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Program Overview

Welcome to **via media: expanded**—a tool for evangelism designed to proclaim the Good News of God in Christ Jesus AND the Episcopal Church in a contemporary context. The expanded **via media** curriculum invites those seeking spiritual community into an eight, sixteen, or twenty-four week journey of study, prayer, and action surrounded by radical hospitality and grounded in a traditional Anglican perspective. Balancing Scripture, traditions, and reason, the course content is rooted in the Trinity and offers diverse, compelling witnesses to the unique way of being Christian that is our Anglican heritage.

via media celebrates who we are as American Anglicans and invites others to "come and see"—offering seekers both the content and the context for engaging in conversation about their faith journey from an unabashedly Anglican perspective. Its goal is not to offer easy answers to the hard questions 21st-century seekers are asking, but to model in the video and table discussions that it is possible to find answers in conversation and in community—that we are enriched by our differences, and that our faith is enlivened by our challenges.

What **via media** offers is a proven format for evangelism built around theology that is broadly Anglican, and hospitality that is radically inclusive. What **via media** challenges is the idea that only Evangelicals can do evangelism. What **via media** celebrates is a Church that tells the truth about both its strengths and its challenges and invites those seeking spiritual community to come and do the same.

Why **via media**? One of the Latin phrases that our Church throws around is *via media*, which means, “middle way.” As the Church of England was anticipating its future within a Roman Catholic tradition set in a Reformation world, it became clear that there was Truth in both experiences of Christianity. The middle way was a way to broaden the polarizing perspectives of the day to celebrate what both sides could bring to the proverbial table. *Via media* is a celebrated Anglican tradition of *both/and* that frames the context of how we think theologically and how we handle conflict in community. *Via media* is alive and at work in our communities today.

Welcome to the journey!



Participant's Introduction

This section provides an overview of the **via media: expanded** curriculum and describes the flow and content of a typical **via media: expanded** session. Each of the eight **via media: expanded** sessions (*Overview, God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, Word, Sin, Hope, and So What?*) is presented in three modules. Module A provides a general introduction to Anglican thought on each of the sessions' topics. Module B brings the session topic to the local church level to discuss how we, as American Episcopalians, practice our beliefs in the diocese and in the parish. Module C brings the discussion from the parish to the pew, helping participants to articulate their own beliefs in a way that contributes to the tapestry of Anglican theology and thought.

Flow of the Session

Each **via media: expanded** session will follow the general outline below:

Welcome and Meal

- Grace
- Icebreaker at table
- Introduction
- Table Talk

Theological Presentation

- Module A: Watch 30-minute session video
- Module B: Hear a Church Teaching excerpt and review video clip
- Module C: Hear a Personal Witness (live, on video, or read)

Small Groups

- Discussion of theological presentation
 - Module A: Engage in dialogue modeled in video
 - Module B: Discuss how you practice faith in community
 - Module C: Practice articulating your own beliefs

Going Forth

- Take-Home Materials
- Journaling
- Reflection for the Week

Worship

Small-Group Outline

The small-group experience is one of the greatest strengths of **via media: expanded**. It is in the small group that the topics introduced in the videos can be expanded, modeling the dialogue and discussion style of the video participants. As the weeks progress, community and trust can truly build in the small groups. For that reason, we suggest that, as much as is possible, small-group

assignments are fixed, rather than flexible.

Facilitator's Role

The small-group facilitator's task is essentially to guide the small group into the discussion of the theological presentation materials. Following the presentations, participants will be experiencing various emotions: some might be shocked by what they have seen or heard, while others might be ready to jump right in and tackle the hard questions. Once the conversation starts, the facilitator's role is just to help keep the discussion moving and on topic.

Participant's Role

The participant's role in the small group is the most important, because it is in honest, active dialogue that we truly engage in, and contribute to, Anglican theology. It is not necessary that participants agree or disagree with one another; it is necessary that all participants respectfully hear diverse perspectives. Whether you are returning to church from another tradition, have never attended church, or are currently a practicing member, your voice is welcome and needed in the Episcopal Church.

Discussion Questions

Each week, your small-group facilitator will offer questions and/or material to spark conversation. The questions are to help guide, not control, the conversation by letting the group discussion proceed naturally unless the people veer off the session's topic. As participants, you will certainly have questions of your own which will deepen your group's conversation.

Take-Home Materials

Each week, you will be given written material to take home that will include a theological content summary, the scripture chosen for the session, a piece from our traditions, and a prayer from the *Book of Common Prayer*. This material will be given to you as you leave the small group to go to worship. You will also be provided with a Reflection for the Week, which you are encouraged to use in your journaling, prayer, or meditation.

Journaling Activity

At the beginning of your participation in **via media: expanded**, you will be provided with a journal in which to write about your journey through this course. You are encouraged to use the journal during the week to record your thoughts, feelings, prayers, and especially your reflections upon the Reflection for the Week. You are reminded that you will get out of **via media: expanded** what you invest, and it is our hope that you will invest time and thought throughout the week.

Participant's Worship Notes

One of the ways that Anglicans share beliefs with one another and with the wider world is through common prayer. Our corporate worship, the liturgies that we develop, and in which we participate, shape our encounter with the divine. Worship also mirrors the culture and context of the gathered body.

Each **via media: expanded** session is designed to conclude with a brief worship experience. These simple liturgies incorporate prayer, Scripture, hymns, and a benediction, most of which are drawn from the *Book of Common Prayer* and other liturgical resources of the Episcopal Church. They also include a range of prayer practices that draw upon the diverse traditions of Christian spirituality. Each liturgy provides a fitting conclusion to the small-group discussion and reinforces the themes of the session. These liturgies are offered as a way to introduce participants to the liturgical richness of the Anglican traditions.

What we offer is a basic structure for concluding worship. As communities differ, and as your context shifts, the Coordinator of your **via media: expanded** program may want to add or take from these suggestions. In some cases we use inclusive language forms of standard prayers, in other cases we include traditional language, in still other cases we have written new prayers and meditations.

Worship is an important end to the time a community has spent in dialogue together. As Anglicans, our prayer is shaped by our experience and encounter of God in each other. Your Coordinator will introduce the transition from the small groups into the closing community worship liturgy.

Unless otherwise specified, Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible.

Session Eight: So What?

Did You Know She Was an Episcopalian?

Juliette Magill Kinzie Gordon Low (October 31, 1860 - January 18, 1927).

Founder of the Girl Scouts. Low was educated at Stuart Hall and Edge Hill in Virginia, and at the Mesdemoiselles Charbonnier's in New York City. She was a lifelong member of Christ Church, Savannah. In 1911 Low met the founder of the Boy Scouts, Sir Robert Baden-Powell, in England, where she was living at the time. Following his example, she organized Girl Guide troops in England and Scotland. On March 12, 1912, Low formed the first Girl Guide units in Savannah, enrolling sixteen girls in two patrols. In 1913 she worked in Washington to establish a national organization. In 1915 the Girl Scouts of America was formed with Low as president. She resigned as president of the Girl Scouts in 1920.

Excerpted from *An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church*, eds. Don S. Armentrout and Robert Boak Slocum (New York: Church Publishing, 2000), 313.

Session Eight Video Participants

In order of first speaking occurrence

Narrator: Mr. Vic Vinson
Speakers: The Very Rev. Tracey Lind
Ms. Stephanie Spellers
Ms. Rebecca Brown
The Rev. Keith Yamamoto
The Rev. Shannon Ferguson Kelly
The Rev. Sandye Wilson
Mr. Johnathan Callard
The Rev. Altagracia Perez
The Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston
The Rev. Malcolm Boyd
The Rev. Ernesto Medina
The Rev. Mary Bozzuti-Jones
The Rev. "AKMA" Andrew Keith Malcolm Adam
Ms. Phyllis Tickle
The Rev. Michael Hopkins
The Rev. Winnie Varghese

Session Eight Modules

Module A: What Does It Mean to Be a Christian?

Module B: What Does It Mean to Be an Anglican Christian?

Module C: What Does It Mean to Participate in the Eucharist?



Session Eight—So What?

Module A—What Does It Mean to Be a Christian?

Theology Statement

via media is a journey. Whether you started this journey at the beginning, with the people gathered around you, joined somewhere along the way, or have just settled in today for the first time, you are a part of a long tradition of Anglicans doing and shaping theology. You're a part of a conversation that has been happening for a long, long time. The people around you, your friends, your neighbors, even those who you don't know well are your companions on the journey. Our Anglican point of view reminds us that we can each think theologically. *So what?*

What you contribute to the conversation is your experience and your active participation in a community of faith. As St. Paul reminds us, the Body of Christ needs all of its members in order to function. Active participation through holy listening, through honest dialogue, and through respectful communication is the gift that we give and receive in a healthy community of faith. *So what?*

We meet each other in community through the sacrament. Our baptism introduces us to our family community. Just like the love of family, and the abiding love of our Creator God, nothing we can do could ever take our baptism from us or invalidate the covenant into which we entered with God and one another. *So what?*

Meeting around the table is the other way in which Anglicans experience community. Like the bread, we are taken, blessed, broken, and given to the world as a sign of God's love for all of creation. *So what?*

Together, Baptism and Eucharist, provide the framework for community: Welcome and feast. Everything else that we experience as children of God, as neighbors loving together, becomes the scrapbook of our life in community. Our sickness and our health, our joy and our pain. Times of prosperity and times of recession. The births and deaths, and the comings and goings. Even the conflicts within our community are part of our history of faith and family. Still we extend a radical welcome to all who seek God and meet at the table to celebrate. *So what?*

In this session you will hear examples of Episcopalians talking—about what it means to be Christians in the 21st century. So what are we to do with all the questions that we've asked, and the answers we have found in community? What does all of our theology, our Scripture, Traditions, and Reason bring us to think about the world around us and our role in the Kingdom of Heaven?

The questions don't stop today and the conversation doesn't end today, either. Participating in the *via media* reminds you that you have all the tools you need to continue conversations about God the Creator, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, Sin, Hope, and our Anglican heritage. Everyone

you meet is a companion on your journey and you inform each other about the world around you.

Welcome to the journey!

"Continuing the Conversation" Discussion Questions

As you come to the close of your time in **via media: expanded** and think about how to apply it to your life and relationships, consider answering the following questions in the large group and in your journal. Don't feel put on the spot by these questions, but tackle them with honesty, relying on your community to help you answer them.

- If someone asks you what you believe about God, what is your answer? Why do you go to church?
- How do you keep your faith in a Good God when there is so much evil and death in the world?
- Why do YOU take the Eucharist?
- What has been your most memorable experience of the Eucharist?
- Have you ever had an experience where your politics and your spirituality clashed? How did you resolve it?
- Have you ever had an experience of being ashamed of your Christianity? Or a time when you haven't admitted being a Christian? What was that about? How did it feel?
- How are you able to get along with people in your church with whom you disagree on matters of politics or theology?
- What has been one of your most joyful moments in church?
- Are you the same person at church as you are when you are at home? At work? With friends?

Take-Home Materials for Session Eight, Module A

The work of the Gospel calls us to go out into the world, to take the learning, prayer, and spirit of the community to the people of God who are not gathered in our community. As you reflect on your experience this week, here are some resources to focus your meditation, prayer, and study. You may have time to do all of these things during your week. You may only have time for some of the suggestions. Whatever you do, please keep the members of your small group in your thoughts as you carry out your work this week.

Something about Our Tradition (*Book of Common Prayer*, pg. 855-56)

An Outline of the Faith

The Ministry

Q. Who are the ministers of the Church?

A. The ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons.

Q. What is the ministry of the laity?

A. The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church.

Q. What is the ministry of a bishop?

A. The ministry of a bishop is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as apostle, chief priest, and pastor of a diocese; to guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the whole Church; to proclaim the Word of God; to act in Christ's name for the reconciliation of the world and the building up of the Church; and to ordain others to continue Christ's ministry.

Q. What is the ministry of a priest or presbyter?

A. The ministry of a priest is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as pastor to the people; to share with the bishop in the overseeing of the Church; to proclaim the Gospel; to administer the sacraments; and to bless and declare pardon in the name of God.

Q. What is the ministry of a deacon?

A. The ministry of a deacon is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as a servant of those in need; and to assist bishops and priests in the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments.

Q. What is the duty of all Christians?

A. The duty of all Christians is to follow Christ; to come together week by week for corporate worship; and to work, pray, and give for the spread of the kingdom of God.

Prayer for the Week (*Book of Common Prayer*, pg. 256)

For the Ministry- III. For all Christians in their vocation.

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Scripture for the Week

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? "For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done."

Matthew 16:24-27, New Revised Standard Version

Journaling

Journaling is a good way for adults to pay attention to their faith lives. You are encouraged to journal so that you can consider the questions that develop during our time together. As with other prayer disciplines, it often helps to pick a time to write in your journal each day, setting it aside in some way. The topic to think about as you write this week appears below.

Reflection for the Week

Following from the discussion in today's session, use your journal to further reflect what it means to be a Christian. You may use the "Continuing the Conversation" discussion questions or write your own questions. Respond to as many of these questions as you are able in your journal. This marker of spiritual reflection will be an important resource to you in the years to come.

Learn a New Church Term

Stole Fee—Payment to clergy for officiating at a church service, usually a baptism, a marriage, or a funeral. The term is derived from the stole typically worn by the member of the clergy person while officiating.

Excerpted from *An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church*, eds. Don S. Armentrout and Robert Boak Slocum (New York: Church Publishing, 2000), 504.



Session Eight—So What?

Module B—What Does It Mean to Be an Anglican Christian?

Excerpt from *The Practice of Prayer*

Lectio divina—holy reading—is a gift from the Benedictine-Cistercian tradition, beginning with the early days of western monasticism in the sixth century. Like centering prayer, it is deceptively simple and its aim is movement toward God by resting, beyond words, in God's presence.

For most of us, reading is an intellectual undertaking: we read to gather information, to develop rational and logical constructs, to understand with our minds. There is subtle and not so subtle pressure in our educational systems and in society as a whole to read as much and as rapidly as possible. Even when we are reading for pleasure, we go for quantity and speed. I am amazed and a little embarrassed by my tendency to gulp down books as if they were mental fast food rather than an intellectual or spiritual gourmet meal. For me the sin of gluttony asserts itself not at the dinner table, but when I walk into one of the giant bookstores that dot the city. I want to read them *all* and, if possible, to own them *all*. My study has books in bona fide bookcases, books in shaky, makeshift constructions, and books stacked on the floor. And they are never quite enough.

To pray through holy reading, however, only one book is needed: the Bible. Instead of galloping over the text and ranging far and wide, *lectio divina* invites us to slow down and go deep. We begin with a passage of scripture—perhaps a favorite psalm, a gospel story, or a portion of the Sunday lectionary—reading slowly and thoughtfully. This is not a time to look things up in a commentary or ponder theological minutiae. Just read. It may be necessary to go over the passage a second time until a word, a phrase, or a sentence seems to leap from the page and engages our attention. This is the first step: reading. *Lectio*.

The next step is reflection on the words that have spoken to us: *meditatio*. Suppose the passage chosen is the familiar one from John's gospel in which Jesus tells his disciples, "In my Father's house there are many dwelling places" (John 14:1-6). Jesus' promise, "I will come again and will take you to myself," catches our eye, seems suddenly new and powerful. How could we have read and heard these words so many times and not been struck by them? It is as if we are reading them for the first time. This is the time to reflect prayerfully on the words, to hear them as if they are addressed to us personally—indeed to ruminate on them. Remember how cows chew a mouthful of grass over and over—no speedy gulping and swallowing for them! So we chew on the text, pray it, and let it pray itself in us. What would it be like for Christ to come and take us to himself? Those with lively imaginations might picture a scene of homecoming, while the highly intuitive might simply stay with the words and let their truth soak in. This is the time to be with the words and let them work on and in us until our prayer—*oratio*—emerges.

This prayer is both simple and subtle, arising from an openness to God and a yearning for God. It moves away from words to a place beyond intellect and imagination. As Sister Thelma Hall says

in her wise book on *lectio*: "The goal of prayer is not thoughts or concepts or knowledge *about* God, however sublime, but God himself as he *is*, mysteriously hidden in my deepest, true self." Just as in centering prayer, the one who prays is led to surrender self and simply be in the loving presence of God. This final stage is *contemplatio*, resting in that love.

It is my experience that this final stage is not reached easily and is certainly not reached every time. This is, however, no reason to dismiss *lectio* as a fruitful way of praying. Comfort with the method comes with practice, and even those who tarry in the beginning stages can enjoy new perspectives on scripture. When we let ourselves be open to a few words, unhurriedly and without expectation, surprises are inevitable. Was that word really there all along? Is this what it means, that Jesus will come and take me to himself? Somehow the promise has become real, etched on our spirit, known and understood at a depth beyond words. The words on the page do not matter anymore.

Excerpted from Margaret Guenther, *The Practice of Prayer, The New Church's Teaching Series*, Vol. 4 (Boston: Cowley Publications, 1998), 67-69.

Take-Home Materials for Session Eight, Module B

The work of the Gospel calls us to go out into the world, to take the learning, prayer, and spirit of the community to the people of God who are not gathered in our community. As you reflect on your experience this week, here are some resources to focus your meditation, prayer, and study. You may have time to do all of these things during your week. You may only have time for some of the suggestions. Whatever you do, please keep the members of your small group in your thoughts as you carry out your work this week.

Something about Our Tradition (*Book of Common Prayer*, pg. 856-57)

An Outline of the Faith Prayer and Worship

Q. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is responding to God, by thought and by deeds, with or without words.

Q. What is Christian Prayer?

A. Christian prayer is response to God the Father, through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Q. What prayer did Christ teach us?

A. Our Lord gave us the example of prayer known as the Lord's Prayer.

Q. What are the principal kinds of prayer?

A. The principal kinds of prayer are adoration, praise, thanksgiving, penitence, oblation, intercession, and petition.

Q. What is adoration?

A. Adoration is lifting up of the heart and mind to God, asking nothing but to enjoy God's presence.

Q. Why do we praise God?

A. We praise God, not to obtain anything, but because God's Being draws praise from us.

Q. For what do we offer thanksgiving?

A. Thanksgiving is offered to God for all the blessings of this life, for our redemption, and for whatever draws us closer to God.

Q. What is penitence?

A. In penitence, we confess our sins and make restitution where possible, with the intention to amend our lives.

Q. What is prayer of oblation?

A. Oblation is an offering of ourselves, our lives and labors, in union with Christ, for the purposes of God.

Q. What are intercession and petition?

A. Intercession brings before God the needs of others; in petition, we present our own needs, that God's will may be done.

Q. What is corporate worship?

A. In corporate worship, we unite ourselves with others to acknowledge the holiness of God, to hear God's Word, to offer prayer, and to celebrate the sacraments.

The Sacraments

Q. What are the sacraments?

A. The sacraments are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure and certain means by which we receive that grace.

Q. What is grace?

A. Grace is God's favor toward us, unearned and undeserved; by grace God forgives our sins, enlightens our minds, stirs our hearts, and strengthens our wills.

Q. What are the two great sacraments of the Gospel?

A. The two great sacraments given by Christ to his Church are Holy Baptism and the Holy Eucharist.

Prayer for the Week (*Book of Common Prayer*, pg. 834)

After Worship

Grant, we beseech you, Almighty God, that the words which we have heard this day with our outward ears, may, through your grace, be so grafted inwardly in our hearts, that they may bring forth in us the fruit of good living, to the honor and praise of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Scripture for the Week

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:16-20, NRSV.

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said

further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Exodus 3:1-6, NRSV.

"With what shall I come before the Lord,
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?
Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"
He has told you, O mortal, what is good:
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6:6-8, NRSV.

Journaling

Journaling is a good way for adults to pay attention to their faith lives. You are encouraged to journal so that you can consider the questions that develop during our time together. As with other prayer disciplines, it often helps to pick a time to write in your journal each day, setting it aside in some way. The question to think about as you write this week appears below.

Reflection for the Week

Next week will be your final week of **via media: expanded**. You are near the end of one journey, and approaching the beginning of another. Use your journal this week to record what you hope to offer God when you come to the Eucharist and what you hope to receive from God in the Eucharist.

Learn a New Church Term

Novice—A trainee in a religious community. After being a postulant, aspirant, or candidate (the vocabulary varies), the novice is prepared for the religious life according to the rules, constitutions, and customs of the community. Novices use this time to deepen their spiritual life and to test whether the community fits their own sense of vocation. This time is known as the novitiate. It is typically supervised by a member of the community who may be known as the novice guardian or master (mistress).

Excerpted from *An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church*, eds. Don S. Armentrout and Robert Boak Slocum (New York: Church Publishing, 2000), 366.



Session Eight—So What?

Module C—What Does It Mean to Participate in the Eucharist?

Personal Witness Statement from the Rev. Deacon Tracy Longacre

Going forth into the world

My life over the past several years has been going through innumerable transitions. I do not think that any aspect of my life has been untouched or unchanged. Some of these transformations were intentionally self-initiated—I have lost 30 pounds and started to run and do yoga regularly; I sold my home and moved. Some changes were welcome surprises—a friend offered me a job just when I needed it, another offered me a long-term housesit situation, I was ordained. And a few were grief-ridden and painful—there was a major split in my parish, my partner died of lung cancer, both of our cats died. In the midst of all this, I turned 40 and, as is fairly common amongst women, began to gain a new, deeper sense of my self. Naturally, I began to rethink everything in my life. And everyone was asking me, or telling me I should be figuring out, “what do I want?” This is the “follow your heart and the money will follow” philosophy, the idea being that by knowing what I truly want and then pursuing/creating/getting it, I will be happy and that this is what God wants for me.

So I asked myself, “What do I want to do with my life? How do I want to contribute? What difference do I want to make?” I contemplated this. I meditated on this. I spoke with my spiritual director, friends, therapist, family and co-workers. Whenever something became clear to me, and I really felt that it was truly something I wanted, I pursued it. I was clear that I loved Africa and that I really wanted to work there. I had visited many times over the last dozen years, but there had always been something else I needed to do besides or before I could live and work there. Now I decided to take the leap and try to make this happen.

Over and over again, however, things would not turn out the way I thought they would or the way I wanted them to. After months of not getting what I wanted, not finding a position where I could make the biggest difference, my faith began to be shaken. As well as I could discern, I was clear I was indeed pursuing what I wanted. I was taking the actions I could see to take. Everyone around me was encouraging. They were as surprised as I was each time some lead or opportunity I was following fell through. At first, God seemed quite distant—off in some faraway place with no interest or care for me and my struggles. When I began to engage with God more closely, it was mostly in anger and frustration. I was very frustrated and my lack of success in following the “do what you really want and you will be happy” formula confused me terribly. Although all external signs indicated that my life was fine, that all was okay, internally I was constantly agitated.

Recently, I decided I needed to go on retreat. I had worked with a spiritual director in the past

who now ran a retreat center in New Mexico. The idea of sun and warmth and being away from my usual environment sounded very good. My first day in meditation felt very similar to everything that had been happening for the past few years—the same internal conversations, the same frustrations, the same way of relating to God and my life. At the end of the day, I felt more peaceful and able to be with the state of things, but I did not feel any shifts in either my perspective or my being and I did not receive any guidance or messages telling me how to move forward with things. Still it was nice being in the high desert and I loved the sun.

The second day of meditation was very difficult. My mind latched onto the, “what do I want?” question and would not let go. I began to see things I wanted that I could not have, that would never come to pass. Interestingly, these wants were far more clear and concrete than anything I had been able to articulate before. And they were impossible. I also mentally followed the path of many things I thought I wanted and they kept leading to dead ends. That is, they held no motivation for me, no juice. I would look them over and try to see them from every angle, but no matter how hard I tried, I could find no interest in pursuing them. This process went on until I felt thoroughly empty inside, until I realized that there was nothing that I really wanted, nothing I felt like “getting up” for. Looking at “what I wanted” held not motivation for me at all. The more I asked the question, the less energy I had to even move.

After this rather disturbing day, I was speaking with the retreat director and he said, matter-of-factly, “Well, it sounds like perhaps the question is not ‘what do you want’ but rather ‘where can you serve?’” And suddenly, every cell in my body said, “Yes!” I felt a flood of energy and aliveness. “Where can I serve?” was a question I was very interested in pursuing.

Upon returning home, I was talking to a homeless man on the street one evening—a total stranger—who looked me in the eye and said, “you seem very peaceful, very much at peace,” and I realized that yes, indeed, I was very much at peace. The circumstances of my life have not changed, and yet, I am much happier with how things are. I have two jobs that are about serving others and they are really a lot of fun. Every time I ask myself the question, “where can I serve?” I am filled with joy. I was feeling anxious because I had been accepted to volunteer with an organization that worked in many countries outside of Africa and there was not guarantee that they would find a placement for me in Africa. But I decided that with any potential placement, I would simply look to see if I could serve there and make my decision on that basis. Might this mean that I would never get to work in Africa? Perhaps, and yet I feel peace and joy and virtually no anxiety when I remove what I want from the equation.

If someone had told me a couple of years ago that I would experience peace and joy again, and in the not-too-distant future, I would have laughed cynically at their naïveté. And I surely would never have thought that such a profound transformation in my life would come from a slight change in perspective. But by changing the question from “what do I want?” to “where can I serve?”, has changed everything.

Take-Home Materials for Session Eight, Module C

The work of the Gospel calls us to go out into the world, to take the learning, prayer, and spirit of the community to the people of God who are not gathered in our community. As you reflect on your experience this week, here are some resources to focus your meditation, prayer, and study. You may have time to do all of these things during your week. You may only have time for some of the suggestions. Whatever you do, please keep the members of your small group in your thoughts as you carry out your work this week.

Something about Our Tradition (*Book of Common Prayer*, pg. 859-60)

An Outline of the Faith

The Holy Eucharist

Q. What is the Holy Eucharist?

A. The Holy Eucharist is the sacrament commanded by Christ for the continual remembrance of his life, death, and resurrection, until his coming again.

Q. Why is the Eucharist called a sacrifice?

A. Because the Eucharist, the Church's sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, is the way by which the sacrifice of Christ is made present, and in which he unites us to his one offering of himself.

Q. By what other names is this service known?

A. The Holy Eucharist is called the Lord's Supper, and Holy Communion; it is also known as the Divine Liturgy, the Mass, and the Great Offering.

Q. What is the outward and visible sign in the Eucharist?

A. The outward and visible sign in the Eucharist is bread and wine, given and received according to Christ's command.

Q. What is the inward and spiritual grace given in the Eucharist?

A. The inward and spiritual grace in the Holy Communion is the Body and Blood of Christ given to his people, and received by faith.

Q. What are the benefits which we receive in the Lord's Supper?

A. The benefits we receive are the forgiveness of our sins, the strengthening of our union with Christ and one another, and the foretaste of the heavenly banquet which is our nourishment in eternal life.

Q. What is required of us when we come to the Eucharist?

A. It is required that we should examine our lives, repent of our sins, and be in love and charity with all people.

Prayer for the Week (*Book of Common Prayer*, pg 252)

Of the Holy Eucharist

God our Father, whose Son our Lord Jesus Christ in a wonderful Sacrament has left us a memorial of his passion: Grant us so to venerate the sacred mysteries of his Body and Blood, that we may ever perceive within ourselves the fruit of his redemption; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Scripture for the Week

"Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh." The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" So Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever."

John 6:47-58, New Revised Standard Version

Journaling

Journaling is a good way for adults to pay attention to their faith lives. You are encouraged to journal so that you can consider the questions that develop during our time together. As with other prayer disciplines, it often helps to pick a time to write in your journal each day, setting it aside in some way. The question to think about as you write this week appears below.

Reflection for the Year Ahead

You have now been keeping a spiritual journal for the last 24 weeks. You are encouraged to review your reflections during the **via media: expanded** journey and then to continue writing in your journal during the months ahead. From time to time, look back at your growth and record where God is presently guiding you on your journey of faith.

Learn a New Church Term

Pledge—A commitment to give one's time, talents, and money as an expression of faith and a personal response to God's generosity. Parish members are encouraged to make an annual stewardship pledge. This pledge represents their specific Christian commitment to "work, pray, and give for the spread of the kingdom of God" (BCP, p. 856). Parish budgets are prepared in light of the pledges received from their members. A pledge is a statement of intent, not a legal obligation. It can be changed at any time.

Excerpted from *An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church*, eds. Don S. Armentrout and Robert Boak Slocum (New York: Church Publishing, 2000), 404.

Glossary

We have tried in the production of **via media: expanded** to avoid, as much as possible, the use of church jargon, though any community's reflection will inevitably use words that mean different things in different settings. This glossary is our attempts to show how we use certain words in the context of this curriculum. Also, some fun (and more obscure) church jargon is presented during the Icebreaker for each module in *Learn a New Church Term*.

Altar / Table – These words are used interchangeably in the *Book of Common Prayer* to refer to the central piece of furniture in an Episcopal Church, on which bread and wine are offered in the Holy Eucharist (see *Communion, Eucharist*).

Anglican Christians – Christians who are members of churches that have their historical roots in the Church of England (the Episcopal Church in the United States, the Church of the Province of Southern Africa, Iglesia Anglicana de Mexico, etc), who are recognized as Anglican by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Anglican Communion – Collectively speaking, the churches in countries around the world in association with the Church of England, through bonds of history and affection, which are recognized as Anglican by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Apostle – Specifically, one of Jesus' twelve closest followers who formed his inner circle of disciples; also used in reference to Paul (see *Paul*).

Archbishop of Canterbury – The chief bishop of the Church of England and the symbolic head of the Anglican Communion. Although the Archbishop of Canterbury convenes and presides over meetings of all the bishops of the Anglican Communion, his official authority is limited to the Church of England.

Author – Writer; in this context, a writer of one of the books of the Bible.

Authority – A form of rule that is seen by its adherents as both legitimate and worthy of respect. Three basic things we expect from authority in a spiritual context are: (1) a sense of identity and hope, (2) a set of norms for belief and behavior, and (3) some external checks on us, to keep us from straying too far from these established norms.

Banquet – A feast; often used to describe the “meal” of bread and wine offered in the Eucharist (see *Eucharist*).

BCP – *Book of Common Prayer*. Usually refers to the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* used in the Episcopal Church of the United States of America (ECUSA).

Bible / Scripture – The collection of texts viewed by Christians as sacred, composed of both the texts held sacred in the Jewish tradition (the “Hebrew Scriptures” or “Old Testament”), and certain writings from the early Christian communities (the “Christian Scriptures” or “New Testament”).

Body of Christ – (a) A metaphor for the Church (see Church), thought of as the extension of the ministry Jesus began during his life on earth. (b) The bread of the Eucharist (see Eucharist) is considered to be the Body of Christ.

Catholic – (a) The “universal” church, or all Christians of every sect and denomination. (b) The Roman Catholic Church.

Celebrate – Used in reference to the Eucharist and other acts of sacramental worship; the priest presiding at such a worship service is often referred to as the “Celebrant,” although the entire congregation is “celebrating” together (see *Sacraments*).

Chancel – Part of the church building containing the altar and sometimes the choir stalls. It is typically the easternmost portion of the church.

Christ – Derivative of a Greek word meaning “anointed one,” and synonymous with the Hebrew word “Messiah”; the one who would bring salvation to the earth.

Church – In the Greek, literally “congregation”; used to refer to: (a) Christians in general, (b) a specific or local congregation, and (c) the buildings where a congregation gathers.

Church of England – England’s national Church, which broke from the Pope in 1534.

Common Prayer – (a) The corporate prayer offered by a congregation, as opposed to the prayers of an individual. (b) The *Book of Common Prayer*, the official prayer book of a Church in the Anglican Communion. The first *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP) was issued in 1549, and various revisions have continued to be made and used throughout the Anglican Communion since that time.

Communion - (a) Relationship or fellowship between people of faith. (b) The part of the Eucharist where bread and wine are consecrated, and become bearers of the Real Presence of Christ, and are consumed by a congregation of Christians. (c) In older parlance, synonymous with Eucharist. (d) The collection of churches that make up the Anglican Communion (see *Anglican Communion*).

Community of Faith – A gathering or congregation of people for intentional and ongoing consideration, contemplation, and worship of God.

Confession – The act of naming, acknowledging, and admitting one’s shortcomings, or sins (see *Corporate Confession*).

Corporate Confession – A unison confession prayed by a congregation of faith (see

Confession).

Cradle Episcopalian – Someone who has been an Episcopalian since birth.

Cranmer, Thomas – Archbishop of Canterbury from 1533 until his burning at the stake in 1556, the compiler of the first three Books of Common Prayer, and a leader in the English Reformation.

Creation – All that is made by God.

Crossing, the – The part of a traditional cross-shaped church building that intersects the nave just to the west of the Chancel or Choir (Quire).

Disciple – (a) A follower, in this context, of Jesus. (b) One of the twelve followers who comprised Jesus' inner circle.

Doctrine – Official belief or dogma of a community of faith. Anglicanism has tended not to establish a particular set of doctrines, but has developed its characteristic spirituality and communion with God through community prayer and worship.

ECUSA – The Episcopal Church of the United States of America

EFM – Education for Ministry: an intensive, four-year curriculum of Christian education, produced by the University of the South, Sewanee, TN.

Elizabethan Settlement – The arrangement made during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, decisively stating that there would be one Church in England, inclusive of both the Protestant and Catholic parties. From that time, the Church of England and, by extension the Churches of the Anglican Communion, have thought of themselves as both “Catholic” and “Protestant.”

Epiphany – A sudden manifestation of the essence or meaning of something. A comprehension or perception of reality by means of a sudden intuitive realization:

Episcopal Church – The United States' branch of the Church of England, which became a separate entity after the American Revolution. Also referred to as ECUSA.

Eucharist – A derivative of a Greek word meaning “thanksgiving”; the Holy Eucharist is the principle act of worship of the Episcopal Church, divided into two main sections: 1. “The Liturgy of the Word” which includes readings from Scripture (including one from one of the four Gospels), a sermon, and prayers for the church and the world. 2. “The Holy Communion” (see *Communion*), which includes a prayer called “The Great Thanksgiving,” wherein bread and wine are consecrated, and become bearers of the Real Presence of Christ, and are consumed by a congregation of Christians, who are then dismissed to carry out Christ's ministry in the world.

Evangelism/Evangelical – (a) Related to sharing the Gospel or Good News of Christ. (b) In Anglicanism, relating to the Christian movements or churches that stress sharing the Gospel through the spoken word, such as sermons and teaching, more than through ritual and

sacramental worship. (c) In some Christian traditions, “evangelical” is the word chosen by some, typically more conservative, movements to describe their emphasis on personal conversion, and zeal for the spreading of Christianity.

Faith – The human response to divine truth, including the endeavor of belief and trust in God.

Forgiveness – Evokes the sense of the Greek word, which, although translated “forgive”, carries the idea of releasing or letting go. It is not simply “making nice,” but the deliberate action of allowing God’s creative love to replace feelings of hurt, anger, and resentment.

Gospel – (a) Translated from a Greek word meaning “good news.” (b) In Christian terms, relating to the message of Jesus’ love and salvation. (c) The four narrative accounts of Jesus found in the Christian Scriptures or “New Testament.”

Grace – The infinite love, mercy, and goodwill shown to humankind by God. Grace is given freely, neither granted as a reward for good behavior, nor withheld as a punishment for bad.

Henry VIII – King of England from 1509-1547

Holy – Sacred, related to the Divine; the word has the same roots as the English word “whole,” and entails a sense of completeness.

Holy Communion – see Communion

Holy Eucharist – see Eucharist

Holy Spirit – The “third” person of the Trinity: that part of God that makes God known in encounters with all of creation, and the divine “comforter” Jesus promised to send to the disciples to help them continue his ministry (see *Trinity, Spirit*).

Hooker, Richard – Sixteenth-century Anglican clergyperson, and one of Anglicanism’s most important theologians. Writing at a time in which the newly formed Church of England was struggling for definition, Hooker is largely responsible for shaping the way Anglicans look at their faith.

Icebreaker – An exercise or tool used at the beginning of a session to “break the ice” or to get people comfortable with talking with each other, usually around a specific theme or topic.

Incarnation – God is said to have taken human form, to have “become flesh” in the person of Jesus of Nazareth; this association by God with the created order validates the goodness of God’s creation.

Intentional – Deliberate, purposeful.

Irenaeus – c.130–200 CE; bishop of Lyons, and one of the first great Christian theologians, his work made much of the authority of the teaching of the apostles; his name means “the peaceable one.” Once said: “the glory of God is the human fully alive.”

Jones, Absalom – The first African-American ordained in the Episcopal Church; ordained deacon in 1795 and priest in 1802; a former house slave, Jones bought his own freedom.

Kingdom of God / Kingdom of Heaven –see *Reign of God / Reign of Christ*.

Laity/Lay/Lay Person – All baptized Christians who are not ordained; the laity is understood in the Episcopal Church to be its primary ministers. “Laity” comes from a Greek word referring to the “whole people of God,” so even clergy remain, in some sense, members of the laity. (See *Ministry*).

Lay Eucharistic Minister/Visitor – A lay person licensed by his or her diocese to take communion to persons who are unable to be present for worship with the community. The term, sometimes abbreviated “LEM,” can also apply to people licensed to serve the elements of Communion in worship services.

Lectionary – A table of the sections of Scripture that are appointed to be read in the services of the Church. The current practice of the Episcopal Church for Sunday worship is to read a lesson from Hebrew Scripture (the “Old Testament”), a lesson from the non-Gospel portion of the New Testament, a lesson from one of the Gospels (accounts of the life of Jesus), and a Psalm.

Liturgy – Worship, in particular, worship that has some specific form. The term comes from a Greek word meaning “work of the people,” which reminds us that our worship in the Episcopal Church is the “work” of the entire congregation, and not the clergy alone.

Mandala – In Buddhist or Hindu traditions, a symbol of the universe used in meditation. An object, or icon, which focuses thought.

Messiah – Hebrew word meaning “anointed one” (see *Christ*).

Ministry – The act of taking care of something, in this case an aspect or aspects of the Church’s people, life, or mission. In the Episcopal Church, the four orders of ministers are lay people, bishops, priests, and deacons. The laity (those not ordained to the other three orders) are understood as the “primary” ministers of the Church. (See *Laity*).

Nave – Part of a traditional cross-shaped church building to the west of the crossing, usually containing the pews. Comes from the Latin word for “ship” because the ceiling construction resembles that of the hull of a ship.

NRSV – *New Revised Standard Version* of the Bible made available starting in 1989. A standard in the ECUSA lectionary.

Paradigm – In the case of a community of faith, the form or model that serves as a pattern for the expression and exercise of that community’s faith and practice.

Paul – A prominent Jewish Palestinian and Roman citizen who, by his own admission, persecuted members of the earliest Christian communities. Paul’s writings described an

encounter with the Risen Christ, which led to his conversion to Christianity. He then became a self-professed “apostle,” and founded a number of churches. Both his original writings, and the later writings attributed to him, comprise a large portion of the Christian Scriptures or “New Testament.”

Protestant – A term used to refer to various Christian groups that broke away from the Roman Catholic Church in the Sixteenth-century.

Radical Welcome / Radical Hospitality – The manifestation of the Gospel call for hospitality. Radical Welcome goes beyond tolerance of difference, and strives for the total inclusion of all God’s children in community.

Reason – One “leg” of the Anglican “three-legged stool,” (see *Three-Legged Stool*) referring to the combined use of logic and our experiences of God and the world. While reason is commonly understood today to be an aloof, non-emotional consideration of clear “facts,” since the time of Sixteenth-century theologian Richard Hooker (see *Hooker, Richard*), Anglicans have used the term in a more holistic way, entailing both the operations of the mind and the heart. Anglican Reason must include a combination of logic, and the subjective, basic sense of “rightness” which each of us possess.

Reconciliation – The bringing back together of people (or people with God) who have been separated by sin, misunderstanding, miscommunication, etc. (see *Confession, Sin*).

Rector – The priest in charge of a parish congregation.

Reign of God / Reign of Christ – The fulfillment of God’s best purpose for all of God’s creation, including humankind. Episcopalians have a sense of the “already but not yet” with regard to the Reign of God, in that we catch glimpses of it, understand part of our mission as helping to usher it in, and yet await its fulfillment at the end of time as we know it; also referred to as Kingdom of God / Kingdom of Heaven.

Robinson, Gene – The first openly gay man to be elected bishop in the Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion, ordained as bishop in the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire on November 2, 2003. The Episcopal Church’s affirmation of Robinson’s election, and his subsequent ordination as bishop, were occasions of great joy for some in our Church and occasions of sadness and concern for others.

Sacrament – *The Book of Common Prayer* defines a sacrament an “outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as a sure and certain means by which we receive that grace”; in unpacking that definition, we would further note that, while there is a sense in which the sacraments convey grace, there is an even greater sense in which the sacraments “make real” or experiential that which is already true. For example, one might say, “I experienced God’s forgiveness when I confessed my sins, but God had already forgiven me long before I knew of my sin.”

Scripture – See Bible, see also Three-Legged Stool

Sin – In the confessions in the *Book of Common Prayer*, referred to as “those things which we ought not to have done” or “what we have done and what we have left undone,” “we” having the sense of both the individual and the corporate or institutional in nature; the exercise of evil; the Greek word literally means “missing the mark” (see *Confession, Corporate Confession, Grace*).

Spirit – (a) see Holy Spirit. (b) The aspect of the human being that perceives form, order and relationships, and through which we come to know one another and ourselves.

Spiritual / Spirituality – Concerning a person’s relating to the Holy; one’s intentional seeking of relationship with God.

Table / Altar – See Alter / Table

Theology – Intentional, purposeful thinking about God.

Three-Legged Stool – A metaphor used by Anglicans to describe the consideration of Scripture, Traditions, and Reason, each one informing the other two, to discern truth, make decisions, and find authority. (see *Scripture, Traditions, Reason*)

Traditions / Tradition – The prayer and theological reflection by a multiplicity of voices throughout Church history. There has never been one established, monolithic “Tradition,” but that, at any given point in time, there are a variety of important “Traditions.” (see *Three-Legged Stool*)

Trinity – A way of describing the one God in three distinct, yet related, aspects or persons. The Trinity is composed of: (1) the Creator – the loving maker, parent or “Father” God, who, according to the account in Genesis, created the universe, and referred to as “Father” or “Abba” by Jesus in the Gospels; (2) the Redeemer – God in the person of Jesus, known as the Son of God and Christ or Messiah, who was made flesh to live and die as one of us, but both fully human and fully Divine; and (3) the Sanctifier, Sustainer, and Comforter – the unseen Holy Spirit of God who is actively and generatively working in humankind and throughout the world today (see *Holy Spirit, Spirit, Incarnation, Christ, Messiah, Word of God*).

Trinitarian – Of or relating to the Holy Trinity (see *Trinity*).

Via Media – A Latin phrase meaning “middle way,” used by Anglicans to describe the manner in which they reconcile or hold in tension conflicting views on various religious questions. Though the term is commonly misunderstood to mean the search for compromise in the precise middle ground between two opposites, it is really the idea of according equal respect to opposing views.

Vicar – In the United States, vicar is the title given to the priest in charge of a mission congregation; in England, a vicar is in charge of any congregation.

Word of God – (a) The expressive act through which God is shown to create, in Genesis and John’s Gospel. (b) A translation of a Greek term meaning both “word” and “primary reason,” used in the Gospel of John to describe the state of Jesus’ existence before his birth in the world.

(c) Communications from God to humankind, especially in the Hebrew Scriptures and in words attributed to Jesus in the four Gospels.