (or both!), we're so glad you've joined us for worship!

ANTHEM

An anthem is a musical element of the worship service that can be a choir piece, a solo, or an instrumental. What makes an anthem unique is that only the musician(s) perform it; the rest of us get to sit back and listen!

ASSURANCE

This is the moment in worship when we affirm that God's love is bigger than any human sin, and that God is always ready to welcome us into a relationship or reconciliation.

BENEDICTION

The benediction is the moment at the conclusion of worship when the preacher or pastor sends us out into the rest of our week with God's blessing.

CHANCEL

This is the front of the Sanctuary, where the choir sings and where the worship leaders often stand. Some churches have a raised chancel (like us), in others it's right at ground-level.

CHIMING THE TRINITY

We call forth God the Creator, Savior and Holy Spirit in musical tones, one for each part of the Trinity

DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship in the Christian church means following Jesus. It often involves studying Jesus' teachings, reflecting on them prayerfully alone or with others, and trying to live your life accordingly.

HYMNAL

A hymnal is the book of hymns that we use in worship. The hymnal in our pews is the New Century Hymnal, but sometimes we use hymns and songs from other sources, too!

LITURGIST

A liturgist is any person who helps lead worship by reading scripture, offering a prayer, or presenting the offering invitation.

OFFERING

The offering is the part of worship when the congregation (and worship leaders) contribute individual donations to the ministry of our church. The collection funds our Emergency Fund, our Operating Fund, or other outside causes.

PRELUDE/POSTLUDE

This is the gathering (and recessional) music played before and after worship. Some folks like to sit and listen to the whole prelude, others like to get up and move around to coffee hour!

SCRIPTURE

Scripture is how we often refer to our sacred text, the Bible. Each Sunday we read a passage of the Bible during worship.

SACRISTY

The sacristy is a small room off of the back of the chancel (and accessible via the lobby, too!). We prepare communion, store our chancel decorations ("paraments") and extra candles in the sacristy.

TRANSEPT

The transepts are the seating areas on the far sides of the sanctuary. If you think of the sanctuary like a cross, the transepts are the 'arms'.

USHERS

Our ushers welcome people arriving to the sanctuary and make sure they have everything they need to worship in our space. Our ushers also collect the offering and help direct people when to leave their pews for communion. Anybody can serve as an usher!

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation is a ritual for youth who have decided to publicly proclaim their Christian faith (after much thought, prayer, and classes!) and join the church as members. Not all of our youth choose to get confirmed, and we celebrate them for being their authentic selves!

SERMON

Our preacher (usually the pastor, sometimes a guest or church member) leads us in a reflection on how the Word of God plays out in our lives.