

# 1 Corinthians

LIFE GROUPS  
FALL 2024

# INTRODUCTION

The Apostle Paul wrote this letter to the church he established in the bustling city of Corinth. He was preaching the Good News of Jesus in other parts of the world when he received a report that the Corinthians were struggling. They were particularly struggling with divisions and arguments (chapters 1-4), sexual immorality (chapters 5-7), and failing to love one another well (chapters 8-14). Paul cared deeply about this church and his response to them, though confrontational and firm, is lovingly pastoral.

Throughout this letter, Paul identifies their inappropriate behavior and ill-conceived ideas, and he helps them see that Jesus ushered in a new reality—one in which God’s kingdom overrides all others. He explains the Gospel again and emphasizes how it impacts our bodies, our decisions, and our interactions with everyone. Paul wants followers of Jesus to integrate Gospel theology and Gospel living. In other words, Paul wants the way they live and behave to be congruent with the values and ways of God’s kingdom. He doesn’t expect them to all be the same or to be perfect, but he does want the love of Jesus and the way of his kingdom to permeate their ways of thinking and being with one another and the culture around them.

As we work through Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, may Jesus himself shape our imaginations and our theology. And may he show us how to integrate the reality of life in the kingdom of God with our everyday interactions and choices.

READ ABOUT THIS IN ACTS: CHAPTER 18

# CORINTH

# 1 CORINTHIANS

SEEING EVERY PART OF LIFE THROUGH THE GOSPEL

1 DEFINE THE PROBLEM

2 RESPOND WITH THE GOSPEL

—THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT JESUS

Life

RELATIONSHIPS

FAMILY

COMMUNITY

WORKS

PAUL AND HIS 18 YEARS

1-4

5-7

8-10

11-14

15

16

DEFINE THE PROBLEM

RESPOND WITH THE GOSPEL

BECAUSE OF THE RESURRECTION WE HAVE

DIVISIONS

SEX

FOOD

THE GATHERING

THE RESURRECTION

FINAL GREETING

THIS IS NOT A POPULARITY CONTEST

PAUL APOLLOS PETER

IN A BATTLE FREE IS CHRIST

DON'T EAT IT!

SEA APPETIT

THE GATHERING

THE RESURRECTION

THERE IS NO RESURRECTION!

REMEMBER THE COMPANION

JEREB MEN FOR YOUR SINS

SCENARIO 1

SCENARIO 2

RESURRECTION = INDISPENSABLE

BECAUSE OF THE RESURRECTION WE HAVE

A REASON FOR UNITY

MOTIVATION FOR Sexual Integrity

POWER TO LOVE OTHERS MORE THAN YOURSELF

VICTORY OVER DEATH

**THE GOSPEL: AN ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT JESUS THAT OPENS UP A NEW REALITY**

created by the Bible Project

## SESSION OVERVIEW

### Wednesday Onsite Schedule

6:00 pm – Dinner

6:40 pm – Welcome and Announcements

6:45 pm – Teaching

7:00 pm – Group Discussion

8:00 pm – Dismissal

### WEEK

### THEME

WEEK 1: SEPTEMBER 8	The Foolishness of the Cross
WEEK 2: SEPTEMBER 15	Glorify God in Your Body
WEEK 3: SEPTEMBER 22	Food Sacrificed to Idols
WEEK 4: SEPTEMBER 29	The Lord's Supper
WEEK 5: OCTOBER 6	One Spirit, One Body
WEEK 6: OCTOBER 13	The Supremacy of Love
WEEK 7: OCTOBER 20	Resurrection

### Resources for Going Deeper

- Digital Discussion Guide and Sunday Sermons
- 1 Corinthians Overview: Bible Project
- “Why Paul Wrote His Letters to Corinth” YouTube video by N.T. Wright
- “Why Does Resurrection Matter?” YouTube video by N.T. Wright
- “Mystery of Faith” (featuring Sarah Masen) by Greg LaFollette
- Paul for Everyone: 1 Corinthians by N.T. Wright
- 1 Corinthians 11 & 14 by Nijay Gupta



## Introductions

Invite each person to share their name, how long they've been at Christ Church and where they grew up.

*Optional Icebreaker: Can you think of a time when someone recommended you try a food, activity, or movie, etc., and you foolishly waited or resisted only to be amazed when you finally tried it?*

## Key Scriptures

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

<sup>18</sup>For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup>For it is written:

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;  
the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”

<sup>20</sup>Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup>For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup>Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup>For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

<sup>26</sup>Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. <sup>27</sup>But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. <sup>28</sup>God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, <sup>29</sup>so that no one may boast before him. <sup>30</sup>It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. <sup>31</sup>Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”

## Discussion Questions

1. Some synonyms for “foolish” are absurd, imprudent, preposterous, nonsensical and reckless. In what ways could Jesus' death on the cross be described or perceived as foolish? In what ways could it be perceived as revealing God's power?
2. What is the core message of the faith according to verse 23? How is the concept of a God who is crucified a stumbling block to faith for you? How does it inspire faith for you?
3. Verses 26-31 emphasize God's gracious work in us. Are there personal accomplishments you can name that are actually gifts of God? What helps us stay focused on God's work rather than our own strength?
4. Reread verses 27-29. Can you think of a time when you've seen what the world considers “foolish” or weak to surpass or put to shame what was considered “wise” or strong (in your own experience or in history, sports, a book, movie)? Have there been times you've felt God has worked through *your own* weaknesses or inadequacies?
5. What are some adjectives or attributes that describe a person who lives a cross-shaped and/or grace-filled life? What might those characteristics look like in our own church community?

## Prayer Time

*Spend time sharing thanksgivings/burdens and pray together as a group. If your group is large, consider splitting into smaller groups of 3-4.*

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### First 5 Minutes

**Introductions:** If there are any new people this week, invite each person to share their name and what brought them to Christ Church.

*Optional Icebreaker:* Is there a certain food that you loved in your younger days but – in the words of Saint Paul – is no longer “beneficial” to your body? Is it hard to stay away from it? Why or why not?

### Key Scriptures

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

<sup>12</sup> “I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but I will not be mastered by anything. <sup>13</sup> You say, “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both.” The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. <sup>14</sup> By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. <sup>15</sup> Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! <sup>16</sup> Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” <sup>17</sup> But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

Some historians believe ancient Corinth may have had a reputation for sexual promiscuity. The Corinthian church apparently contained some believers who thought that sexuality did not have spiritual implications and so believed they had a license to act however they wanted. Paul’s words cut to the heart of the matter: Our bodies matter because they belong to the Lord.

<sup>18</sup> Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. <sup>19</sup> Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; <sup>20</sup> you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

## Discussion Questions

1. As you scan the passage, what are some positive things Paul affirms about the body? What do you find either encouraging or challenging about these things?
2. According to v. 14, why is the resurrection important? How does Paul's view of our physical bodies challenge us to think of and treat our bodies in a kinder, gentler, or more disciplined way?
3. In verse 12, Paul quotes an apparent common Corinthian saying: "I have the right to do anything." Like the Corinthians, we live in a highly sexualized culture which focuses on elevating personal freedom and choice. How does this manifest itself in our day? What does this tend to do to our souls?
4. Reread verses 18-19. What makes sexual sins different from other sins? How does this passage instruct us to address such temptations?
5. Paul says to the Christian, "...your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit" and "You are not your own; you were bought at a price." (v. 18-20) What about these statements serve as a challenge? What about them serve as good news?

## Prayer Time

*Spend time sharing thanksgivings/burdens and pray together as a group. If your group is large, consider splitting into smaller groups of 3-4.*

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## WEEK 3

## Food Sacrificed to Idols

### First 5 Minutes

*Optional Icebreaker: Describe a time when you were younger and thought you “knew” something only to look back and realize you did not know after all.*

### Key Scriptures

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

<sup>1</sup> Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that “We all possess knowledge.” But knowledge puffs up while love builds up. <sup>2</sup> Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know. <sup>3</sup> But whoever loves God is known by God.

<sup>4</sup> So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that “An idol is nothing at all in the world” and that “There is no God but one.” <sup>5</sup> For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”), <sup>6</sup> yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

<sup>7</sup> But not everyone possesses this knowledge. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat sacrificial food they think of it as having been sacrificed to a god, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. <sup>8</sup> But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.

<sup>9</sup> Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak. <sup>10</sup> For if someone with a weak conscience sees you, with all your knowledge, eating in an idol’s temple, won’t that person be emboldened to eat what is sacrificed to idols? <sup>11</sup> So this weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. <sup>12</sup> When you sin against them in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. <sup>13</sup> Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall.

Ancient Corinth was a vibrant religious hub with a diverse and eclectic array of deities and cults, reflecting its status as a major trade and cultural center. The city was particularly renowned for its worship of Aphrodite, and also featured numerous other shrines and temples dedicated to various gods. Most meat sold in ancient food markets would have initially been sacrificed to one of many idols in town, causing a crisis of conscience for some new believers who wanted to distance themselves from the whole enterprise. Other believers were more troubled with the idea of dualism, believing that all of creation belongs to God and is to be received with thanksgiving.

## Discussion Questions

1. Read verses 1-3. How does Paul describe knowledge? Why do you think Paul contrasts knowledge with love? Do you tend to give value to one over the other?
2. In verses 4-6, how does Paul describe the “power” of the ancient idols? What are some modern examples of idols? Does an idol have power over us without our consent?
3. Paul gives specific guidance for daily decisions. What does he instruct Christians to do? Do you think this was the response they expected? Reflect on a recurring decision where you seek clarity. How can Paul’s teaching guide you, and how might you invite God to speak into this situation?
4. Anglican bishop and scholar N.T. Wright says, “Keeping a clear conscience before God is part of basic Christian living.”\* What is the role of the conscience for Christians? How do we guard against violating our conscience?
5. Can you identify modern equivalents to “food sacrificed to idols” (something that offends one Christian’s conscience but not another’s)? How have you seen this cause harm or be helpful?
6. Paul highlights the importance of setting aside personal freedoms to prioritize the well-being of fellow believers. Can you think of examples of what that might look like today? Is there something you’re being invited to “give up” for the sake of others?

## Prayer Time

*Spend time sharing thanksgivings/burdens and pray together as a group. If your group is large, consider splitting into smaller groups of 3-4.*

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*\*Paul for Everyone: 1 Corinthians, p. 103*

**First 5 Minutes**

*Optional Icebreaker: What's one of the most memorable meals you've ever had, and what made it so special?*

**Key Scriptures**

1 Corinthians 11:17-29

<sup>17</sup> In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. <sup>18</sup> In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. <sup>19</sup> No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. <sup>20</sup> So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, <sup>21</sup> for when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk. <sup>22</sup> Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter!

The Lord's Supper, also known as Eucharist, Communion, or The Great Thanksgiving, was central to the worship in the churches Paul established. The Early Church often celebrated it within the context of a shared meal with a core established liturgical structure. The Anglican Church believes Christ is present through the Holy Spirit in Communion but does not explain how. We are content to embrace the mystery!

<sup>23</sup> For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, <sup>24</sup> and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." <sup>25</sup> In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." <sup>26</sup> For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

<sup>27</sup> So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. <sup>28</sup> Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. <sup>29</sup> For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves.

## Discussion Questions

1. Read the account of the last supper Jesus shared with his disciples before his crucifixion from Luke 22:14-20. What do you imagine the disciples felt during that meal?
2. The Early Church often celebrated Communion within the context of a shared meal, complete with food and wine. Why do you think this was such an important part of their life together? What impact does sharing meals together have on us?
3. What criticisms do you notice Paul sharing with the church in Corinth? What effects do you think their abuses had on those without enough resources?
4. Paul addresses the abuses by calling the Corinthians back to faithfully practice the tradition he had received and passed on to them (vv. 23-26). What important positive roles do rituals play in our worship? What are some dangers to avoid?
5. The sacrament of Holy Communion affirms several truths:

**Remembrance** - recalling Jesus' death for us

**Presence** - recognizing and receiving Jesus' living Presence at the Table

**Communion**- sharing in intimate fellowship with God and each other

**Thanksgiving** - praising God for what he has done in Christ

**Proclamation** - declaring Christ's death and the promise of future hope (v. 26)

Which of these themes is most present to you in your current experience of Communion?

Which one is most needed in your life these days?

## Prayer Time

*Spend time sharing thanksgivings/burdens and pray together as a group. If your group is large, consider splitting into smaller groups of 3-4.*

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**First 5 Minutes**

*Optional Icebreaker: Do you have an unusual hidden talent, or is there something (a game, subject of study, life skill, etc.) that you are uncommonly good at? Please demonstrate! Or just share.*

**Key Scriptures**

1 Corinthians 12:1-13

<sup>1</sup> Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. <sup>2</sup> You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. <sup>3</sup> Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

<sup>4</sup> There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. <sup>5</sup> There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup> There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

<sup>7</sup> Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. <sup>8</sup> To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup> All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

<sup>12</sup> Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

## Discussion Questions

1. According to this passage, what is the source of spiritual gifts? What is their primary purpose in the church? Why is it important to keep these things in mind?
2. Read Romans 12:6-8 for an additional list of gifts. As you look at the lists of gifts Paul describes, do any stand out as true about you? Can you describe a time when using your gifts was especially fulfilling?
3. How do you see the various gifts of the Spirit at work in our church on a Sunday morning and in our common life together? What gifts do you see present in the group?
4. What is Paul emphasizing in verses 12-13? Why do you think unity is so important for us to prioritize when talking about spiritual gifts?
5. Have you ever been at a church with a culture different from your own and experienced the truth of “One Spirit, One Body”? What was that like? How did it impact your view of the Church and the kingdom of God? Your own relationship with God and with others?

## Prayer Time

*Spend time sharing thanksgivings/burdens and pray together as a group. If your group is large, consider splitting into smaller groups of 3-4.*

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## Optional Practice this Week

Reflect on any gifts you believe the Spirit has given you and consider writing them below.

What in this passage encourages you about how God has made you? What gifts are being used? Which gifts are lying dormant? What step can you take to lean into your gifts in this season?

## WEEK 6

## The Supremacy of Love

### First 5 Minutes

*Optional Icebreaker: Do you have a favorite "love story" either from a book or fairytale or movie?*

### Key Scriptures

1 Corinthians 13

<sup>1</sup>If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup>If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup>If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

<sup>4</sup>Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. <sup>5</sup>It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup>Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup>It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

<sup>8</sup>Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. <sup>9</sup>For we know in part and we prophesy in part, <sup>10</sup>but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. <sup>11</sup>When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. <sup>12</sup>For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

<sup>13</sup>And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

## Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you about this passage (words, phrases, concepts, etc.)?
2. What comes to the surface as you read this passage? Do any aspects of love stand out as especially difficult to you? Why?
3. In vv. 1-3, Paul lists personal characteristics and spiritual gifts often seen as marks of piety but says that love is greater than them all. Why is it important that love is present and prioritized? What happens if we try to use our spiritual gifts without a heart of love?
4. Have someone in the group reread verses 4 - 8a, substituting the name "Jesus" for the word "love." How does this impact your understanding of this passage?
5. Who is someone in your life who has left an enduring impression of this kind of love? What things did they do or say that impacted you and helped you understand what love is?
6. What do you think Paul means when he says, "when completeness comes" (v. 10)? In what ways can our love be "complete" right now? In what ways is our love still limited until Christ returns and renews all things?

## Prayer Time

*Spend time sharing thanksgivings/burdens and pray together as a group. If your group is large, consider splitting into smaller groups of 3-4.*

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**First 5 Minutes**

*Optional Icebreaker: What is the biggest “enemy” (think dirty dishes, flooding basement, pests of all kinds, etc.) in your household?*

**Key Scriptures**

1 Corinthians 15:19-28

<sup>19</sup> If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

<sup>20</sup> But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

<sup>21</sup> For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

<sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each in turn: Christ, the first fruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. <sup>24</sup> Then the end will come, when he hands over

the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. <sup>26</sup> The last enemy to be destroyed is

death. <sup>27</sup> For he “has put everything under his feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ.

<sup>28</sup> When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Eugene Peterson’s *Message* paraphrase of vv. 19-20 reads: “If all we get out of Christ is a little inspiration for a few short years, we’re a pretty sorry lot. But the truth is that Christ *has* been raised up, the first in a long legacy of those who are going to leave the cemeteries”. How does this impact your imagination and understanding of this passage? What does it do to the Christian faith if there is no resurrection?
2. The Bible teaches that all who are in Christ will also be raised from the dead when Jesus returns and God’s kingdom comes in its fullness. Is this a new idea to you? How does this impact your idea of death and/or eternal life?
3. What words and images does Paul use to describe resurrection? How does he describe death? How do these descriptions shape our understanding? (For more on our physical resurrection, read 1 Corinthians 15:35-44.)

4. Read vv. 24-28. What does this glimpse Paul gives tell us about God's intended future? What stands out to you as powerful or hopeful?
  
5. Can you think of an experience you've had where celebrating the hope of resurrection was particularly important or encouraging to you? Are there particular situations you're facing now in which you need the hope of knowing that God holds the future in his care?

**Prayer Time**

*Spend time sharing thanksgivings/burdens and pray together as a group. If your group is large, consider splitting into smaller groups of 3-4.*

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# COMING UP

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**Renew and Connect:  
A Marriage Event**  
September 27-28



**House of Hope Serve Day**  
October 5



**The Formation Course**  
Hosted @ Christ Church Mission  
Starts October 30  
*5 sessions*

*The Formation Course*

**Anglican Roots**  
Hosted @ Christ Church OP  
Starts October 30  
*3 sessions*



**Advent Evening Prayer**  
@ Christ Church OP  
December 11



**To Learn More and  
to Register for Events**  
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