Choosing readings etc for services
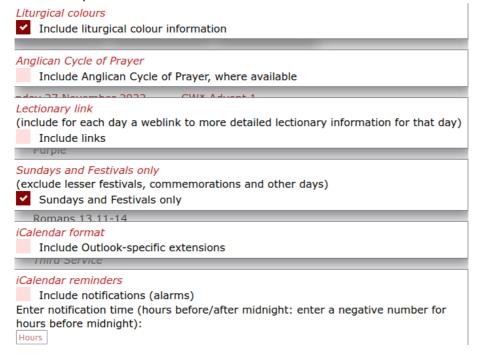
Choosing the Bible readings

A knowledge of the Church's year is essential, in order to find out what the readings are for each day, plus the Collect, Post-Communion prayer etc. There is more than one way to find out what the day in the Church's year is, including a Google search. Church House Publishing (https://www.chpublishing.co.uk/features/lectionary) has several printed options and some apps, but you need to pay for most of them. The Oremus website offers free Almanacs of various types for download, by Simon Kershaw. I now put this on the calendar on our website and this is the easiest and most accurate way. Each Sunday and major day in the Church's year there is an entry labelled 'CW*', and clicking on that gives all the information. Our website calendar is an automatic copy of the Google calendar for the Google user allsaintsherault@gmail.com, for which Roger is at the moment the owner.

The Church year starts around the end of November on Advent Sunday and the Oremus Almanac is available in about mid-October. Go to the Oremus website at http://almanac.oremus.org/ and select the 'Download' tab. The amount of information to be downloaded must be selected first.

Click 'Lectionaries' and tick as below and 'Collects' and tick as below:

Click 'Other options'' and tick as follows:

Click on 'Other options' again to hide the selection and see the boxes underneath. Tick the 'iCal Download' box to download the almanac file (subscript .ics) to your computer. Choose a location that you will be able to find again, eg the Desktop.

Instructions for installing the .ics file are on the 'Help' tab of the Oremus website. You will need to choose 'Google Calendar'. Log into Google as user allsaintsherault@gmail.com and follow the instructions from Oremus.

Finding the words for the Bible readings

This website is an easy source for the Bible words: http://bible.oremus.org/. The default version of the Bible on that website, the New Revised Standard Version (Anglicised Edition), is the one usually used, but if the reader prefers a different version that is OK, provided the translation is a mainstream version. The words sent to the readers should include the introductory and ending texts (ie 'A reading from ...' and 'This is the word of the Lord').

Like most things, the exact wording of the reading to use is not always straightforward, for example sometimes the words should be changed slightly to make more sense by giving the context (eg if the passage is in the middle of a long story about Moses, the Bible will say 'he said', when 'Moses said' would make it more comprehensible). It is therefore useful to have a copy of a lectionary with all the readings printed in it, modified as described, as a check. The chaplaincy has one, kept by Patricia. You will need to know which liturgical year it currently is: the lectionary works on a three-year cycle, years A, B and C. The next few years are as follows.

> Advent 2022 to Christ the King 2023 Year A
> Advent 2023 to Christ the King 2024 Year B
> Advent 2024 to Christ the King 2025 Year C
> Advent 2025 to Christ the King 2026 Year A
> etc

Finding other texts used in services

The Collect for the Day and Post Communion are easy to find in the Oremus calendar.

The Church's year is arranged like this:

Advent (4 Sundays)	27 November to 3 December
Christmas (2 Sundays)	25 December to 5 January
Epiphany (Sundays vary)	6 January to 4 Sundays before Lent
* Sundays before Lent	3rd Sunday before Lent to Sunday before Lent
Lent (6 Sundays)	Ash Wednesday to the day before Palm Sunday
Holy Week	Palm Sunday to Easter Eve
Easter (7 Sundays)	Easter Day to Easter 7 (Sunday after Ascension)
Pentecost (1 Sunday)	The Sunday after Easter 7
Trinity Sunday (1 Sunday)	The Sunday after Pentecost
* Trinity (Many Sundays)	Sunday after Trinity to the 5th Sunday before Advent
* Sundays before Advent (3)	30 October to 19 November
Christ the King (1 Sunday)	20 to 26 November

> * Ordinary Time

You will need to find out if the day is in what is called 'Ordinary Time', because during Ordinary Time there are no special seasonal words to put in the notices. The above list shows when Ordinary Time is: as a rough guide, Ordinary Time is (a) Sundays, if any, after The Presentation of Christ in the Temple (2nd February, Candlemas) and before Ash Wednesday and (b) Sundays after Trinity Sunday and before Christ the King. Note, however, that if a major festival, eg All Saints' Day, falls on a Sunday then that is not Ordinary Time. To complicate matters further, sometimes there is a choice between allocating a day as a Festival or not! You are fairly safe to assume Ordinary Time if the liturgical colour is green and the Oremus calendar gives no choice for the day.

If the day is not in Ordinary Time, there will be this seasonal material to include in the service, at least if I am taking the service and probably for a visiting priest:

Invitation to Confession
Introduction to the Peace
Extended Preface for use with Eucharistic Prayers A, B and E
Blessing.

If you are adding these items to the notices, you will need to cut-and-paste them from Common Worship Holy Communion. The file Seasonal_material.pdf contains this seasonal material. I have extracted it from the main file, HC.pdf (pages 300-329).

If the day is in Ordinary Time, then these items do not need to be added. I always do, however, choose and add to the notices an Introduction to the Peace, to complement the theme of the readings for the day. The file Introductions_to_the_Peace.pdf gives the choices; it is page 290 extracted from HC.pdf.

Roger Smith   March 2023