THE DIVINE SERVICE
ITS HISTORY AND THEOLOGY

Luke 22:27 – "I Am among you as the One who serves."

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Part one – old testament heritage and theology

From where did the liturgy of the church originate and why did it take the shape that it did? This study guide will lead us to answers to these questions and to a deeper understanding and appreciation for the historically-received liturgical orders of the Lutheran Church in the tradition of historic Christianity. Toward this goal we will refer to the Bible, our Lutheran Confessions, church history, the church fathers, and our current hymnal, as well as significant writers on these topics.

THE LITURGY IN THE BIBLE

While time and space for this study do not allow an extensive look at the worship practices of the Old Testament, we will briefly consider a few key points.

GOD'S HOLINESS IS SERIOUS AND CONSEQUENTIAL

1. What were the consequences for Adam and Eve after their rebellion and fall into sin and death in regard to their safe access to God? See Genesis 3:20-24.

2. Read Exodus 3:1-6. God declared the place of the burning bush as holy ground. What made it holy and what was the proper response to this holiness? (Compare to John 1:14)

3. Read Exodus chapter 19. After the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, they come to Mount Sinai in preparation for the LORD giving them the Ten Commandments. How seriously is holiness to be regarded according to the description given in Exodus 19? What are the consequences of disregarding it? May the privilege of safely coming into God's presence be taken for granted or in a casual manner? See also Hebrews 4:12-13.

4. Read Exodus 33:19-23. At Mount Horeb just before leaving, Moses asks to see the glory of God. What is God's response and why? Only God is permanently and inherently holy in and of Himself. All holiness comes from Him. Can holiness be lost or defiled in other persons or things?
    a. Leviticus 20:27
    b. Leviticus 10:10
    c. Ezekiel 44:23

5. What is the relationship between God's holiness and serving Him?
    a. Isaiah 6:1-8
    b. Leviticus 10:1-7
    c. Leviticus 19:1-2

6. Is holiness to serve God an achievement of ours?
    a. Romans 3:9-20
    b. Hebrews 10:1-14
    c. Galatians 2:17-21
    d. Exodus 24:4-8

7. Why do people confuse holiness with moral achievement?
    a. Genesis 3:7-8
    b. Luke 15:25-32
    c. Luke 18:9-14
    d. Luke 18:18-23
    e. Matthew 15:1-20

8. What is the relationship between participating in the liturgy (worship) and God's holiness?
    a. Isaiah 6:1-7
    b. Hebrews 9:11-15
    c. Matthew 5:8
    d. Psalm 51:7-11
    e. Titus 3:4-7
    f. Ephesians 5:25-27
    g. John 13:8-11
    h. Ephesians 1:3-4

9. Why must the prescribed sacrifice be applied to the sinner in order to restore holiness and make them ready to enter God's presence (holy ground)?
    a. Leviticus 17:11
    b. Isaiah 53:4-11
    c. Romans 3:19-26
    d. Hebrews 9:16-22
    e. Ephesians 2:14-18
    f. Romans 6:23

THE LOCALIZATION OF GOD'S MERCY FOR YOU – THE LORD ACCESSIBLE FOR YOU

In the Old Testament God prescribed certain times and places where He made Himself available in His grace to His people so that they could be sure they had access to Him safely and in His mercy.

10. In the Garden of Eden what located gift did God give to Adam and Eve for the sustenance of their life? Read Genesis 2:9.

11. What places did God give Abraham for receiving blessings from God and to office sacrifices of thanksgiving?
    a. Genesis 12:4-8
    b. Genesis 13:3-4
    c. Genesis 13:14-18
    d. Genesis 14:17-20
    e. Genesis 22:9-14

Martin Luther explains the significance of this in his discussion on Abraham's building of his first altar at Shechem:

> *Abraham did not arbitrarily select this place for an altar. The Lord Himself, who appeared to Abraham there, selected it; for the Lord is its first founder. He shows Himself there because He wants to be worshipped there and have His promises proclaimed (there)* (LW 2, 284).

THE TABERNACLE – A TYPE OF THE INCARNATION, FORERUNNER TO THE TEMPLE

12. What was the purpose and meaning of the tabernacle that was instituted directly by the LORD at Mt. Sinai?
    a. Exodus 20:18-26
    b. Exodus 23:14-18
    c. Exodus 24:1-8
    d. Exodus 25:10-22
    e. Exodus 28:1-4, 9-12, 21, 29, 43
    f. Exodus 29:38-46
    g. Exodus 30:17-21
    h. Exodus 31:18
    i. Exodus 33:7-11
    j. Exodus 40:34-38

THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM – FORESHADOWING OF THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST AGAIN

13. While the tabernacle would travel with the Israelites for some time, eventually Jerusalem would become the capital city for God's People in the Old Testament. A permanent building would replace the tabernacle – the temple. King David asked God about building a temple as a worthy house for the LORD, but Solomon would be commanded to build it. What do we learn about the purpose and meaning of the temple built in Jerusalem?
    a. 2 Chronicles 6
    b. I Kings 8:1-13
    c. 2 Chronicles 7:1-11
    d. John 2:13-21

14. Although God is everywhere, we are not. He chooses to especially be present in a particular way for us according to His choosing and promise. How is it beneficial to the certainty of our faith in God's promises that we have specific places and means for receiving God's grace and meeting with Him?
    a. Genesis 28:10-22
    b. Psalm 135
    c. Exodus 20:24
    d. Numbers 6:22-27
    e. Deuteronomy 12:5
    f. Deuteronomy 16:5-7
    g. 1 Kings 12:25-33
    h. John 4:20-22

Luther says: *God wants our conscience to be certain and sure that it is pleasing to him. This cannot be done if the conscience is led by its own feeling, but only if it relies on the Word of God. Therefore if they should worship God in a place chosen by themselves, even if they pleased themselves thereby, nevertheless they would not to be sure that they were pleasing God. They were sure that they were pleasing him only if they made offerings in a place set apart through the Word of God* (Luther's Works, American Edition 9, 123).

15. How does this location of God's mercy for us change in the New Testament?
    a. John 1:1-14
    b. Hebrews 9:23-28
    c. Hebrews 12:18-24
    d. Matthew 18:20
    e. Matthew 28:18-20
    f. Acts 2:38-42
    g. 1 Corinthians 10:16

THE PATTERN OF HEBREW WORSHIP AND DEVOTION OUTSIDE THE TEMPLE

16. What do we learn about Hebrew liturgical life outside of the Temple sacrifices?
    a. Luke 4:14-22
    b. John 18:19-20
    c. Acts 13:14-15
    d. Acts 15:21

Dr. Arthur Just describes the liturgy of the synagogue on the Sabbath in this way:

…synagogues developed during the Diaspora, the period when the Jews were scattered throughout the inhabited world and could not make a yearly pilgrimage to the temple in Jerusalem for Passover. The Sabbath liturgy of the synagogue is different from the temple liturgy because it contains no sacrifices. The synagogue liturgy centers rather around the reading of the Word, interpretation of the Word, the *Shema* or Old Testament "creed" from Deuteronomy 6:4-9 ("Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One…), prayer based on that Word, and the Psalms – the Old Testament hymns that accompanied the themes of the Word. The Sanctus [Holy, Holy, Holy…] from Isaiah 6 and Psalm 118 formed one of the earliest hymns. The services were very similar to our Matins, Vespers, Morning and Evening Prayer, and also helped shape the Word structure in the service of Holy Communion. [*Heaven on Earth: The Gifts of Christ in the Divine Service* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2008; p.68.]

Just also notes as we move into the New Testament:

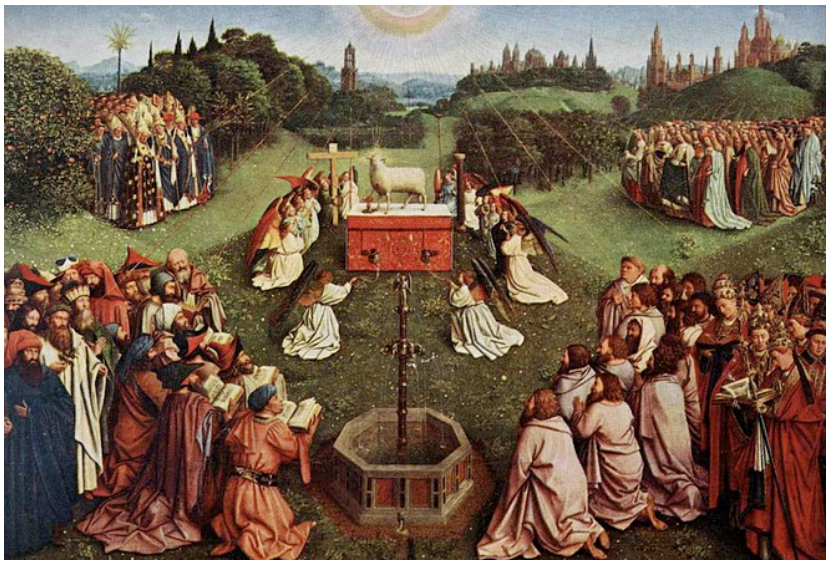
…the temple liturgy had very little impact on Christian worship besides the affirmation of God's holy presence as central to Jewish and Christian worship. The synagogue service, however, gave birth to the Liturgy of the Word, and the Passover and house Seders were the foundation for the Liturgy of the Lord's Supper [Just, p.71].

Part two – New Testament fulfillment and the institution of the spoken and sacramental gospel in the church

In the New Testament the tabernacle and temple are fulfilled in the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Christ, and His ascension on high to fill all things as God and Man. In His ministry during His state of humiliation, before His death, and after His resurrection, before His ascension, our Lord instituted and gave particular gifts to the New Testament Church through the apostles.

1. What is given by the Lord Jesus to continue in the New Testament Church until the end of the world?
    a. Matthew 28:16-20
    b. John 20:19-23
    c. Matthew 26:17-30
    d. Luke 11:1-4
    e. John 8:31-32
    f. Romans 10:17

2. What promises do we have that elaborate on our Lord's continuing presence and work after His ascension, especially in the fellowship of the Church?
    a. Luke 10:16
    b. Matthew 18:20
    c. Luke 22:24-27
    d. Luke 24-30-35
    e. Matthew 16:13-19
    f. John 14:12-27
    g. John 16:13-15
    h. Acts 1:1-3



3. How do the Scriptures describe the nature of the New Testament Church?
    a. Ephesians 5:22-33
    b. Acts 2:42
    c. Hebrews 12:22-29
    d. 1 Corinthians 3:5-17
    e. 1 Corinthians 10:14-17
    f. 1 Corinthians 11:17-19
    g. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 27
    h. Revelation 7:9-10
    i. Revelation 21:1-2

4. How does the identity of the Church shape her liturgical life and confession of the faith in the world?
    a. 1 Corinthians 1:22-31
    b. 1 Corinthians 10:18-22
    c. 2 Corinthians 4:1-6
    d. 1 John 2:15-17
    e. 1 John 4:4-6
    f. Romans 1:16
    g. Acts 2:42
    h. Jude 3

5. Who is the main actor or doer in the Christian liturgical context?
    a. Luke 10:16
    b. Romans 1:16-17
    c. John 20:19-23
    d. Romans 6:3-7
    e. Luke 22:14-27
    f. Acts 1:1-2
    g. 2 Corinthians 5:18-20
    h. I Corinthians 10:16
    i. Revelation 3:20

6. Given the answer for the question above, what terms would best describe the service of Word and Sacrament and why?
    a. Worship/Worship Service
    b. Praise service
    c. The Divine Service
    d. Mass
    e. Divine Liturgy
    f. Contemporary worship
    g. Traditional worship
    h. Service
    i. Worship experience
    j. Blended Service

7. How does this understanding help better shape your understanding of what the Service is all about and why we go to church?

Roger Pittelko notes about the common usage of the term "worship":

> Worship is usually defined as honoring or revering a supernatural being or power. This adoration is done with appropriate acts, rites, or ceremonies. In fact, the word worship and its formation are peculiar to the English language going back to the root words of worth and ship, that is, a being or power that has worth and merit and is to be honored and adored.
>
> There is much about this meaning of worship that is salutary. God has worth, merit. That merit or worth is to be adored and honored. However, the main thrust of the English word worship is from the worshiper to the worshiped. The direction is from us to God. We recognize the merit or worth of God. When we recognize the merit or worth of God, we offer God appropriate acts, rites, and ceremonies of worship. The English word worship makes the activity ours. It is something that we do when we have recognized the greatness of God.
>
> Such a view of worship is antithetical to the Evangelical Lutheran understanding of worship. The dictionary understanding makes worship our action or response. It turns worship into an anthropocentric activity that is measured and normed by what we do, by what we understand God to be. The evangelical Lutheran understanding of worship is just the opposite. It is from God to us….
> [Roger D. Pittelko, "Corporate of the Church" in *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice*, edited by Fred Precht. (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993), p.44-45]

Arthur Just states the following about the proper understanding of the word "liturgy" in Christian usage:

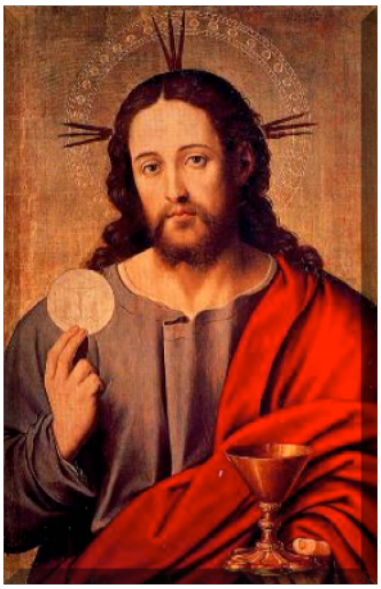
> Our understanding of liturgy has been influenced by the later medieval notion of "the work of the people," but this is a misrepresentation of its original intent. Liturgy is taken from the Greek word *leitourgia*, which Christians borrowed from Roman culture to describe their worship. Philip Melanchthon describes *leitourgia* well: "to the Greeks it meant public burdens, such as tribute, the expense of equipping a fleet, or similar things" (Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXIV 81). What is overlooked in this discussion is that the tax/obligation/responsibility that a Roman

citizen owed was for the sake of the empire. The Roman citizen did not pay this tax for himself, but for the good of the Roman community. Only secondarily was this tax a subjective act, that is, if he did not pay, the "Roman IRS" would be after him. No, primarily this was an objective act performed as a faithful Roman citizen.

On account of this notion of tax for the sake of the empire, early Christians adopted the word, *leitourgia* to describe their worship. Typical of things borrowed from paganism, the word was Christianized. Early Christians kept the objective character of the word, that is, what Roman citizens gave for the sake of the empire, and translated it into the broader sense of what God the Father was doing in sending His Son to give up His life **for the life of the world**, or for the life of all creation, which is what "the world" implied. [Just, pp.21,22]

Just also notes how this understanding was expressed in the Lutheran Reformation:

Here we see the origin of Luther's word for worship, *Gottesdienst* – God serving the world with His gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation through Word and Sacrament. The liturgy is the context in which God acts to save His people and in which God's people respond. First, they receive the gifts God pours upon the world through the Christian liturgy; then, as representatives of the world, they respond to the gifts in acts of worship. The liturgy is where God is present in Christ to save us from sin, death, and the devil. This definition of liturgy may well have been endorsed by Luther, whose sole principle in renewing the liturgy was justification by grace through faith. [Just, p.23]



"*Der Gottesdienst*" or "the Divine Service" is justification by grace through faith for the sake of Christ said in a liturgical way or in the liturgical context. In Luke 22:27, Jesus, just after He instituted the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, points out for the apostles that He is and continues among us as the One who serves, particularly in His Word and Sacraments. "*Der Gottesdienst*" is the German word that signifies that the liturgy belongs to God and it is He who is doing it. We then respond in acts of prayer, praise, worship, and faithful living. God's activity always comes first. That also helps explain the dynamic rhythm of back-and-forth versicle and response in the historic liturgy. Also in Norwegian (*Gudstjeneste*), Swedish (*Gudstjänst*), and Finnish (*Jumalanpalvelus*) there are words used among Lutherans which also express this biblical truth about the Lord's service to us in the liturgy. This is also said as "*ἡ θεια λειτουργια*" [*he theia leitourgia*] among Greek speaking Christians (the Divine Liturgy).

Roger D. Pittelko further explains a proper gospel understanding of worship:

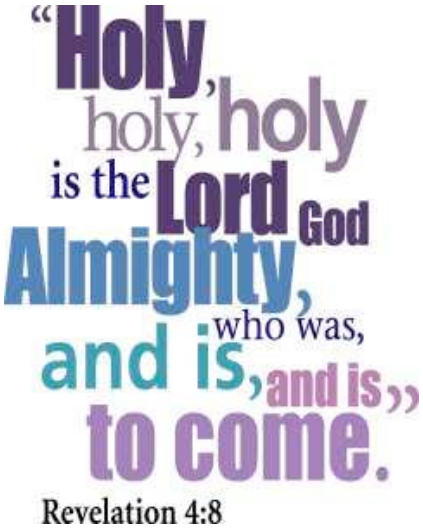
Worship is God speaking. It is our listening. Worship begins with God's Word. He is the content. Evangelical Lutheran worship begins with God giving us his Word. It comes to us and we respond in faith and devotion. It is God's action, not ours. He is the mover, the doer. Faith comes as the gift from God, not from our own doing or action.

Such an understanding of worship is quite different from the dictionary definition of the word. It is for that reason that the Evangelical Lutheran Church has shown a preference for the word *service*. The chief gathering of Christians on a Sunday morning is called the Divine Service. In the Divine Service, God serves us. He gives us his Word and sacraments. Only after we have received the Word and the gifts he offers do we respond in our sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise. The Divine Service (liturgy) is God giving to us and our responding to him. It is theocentric and Christocentric, not the man centered activity that is usually defined as worship. [Roger D. Pittelko, "Corporate of the Church" in *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice*, edited by Fred Precht. (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993), p.45]

1 John 4:19 – "We love Him because He first loved us."

Luke 22:27 – "I AM among you as the One who serves."

8. What do the Scriptures teach of reverence before this gracious God who comes to us with grace and mercy?
    a. Hebrews 12:22-29
    b. 1 John 1:1-7
    c. Revelation 5
    d. John 20:16-18
    e. Acts 2:42-43
    f. 1 Corinthians 5:8
    g. Isaiah 6:1-7
    h. Matthew 2:10-11
    i. 1 Corinthians 11:17-22
    j. 1 Corinthians 14:40



9. What are some other New Testament instructions or examples for the liturgical service and context?
    a. Matthew 6:9-13
    b. Matthew 26:30
    c. 1 Corinthians 4:1-2
    d. I Corinthians 11:26
    e. 1 Timothy 2:1-2
    f. Acts 2:42
    g. James 5:16
    h. 2 Timothy 1:13-14
    i. 1 Corinthians 14:34-38 & 1 Timothy 2:11-12
    j. Colossians 3:16-17
    k. 1 Corinthians 10:14-22
    l. Acts 20:7, 27

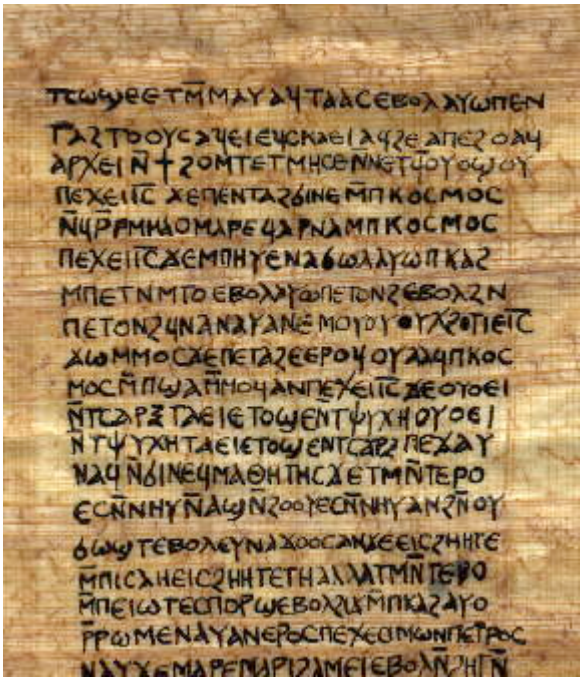
10. How do the following passages teach the "catholicity" or universality of the church's liturgical life and teaching? The word "catholic" comes from two Greek word, "kata" meaning "according to" and "holos," meaning "whole or entire." The Christian faith is to be kept "whole and undefiled," as it says in the Athanasian Creed. The original language of all three creeds used "catholic" in this proper sense.
    a. Jude 3
    b. Ephesians 1:9-10
    c. Ephesians 4:4-6
    d. Hebrews 12:22-24
    e. 1 Corinthians 3:11-17
    f. 2 Timothy 1:13-14
    g. Acts 2:42

Part three – the Christian liturgy in the life of the early church

The Lutheran liturgy is received from the faithful church before us, going long before the 16th century. We do not claim to be a "new church." The Lutheran Church understands herself to be a faithful continuation of the early and medieval church, reformed and renewed from errors that crept in over time. We value our continuity with the faithful who have gone before us throughout time and throughout many nations, where God's people have shared a common heritage in the Word and Sacraments purely given.

In this section we will make use of quotations from early Christian documents, writings of the early church fathers, and from historians and theologians.

A glimpse into LITURGICAL PRACTICE IN THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES



THE *DIDACHE – an early church manual*

The Didache (did-ah-kay), an early Christian writing detailing church order and practice, dates from the first century A.D. This writing describes many principles of Christian worship and gives important historical witness to the practice of the early Christians during and just after the time of the apostles.

A few worship related excerpts from the *Didache*

Chapter 7. Concerning Baptism. And concerning baptism, baptize this way: Having first said all these things, baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living water. But if you have no living water, baptize into other water; and if you cannot do so in cold water, do so in warm. But if you have neither, pour out water three times upon the head into the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit. But before the baptism let the baptizer fast, and the baptized, and whoever else can; but you shall order the baptized to fast one or two days before.

Chapter 9. The Eucharist. Now concerning the Eucharist, give thanks this way. First, concerning the cup:

We thank thee, our Father, for the holy vine of David Thy servant, which You madest known to us through Jesus Thy Servant; to Thee be the glory for ever..

And concerning the broken bread:

We thank Thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which You madest known to us through Jesus Thy Servant; to Thee be the glory for ever. Even as this broken bread was scattered over the hills, and was gathered together and became one, so let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom; for Thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever..

But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist, unless they have been baptized into the name of the Lord; for concerning this also the Lord has said, "Give not that which is holy to the dogs."

Chapter 10. Prayer after Communion. But after you are filled, give thanks this way:

We thank Thee, holy Father, for Thy holy name which You didst cause to tabernacle in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality, which You modest known to us through Jesus Thy Servant; to Thee be the glory for ever. Thou, Master almighty, didst create all things for Thy name's sake; You gavest food and drink to men for enjoyment, that they might give thanks to Thee; but to us You didst freely give spiritual food and drink and life eternal through Thy Servant. Before all things we thank Thee that You are mighty; to Thee be the glory for ever. Remember, Lord, Thy Church, to deliver it from all evil and to make it perfect in Thy love, and gather it from the four winds, sanctified for Thy kingdom which Thou have prepared for it; for Thine is the power and the glory for ever. Let grace come, and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the God (Son) of David! If any one is holy, let him come; if any one is not so, let him repent. Maranatha. Amen.

But permit the prophets to make Thanksgiving as much as they desire.

Chapter 14. Christian Assembly on the Lord's Day. But every Lord's day gather yourselves together, and break bread, and give thanksgiving after having confessed your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure. But let no one who is at odds with his fellow come together with you, until they be reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be profaned. For this is that which was spoken by the Lord: "In every place and time offer to me a pure sacrifice; for I am a great King, says the Lord, and my name is wonderful among the nations."

ST. JUSTIN the MARTYR and his account of Christian worship

Justin is an apologist, meaning defender of the faith. He was converted to Christianity around the year 130 at around thirty years old. He lived in Asia Minor and Rome. He died in martyrdom around A.D. 165. There are thre writings attributed to Justin that we have in the body of writings from the early church, *First Apology*, the *Second Apology*, and the *Dialogue with Trypho*. Other writings were lost. These are “apologies” or defenses of the Christian faith and written with those on the outside in mind.

Some quotes from Justin the Martyr giving testimony related to Christian liturgical practice:

From Justin Martyr’s *First Apology:*

CHAPTER LXI -- CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

I will also relate the manner in which we dedicated ourselves to God when we had been made new through Christ; lest, if we omit this, we seem to be unfair in the explanation we are making. As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, "Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Now, that it is impossible for those who have once been born to enter into their mothers' wombs, is manifest to all. And how those who have sinned and repent shall escape their sins, is declared by Isaiah the prophet, as I wrote above; he thus speaks: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from your souls; learn to do well;

judge the fatherless, and plead for the widow: and come and let us reason together, saith the Lord. And though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white like wool; and though they be as crimson, I will make them white as snow. But if ye refuse and rebel, the sword shall devour you: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

And for this [rite] we have learned from the apostles this reason. Since at our birth we were born without our own knowledge or choice, by our parents coming together, and were brought up in bad habits and wicked training; in order that we may not remain the children of necessity and of ignorance, but may become the children of choice and knowledge, and may obtain in the water the remission of sins formerly committed, there is pronounced over him who chooses to be born again, and has repented of his sins, the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe; he who leads to the layer the person that is to be washed calling him by this name alone. For no one can utter the name of the ineffable God; and if any one dare to say that there is a name, he raves with a hopeless madness. And this washing is called illumination, because they who learn these things are illuminated in their understandings. And in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Ghost, who through the prophets foretold all things about Jesus, he who is illuminated is washed.

CHAPTER LXV -- ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS.

But we, after we have thus washed him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled, in order that we may offer hearty prayers in common for ourselves and for the baptized [illuminated] person, and for all others in every place, that we may be counted worthy, now that we have learned the truth, by our works also to be found good citizens and keepers of the commandments, so that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation. Having ended the prayers, we salute one another with a kiss. There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying Amen. This word Amen answers in the Hebrew language to *genoito* [so be it]. And when the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion.

CHAPTER LXVI -- OF THE EUCHARIST.

And this food is called among us Eucharistia [the Eucharist], of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, "This do ye in remembrance of Me, this is My body;" and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, "This is My blood;" and gave it to them alone. Which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithras, commanding the same thing to be done. For, that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated, you either know or can learn.

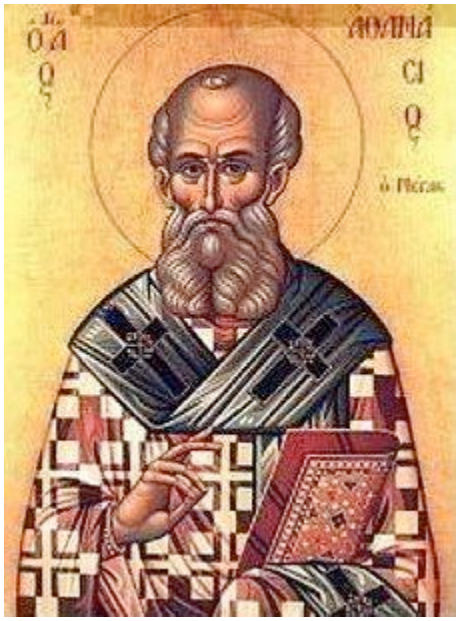
CHAPTER LXVII -- WEEKLY WORSHIP OF THE CHRISTIANS.

And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together

to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who aids the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration.

FOURTH CENTURY LITURGICAL PRACTICE

In the fourth century A.D., Christianity gained legal and special status and this enabled Christians to move from private or secret meetings to public buildings made especially for the purpose of the liturgy. Liturgical scholar Frank Senn notes:



…In no sense can Christian worship in the first three centuries be viewed as public. A persecuted community would not likely be grateful for publicity.

An event happened early in the fourth century, however, that made it possible for the worship of the earthly church to visually approximate heavenly worship. In fact, the public worship of the church actually came to be called "the divine liturgy." The worship of the earthly church could be joined with the praise and adoration of "the angels and archangels and all the company of heaven." In 313, after a decade of the fiercest persecution of Christians and the suppression of the church under the Emperor Diocletian, his successor, the Emperor Constantine, promulgated the Edict of Milan by which he secured for the church the privileges of a *religio licita* (licensed cult) in the Roman Empire. […] All of this had a profound impact on the liturgy of the church. [Frank Senn. *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1997), p.109, 110]

Liturgical scholar Luther D. Reed summarizes the liturgical development of this period of history:

> The Council of Nicaea [325] was held amid high liturgical solemnities. The Spanish abbess Etheria has described the great festivals as observed at Jerusalem in the middle of the century. In Constantinople, Rome, and elsewhere great basilicas were erected and endowed with lavish gifts by the emperor. Processions, pilgrimages, and pageants were undertaken on an elaborate scale. Within a generation or two the church had invested public worship, and particularly the administration of the sacraments, with a dignity and beauty which not only brought spiritual satisfaction to believers but also impressed the pagan world. [Luther D. Reed. *The Lutheran Liturgy: A Study of the Common Liturgy of the Lutheran Church in America - Revised Edition*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960), pp. 35-36]

Reed also notably points out that while there were a number of things carried over in Christian liturgical practice from Hebrew Temple and synagogue practice, a number of things could not be carried over without violating the gospel:

> The persistence of Jewish influence, however, particularly that of the synagogue, in seen in the full development of the first part of the Christian Service – the Service of the Word – with its continued reading and exposition of

the Old Testament, the use of Hebrew words and phrases, and the devotional use of psalms, hymns, and prayers. The psalms were read (probably chanted) at vigils, funerals, gatherings of ascetics, etc, as well as in the liturgy proper, between the Old and the New Testament lessons.

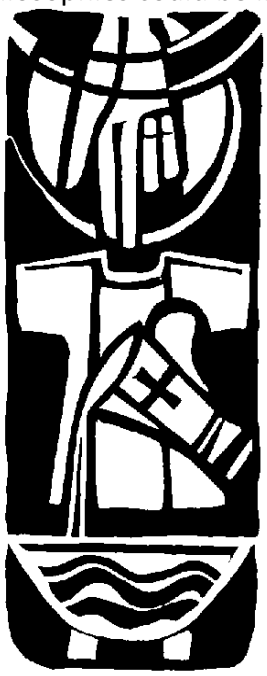
It should be noted that the Christians were discriminating in their use of Jewish elements. They retained the Old Testament teaching concerning the one true God and whatever else was not antagonistic to the Christian faith.

In addition Hebrew formulas, such as Amen, Alleluia, Hosanna, Peace be with you, and doxologies, they took over the observance of the week and of the great festivals, Easter and Pentecost, though with different meanings. Minor details, such as ablutions, the use of oil and incense, the imposition of hands, standing in prayer, were also retained. On the other hand, Jewish features irreconcilable with the Christian faith were definitely rejected – the observance of the Sabbath, the new moon, national festivals, circumcision, bloody sacrifices, temple ceremonial, etc. In fact, the early Christians, coming out of Judaism, applied the same conservative and discriminating principle which the Lutheran Reformers later applied in dealing with details of medieval worship. [Reed, p.36]

CATECHUMENATE - PATH OF DISCIPLESHIP & SACRAMENTAL LIFE

As Christianity spread into the Greco-Roman world and into parts of the middle east that were largely pagan in background, even more extensive catechesis was needed, particularly also as various heresies (false teachings) arose among Christians and threatened the one true faith. In this context, the church developed a way of instruction (catechesis) leading to adult baptism and first communion in the Divine Service that was thorough and reverent, focused on repentance and faith as both trust and content of belief.

The catechumenate was an orderly way by which adult converts to the Christian faith from other religions or philosophies could be instructed, lead in the life of repentance and faith, baptized, taught the liturgy, and initiated into the sacramental life of the Church. There was no notion of a mere few hours of an "information class." This was no mere information and not merely a class.



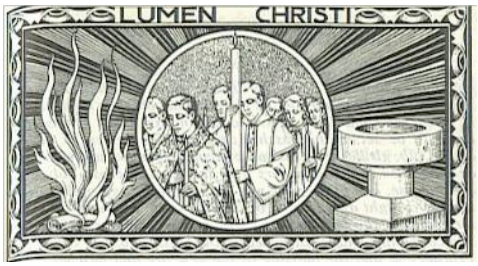
Thomas Talley describes the development of the catechetical process of the church:
However early it may have been, *Didache* itself tells us little about the length of prebaptismal catechesis. Nor, indeed, does the account of baptism in the First Apology of Justin Martyr. There again, it is clear that some time was given to the formation of candidates, but Justin's account gives no detail regarding that.

The classic account of the ante-Nicene catechetical regimen is surely that of the Apostolic Tradition. There, admission to the catechumenate itself was controlled by rigorous examination of the applicant's profession, marital status, legal status, and so on. Once admitted, the normal duration of the catechumenate was three years, although that might be shortened for those whose formation was perceived to have proceeded more swiftly. [Thomas J. Talley. *The Origins of the Liturgical Year.* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1986), p.164]

Senn observes about the lead-up to the administration of Holy Baptism for those moving out of the general catechumenate group into those candidates soon-to-be baptized, called "*competentes*" or "elect":

The *competentes*, or elect, as such persons were called, stood apart in a special section of the church where they could be seen by all. The preaching was especially directed toward this group, but in the hearing of all so that the catechumens would be challenged and the faithful would be reminded of the essentials of Christian belief and lifestyle. Indeed, bishops did not confine themselves to the skeleton of Christian doctrine, but lashed out in moral exhortation. Nearly two centuries after Hippolytus, Augustine was still reminding his hearers that actors, stage managers, pimps, prostitutes, and gladiators would under no circumstances be received into the church. In some cases a total change in one's way of life was expected as a sign that the elect comprehended what the new life in Christ entailed. […]

About the third Saturday or Sunday in Lent, the elect were taught the rule of faith phrase by phrase in a process called the *Traditio symboli* (Handing over the Creed). A week later they had to recite it back (*Redditio symboli*). Then they were taught the Our Father in a similar manner. The Traditio took place in baptisteries or other secluded places because the texts were not publicly used, and the catechumens were told not to write them down but learn them by heart. [Senn, pp.148-149]



The final lead-up to Holy Baptism and first communion was the season of Lent, with intensive catechesis, focus on repentance and a Christian way of life in one's vocations, with the culmination occurring most often on the Vigil of Easter or in some places on the Vigil of Pentecost. The anointing of oil (chrism) was the origin of the ceremony we know today as confirmation. Confirmation, or chrismation, was a ceremony connected with the administration of Holy Baptism as a visible way of describing the seal and blessing of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. Frank Senn describes this:

> The person who was the subject of these rites would probably have agreed as to their awesomeness after experiencing the almost daily fasts, instructions, exhortations, exorcisms, and prayers of his or her sponsors and the faithful during the weeks before Pascha (Easter). Finally on Holy Saturday night, the candidate would hear the voice coming out of the darkness commanding him or her to renounce the devil, swear allegiance to Christ, and strip off all clothing before having his or her body anointed and then immersed in water three times at the profession of belief in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The candidate was then dressed in a new white robe, led into the assembly of the faithful to be greeted by the bishop with the laying on of hands, a "sealing"- anointing, and the kiss of peace. And at last, he or she was allowed to participate for the first time in the hitherto off-limits (for the unbaptized) rite of the Eucharistic meal by offering gifts and receiving Holy Communion. It is remarkable how similar these rites of initiation were throughout the churches of the Roman Empire and beyond, so that a common "shape of baptism" is discernible. [Senn, p.147]

CATECHUMENATE SPONSORS AND ENROLLMENT – NOT ALONE IN THE JOURNEY

Also notable here in the common pattern of the catechumenate is the use of sponsors for adult candidates for Holy Baptism:

> Sponsorship, which probably arose during the time of persecution, continued to be a custom. Whoever wished to become a Christian went to the bishop's residence along with sponsors from among the faithful. The bishop, or a presbyter or deacon, would write down the names of the inquirers and inquire as to their reasons for wanting to become Christians. […] After an address by a catechist laying out the contours of the faith, the supplicant was asked if he or she accepted what was presented and was prepared to live in accordance with it.

If the answer was "yes," there followed a rite of enrollment into the catechumenate that included four little ceremonies: the sign of the cross on the forehead, the laying on of hands in blessing, an exorcism (sometimes eating the bread of exorcism), and the "sacrament of salt." […] The signing with the cross on the forehead foreshadowed baptism, the laying on of hands prefigured the post-baptismal rites, and the reception of the blessed salt and the bread of exorcism anticipated Holy Communion. From this point the catechumen attended the liturgy of the word and heard the sermon, along with the faithful, Jews, and even pagans who were curious to hear about Christian teaching. [Senn, 147, 148]

Part of the reason for the elaborate catechumenate was due to the large number of converts approaching the church due to the legalization and favor given Christianity by civil authority in the Roman Empire. In his important work on the catechumenate, William Harmless summarizes some of the issues involved in why the church in the Constantinian era would have an extensive catechumenate:

Macmullen and A.H.M. Jones have suggested several factors that at least would have made people more receptive to Christianity: (1) the new tolerance allowed Christian evangelical campaigns to take place unchecked by government authorities; (2) the conversion of Constantine gave Christianity considerable publicity, and probably did much to make it at least socially acceptable; (3) the benefits that Constantine lavished on the churches drew public attention to them and helped make them major public centers (i.e., for settling lawsuits, for distributing bread for the needy); (4) the favors Constantine and his sons gave to their co-religionists made it politic in some circles (e.g., government, the military) to become a Christian; (5) pagan cults faced a slowly mounting body of legislation that curtailed their activities and depleted their state-supported revenues. **None of these, of course, guaranteed conversion.** [William Harmless. *Augustine and the Catechumenate*. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995), p.53 – emphasis mine]

The emergence of heresies like Arianism and Gnosticism, among others, also saw the need for catechesis to provide a defense converts and congregations to be protected from errors and temptations to corrupt sound teaching and practice. This, coupled with the fact that there was not much social risk or cost relatively speaking, to becoming a Christian when compared with suffering of the Church in times of being outlawed or generally persecuted. It is clear in this that easier times did not amount to the church saying that it should become haphazard or undemanding in its making of disciples in the life of repentance and faith in Christ.

CLOSED COMMUNION LOCALLY IN THE EARLY CHURCH – A HOLY FELLOWSHIP IN THE TRUTH

One thing that is notable from our modern perspective is the practice regarding visitors and the catechumens in the liturgy. Again, as the quotation from Senn pointed out above, visitors and the unbaptized (catechumens) were welcomed to stay for the Liturgy of the Word, including the sermon. However, they would not stay for the entire Divine Service:

After the sermon all but the faithful were dismissed; the doors were closed and a porter stood guard to allow entry to no one except the baptized. It is understandable that during the third century the church had to be cautious about police spies. But by 400 most of the candidates for baptism were coming from Christian families in a society that was becoming Christianized. This very fact makes the practice of the closing of the doors all the more precious. It suggests, at least, that until one has received the gift of the Holy Spirit in baptism one cannot discern what the Lord's Supper is all about. Augustine compared the state of the catechumenate with that of the man born blind, whose eyes Jesus had touched with spittle, but who had not yet entered the Pool of Siloam. [Senn, p.148]

Werner Elert further describes this practice of closed communion (note the closing of the doors) in his classic work, *Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries*:

> Those outside were not denied were not denied the opportunity of hearing God's Word, but they must first prove their serious intention. Following the service of the Word came the celebration of the Eucharist. This was at least so from the middle of the second century (Justin). Before the Eucharist began, however, the "hearers" had to leave the assembly, and not only they but also the catechumens, even though they were already being solidly instructed toward reception. During the Eucharist the doors were guarded by deacons and subdeacons. Tertullian severely rebukes the contrary way of doing things among the heretics, who did not maintain the distinction between catechumens and believers. "They assemble together, listen together, pray together, indeed when heathen come, they cast what is holy to the dogs, and the pearls, which to be sure are not in fact pearls, to the swine." The gathering for worship in the early church was not a public but a closed assembly, while the celebration of the Eucharist was reserved for the saints with the utmost strictness. [Werner Elert. *Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries.* Trans. N.E. Nagel. (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966), pp.75-76]

Not only was Holy Baptism prerequisite for the reception of Holy Communion and the establishment of altar fellowship, but also unity in doctrine, particularly when an individual is coming from a church that is heretical (teaching false doctrine) is in question. Elert further elaborates:

> The partakers become "one body and one spirit." Therefore there may be nothing separating or dividing them, for that which divides would do injury to the *koinonia* and so to the unity body of Christ. Such divisions are a constant danger even among the baptized. Even though a man must first be baptized before he may partake of the Holy Communion, this does not mean that all the baptized may without distinction partake of the Eucharist together.
>
> Divisions can be of various kinds. In the case of heresy it is a confessional division. The extending or refusing of Eucharistic fellowship is then always a confessional act of the whole congregation. In the case of personal divisions there would also be injury of the integrity of the *koinonia.* For this reason the formularies of the early church require that all such divisions be put right before partaking of the Lord's Supper. So already the *Didache.* Here we come upon the passage from the Sermon on the Mount which calls for reconciliation before the bringing of an offering (Matt. 5:23 f.). It found a regular place in this context. [Elert, p.80]

This relates to the early church practice of the "kiss of peace," which was not a mere casual greeting or "good morning." It had a particular liturgical function in the context of the Holy Supper. Elert notes:

> This is the sign which declares the souls united and all grudge-bearing set aside. The kiss of peace had its firm place in the liturgy either at the beginning of the Eucharistic section or later, but always after the catechumens were dismissed and before the Communion proper. According to the so-called Egyptian Church Order the

catechumens were not permitted to exchange the kiss of peace "because their kiss was not yet clean." The kiss of peace is that of Christian brothers, that is of "holy brothers," and they first become such through Baptism.

The obligation to be first reconciled and the kiss of peace coming before the partaking (*metalepsis*) of the Sacrament are there to prevent human divisions from breaking the unity of the body of Christ. If reconciliation is not achieved, then there is to be no partaking of Holy Communion. Clearly the appeal is to the consciences of all participating, for hatred and ill will in the heart cannot be discerned by others. If any man acts against his conscience, then the word of the apostle about "unworthy" eating and drinking is fulfilled. For this reason alone we may not slight this call to fulfill a brother's obligation which according to ancient liturgies rang out in every celebration of the Holy Communion. [Elert, p.81]

Werner Elert also gives a synopsis of the fact that individual Christians are not "free agents" or atomistic units that are detached from particular congregations, synods, or known confessions of faith:

To the early church a man was orthodox or heterodox according to his confession. He was the one or the other according to that confession with which he was "in fellowship." The fellowship in which he stood, the church to which he belonged, was shown by where he received the Sacrament. When the Princess Sophia received the Sacrament from a Monophysite priest before the enthronement of her husband (Justin II), it was clear to everyone that she wanted to have no fellowship with the Synodites (Chalcedonians). The reversal of this is reported about her by John of Ephesus (H.E., II, 10). "She came into fellowship with the Synodites" as soon as she began "to communicate with the Synod." By his partaking of the Sacrament in a church a Christian declares that the confession of that church is his confession. Since a man cannot at the same time hold two differing confessions, he cannot communicate in two churches of differing confessions. If anyone does this nevertheless, he denies his own confession or has none at all. [Elert, p.182]

Even between churches (congregations or parishes) there is need for attentiveness to doctrine in whether fellowship can be recognized and practiced.

There is one ground for the denial of church fellowship about which there was never anywhere a difference of opinion in the early church, not even between East and West. Heterodoxy breaks the fellowship ipso facto. The basic foundation for this we have seen when considering the local congregation. What is true there is true also between churches. The divisive significance of dogma is only one side of the matter. Dogma is not only the binding doctrinal norm for those who teach in the church, but it is also the confession of all the members who are included in the "We confess" or "We believe." For this reason doctrine is the point at which the unity of the church is most grievously wounded and therefore the point at which also the wounds must again be healed. Where church fellowship is broken by heterodoxy, it can only be restored by the achievement of doctrinal unity. Doctrinal unity is part and parcel of orthodoxy. The truly sound faith leads "to fellowship and unity with those who believe the same." […] Doctrinal unity means according in the "understanding of the faith" (φρονημα της πίστεως). This may not be subjectively misunderstood. Dogma is an expression of the faith, a confession of what is believed. It is not the personal act of believing that forms the unity but what is believed.

This is true for all Christians. It is true in a special way for bishops. Unless he is contradicted, a bishop may regard himself as united in the faith with his own congregation. Since he has the office of teacher, he represents what is taught both within and without. For this he does not have to be a professor. Dogma is the basic stuff of the whole divine service. He is thus a constant defender against heresy. As soon as some alien doctrine arises, he is drawn into controversy by virtue of his office. […] We see how doctrinal unity is always in question. It is not an assured possession but an unremitting task. Since doctrinal unity is always corporate, it can only be maintained jointly. Church fellowship which depends on doctrinal unity needs its special channels of communication. [Elert, p.143-144]

All of this is notable for Lutherans since we assert in our Lutheran Confessions (prologue to Article XXII of the Augsburg Confession):

> **Inasmuch, then, as our churches dissent in no article of the faith from the Church Catholic, but only omit some abuses which are new, and which have been erroneously accepted by the corruption of the times, contrary to the intent of the Canons…**

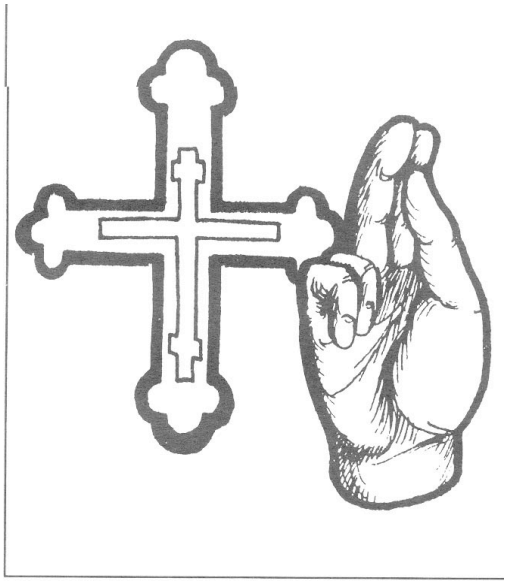
OTHER DEVELOPING LITURGICAL PRACTICES

During the early centuries of the church we also see the development of the church's liturgical calendar in days and seasons and the continued importance of Sunday as a celebration of Easter. Senn summarizes this:

> Both the continuity and the discontinuity of Christian liturgy from the third to the fourth centuries is seen in calendrical developments. Sunday continued to be observed as the day of the weekly assembly to celebrate the resurrection of Christ and the principle day of the eucharist. But in 321 Constantine made Sunday an official day of rest intended to make it easier for Christians to assemble on the Lord's Day. This inevitably brought Sabbath ideas to bear on the Lord's Day. Indeed, keeping Sunday as a day of worship and rest became proof of good Christian behavior, with failure to observe the Lord's Day included in the catalogue of sins. [Senn, p.156-157]

By the fourth century, St. Basil of Caesarea mentions the sign of the cross as a well-established part of Christian liturgical and individual piety in prayer. We also have attestation to it in Tertullian in the second and third centuries. Fourth century church father of the East, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, wrote this about the sign of the cross:

> Let us then not be ashamed to confess the Crucified. Let the cross as our seal, be boldly made with our fingers upon our brow and on all occasions; over the bread we eat, over the cups we drink; in our comings and in our goings; before we sleep; on lying down and rising up; when we are on our way, and when we are still. It is a powerful safeguard; it is without price, for the sake of the poor; without toil, because of the sick; for it is a grace from God, a badge of the faithful, and a terror to the devils; for "he displayed them openly, leading them away in triumph by force of it." For when they see the Cross, they are reminded of the Crucified; they fear him who has "smashed the heads of the dragons." Despise not the seal as a free gift, but rather for this reason honor your benefactor all the more. [quoted in Andreas Andreopoulos. *The Sign of the Cross: The Gesture, the Mystery, the History.* (Brewster, Mass.: Paraclete Press, 2006) p.14]



The meaning of the sign of the cross is invested variously depending upon the context. It may be done by the individual Christian upon oneself in beginning prayers or in receiving a blessing. It may be done to remember Christ's death and protection or as a remembrance of being baptized into Christ's death and resurrection. It may be done in large fashion or upon one's forehead, mouth and heart. It may be done by the pastor in blessing upon an individual or the whole congregation. One author has noted in general:

> This examination of the history of the sign of the cross shows us how the sign developed into a symbol, with every detail having meaning. The sign of the cross, on the other hand, was used rather liberally among early Christians. For many centuries there were no instructions as to the correct way to perform the sign. We can imagine early Christians performing it in different ways throughout the world. Although all testimonies from the early church show that signing one's forehead was the rule, according to the occasion, the believer might sign other parts of their body as well, such

as the mouth or the heart. Many Greeks still cross only their heart when they do not want to be conspicuous. [Andreopoulos, p.40]

Lutheran liturgical scholar, Paul Lang notes:

Crossing oneself was practiced by Christians from the earliest centuries and may go back to apostolic times. We know that it was already a common ceremony used daily in A.D. 200, for Tertullian writes: "In all undertakings – when we enter a place or leave it; before we dress; before we bathe; when we take our meals; when we light the lamps in the evening; before we retire at night; when we sit down to read; before each task -- we trace the sign of the cross on our foreheads." St. Augustine (A.D. 431) speaks of this custom many times in his sermons and letters.

Lang also remarks in regard to Lutherans' continuance of the sign of the cross:

It is one of the traditional ceremonies that was most definitely retained by Luther and the Lutheran Church in the 16th century Reformation. Luther prescribed it in his *Small Catechism* under the heading: "How the Head of the Family Should Teach His Household to Bless Themselves in the Morning and in the Evening." He says, "In the morning when you rise (In the evening when you go to bed) you shall bless yourself with the sign of the holy cross and say: In the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen." Again in his *Large Catechism* he recommends that parents should instruct their children to cross themselves for the purpose of recalling their divine Protector in moments of danger, terror, and temptation. This ceremony is also still authorized in many present-day Lutheran service books [*Ceremony & Celebration*, (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965) p.71f]

CHURCHLY CONTINUITY: QUOTATIONS FROM MARTIN LUTHER ON THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

"You must never doubt that God is aware of your distress and hears your prayer. You must not pray haphazardly or simply shout into the wind. Then you would mock and tempt God. It would be better not to pray at all, than to pray like the priests and monks. It is important that you learn to praise also this point in this verse: "The Lord answered me and set me free." The psalmist declares that he prayed and cried out, and that he was certainly heard. If the devil puts it into your head that you lack the holiness, piety, and worthiness of David and for this reason cannot be sure that God will hear you, **make the sign of the cross**, and say to yourself: "Let those be pious and worthy who will! I know for a certainty that I am a creature of the same God who made David. And David, regardless of his holiness, has no better or greater God than I have." [Luther, M. 1999, c1958. *Luther's Works, vol. 14 : Selected Psalms III* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works. Vol. 14 (Ps 118:6). Concordia Publishing House: Saint Louis]

"Whoever believes in the Son will have eternal life. Cling to His neck or to His garment; that is, believe that He became man and suffered for you. **Cross yourself** and say: *"I am a Christian and will conquer."* And you will find that death is vanquished. In Acts 2:24 St. Peter says that death was not able to hold Christ, since deity and humanity were united in one Person. In the same way we, too, shall not remain in death; we shall destroy death, but only if we remain steadfast in faith and cling to death's Destroyer." [Luther, M. 1999, c1957. *Luther's Works, vol. 22 : Sermons on the Gospel of St. John: Chapters 1-4* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works. Vol. 22 (Jn 3:20). Concordia Publishing House: Saint Louis]

"It is certain that if anyone could speak these words "And the Word became flesh" in true faith and with strong confidence in hours of the greatest temptation, he would be delivered from his trouble and distress; for the devil fears these words when they are uttered by a believer. I have often read and also witnessed it myself that many, when alarmed and distraught, spoke these words "And the Word became flesh" and at the same time **made the sign of the cross**, and thereby routed the devil." [Luther, M. 1999, c1957. *Luther's Works, vol. 22 : Sermons on the Gospel of St. John: Chapters 1-4* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works. Vol. 22 (Jn 1:15). Concordia Publishing House: Saint Louis]

Part FOUR – THE DEVELOPMENT AND DEGRADATION OF THE LITURGY IN THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

The early medieval era saw continued development of Christian Liturgy in the Greek East and Latin West. The Church Year calendar and lectionary continued to be enriched. Church architecture also became a sophisticated expression of theology using the best methods of the time with no expense spared. Various ceremonies developed and came to have catechetical meaning and symbolism associated with them (gestures of reverence, incense, processions, artwork, vestments, architecture, paraments, etc).

While we would not want to give the impression in this brief overview that all liturgical developments in the medieval era were bad (they were not), quite a number of the problems Martin Luther confronted in the Lutheran Reformation did develop during the late medieval era in the Western Catholic Church. The Western Church became officially separate from the Eastern Church in 1066 with the Great Schism and this division remains to this day. This is the first major division among Christians. For this reason there have been a large number of developments in the church of the East (Greek, Russian, Antiochian, et al) that make her culture, liturgical practice, and theological expressions quite different from the West and our own, though as we will note later, there is much in our Lutheran heritage that resonates with some elements of the East. The development of the Eastern Church would be an entire study unto itself and cannot be included in this overview.

Liturgies of the Western Church come from two major familes – the Roman Liturgy and the Gallican Liturgy (from Gaul or France). The Gallican liturgy contains many elements that are more ancient and often reflect more influences of the tradition from the Eastern Church. Eventually the more straight-forward form of the Roman Rite began to be dominant in the West and it became the primary basis for the Lutheran liturgy in the Reformation.

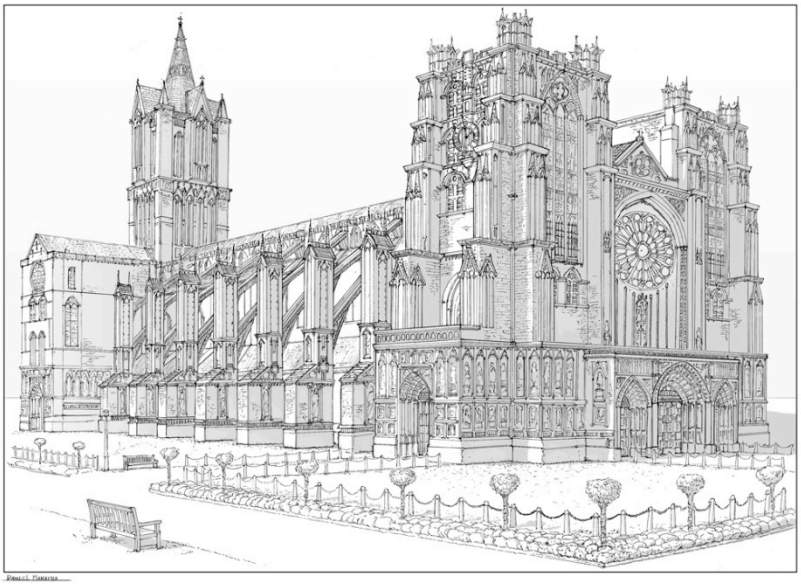
Liturgical scholar Luther Reed describes the development of the Western Church in the medieval era:

> As we survey the medieval centuries we find much in them that was good. The Word of God and the Christian faith were preserved, though mixed with much that was false and evil. Communion with God, the ideas of devotion and reverence, and the spirit of selfless sacrifice were kept alive. The best of the age was in the church – the greatest personalities and intellects. Great theologians, architects, artists, and administrators built up a complex civilization which maintained the honor and dignity of Christianity and exercised a mighty sway over all peoples. The Crusades, the spread of the monastic orders, great missionary activity, intellectual speculation, the erection of the great cathedrals, and the development of the Christian liturgy all testify to vigor and capacity. Fine examples of contrapuntal music, religious painting, and Latin hymnody give ample evidence of refinement and power of expression. [Reed, p.64]

Reed also observes the unity of the time:

> The medieval system of worship was impressive in its unity and universality. The one liturgy and the one liturgical language crossed all frontiers. In every village church as well as in the great cathedrals, among the peoples of every land and language, the same services and ceremonies were daily observed. This testified to the unquestioned authority of the church, the key to our understanding of medieval thought and life in general. Any

fair and well-informed view of this expanse of history – longer in point of time than the centuries since the Reformation – must recognize its vigorous achievements. [Reed, p.65]



PROBLEMS IN MEDIEVAL LITURGICAL PRACTICE AND THEOLOGY

Serious and fundamental errors had over some time crept into the life of the church for various reasons. Since the legalization of Christianity, the increasing danger was for the assumptions of the culture to influence the teaching and practice of the church. The medieval church saw an increasing tendency to emphasize the sacrificial elements of worship over against the sacramental or gift nature of the liturgy.

Reed catalogues a number of the sundry issues that began to be a troublesome clouding of the gospel for Christians in the medieval Western Church:
The Word of God with its clear and simple plan of salvation was obscured by the lack of vernacular Scriptures and services and the decline of preaching and instruction. Tradition, legends, and stories of saints supplanted the Scriptures themselves among the illiterate masses. Allegory and symbolism carried the thought of the sophisticated to absurd lengths. The idea of salvation by works ruled all minds. The peace and assurance which came with the later emphasis upon the doctrine of justification by faith were little known. The Mass was a propitiatory [atoning] sacrifice instead of a true sacrament and gift of grace. Its celebration was a good work which merited favor. The doctrine of transubstantiation led to the withdrawal of the cup from communicants and to other unscriptural and superstitious practices. Mariolatry and hagiolatry clouded the honor and worship due God alone, while the teaching concerning purgatory robbed souls of the certainty of salvation. The worship of images and the granting of indulgences were additional abuses. [Reed, 65-66]

However, Reed, cautions an overly antagonistic view of the medieval church on our part:

> One important fact remains to be stated. As we study these medieval centuries, we must remember that they form a part of the history of our own church. The Lutheran church is not a creation of the sixteenth century. It is a reformation and purification of the historic church. [Reed, p.67]

The Lutheran Church most emphatically wants to maintain her catholicity and continuity with the ancient church. We in no way want to assert that our teachings or practice are new or somehow disconnected from what went before. We do

not institute the Church. Only Christ institutes the Church and He has promised that the gates of hell will not prevail against it. Reed further makes his case:

> We must look upon these centuries as our Reformers looked upon them. The radical Reformers saw nothing but evil in them. They thought to ignore them and to build a new Christianity upon the basis of Scripture and apostolic precedent. The conservative Reformers saw the good as well as the evil. They recognized the fact that no age has been entirely without the presence of the Holy Spirit, and that fifteen hundred years of Christian experience and expression could not be ignored. What was needed was reformation, not re-creation. The problem was to uproot the evil, to save the good, and to find true principles upon which to establish a new and healthier development. This they accomplished. We honor them today because they did not break with the church universal but purified its form of worship, quickened its spirit of devotion, and brought new offerings of their own for the services of the sanctuary. [Reed, p.67-68]

THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS – A GREAT DISTORTION

One of the chief problems in the theology and practice of the Roman Mass of the medieval era was the sacrifice of the Mass within the long prayer of consecration, called the "canon of the Mass" or in modern terms, the "Eucharistic prayer."

The excerpts below come from the Tridentine Mass (approved in the Council of Trent – post 1570) but which still exemplify the theology of the Mass prior to the Council of Trent. Some excerpts from the Roman Canon of the Mass that illustrate their understanding of the Mass not only as primarily a sacrifice but also as an atoning sacrifice.

Excerpt:

WHEREFORE, O most merciful Father, we humbly pray and beseech thee, through Jesus Christ thy Son, our Lord (*he kisses the altar*), that thou p. 465 wouldst vouchsafe to receive and bless (*he joins his hands together, and then makes the sign of the cross thrice over the offerings*) these ✠gifts, these ✠offerings, this ✠holy and unblemished sacrifice (he extends his hands and continues), which in the first place we offer thee for thy holy Catholic Church, that it may please thee to grant her peace: as also to protect, unite, and govern her throughout the world, together with thy servant *N*., our Pope *N*., our bishop, as also all orthodox believers who keep the catholic and apostolic faith.

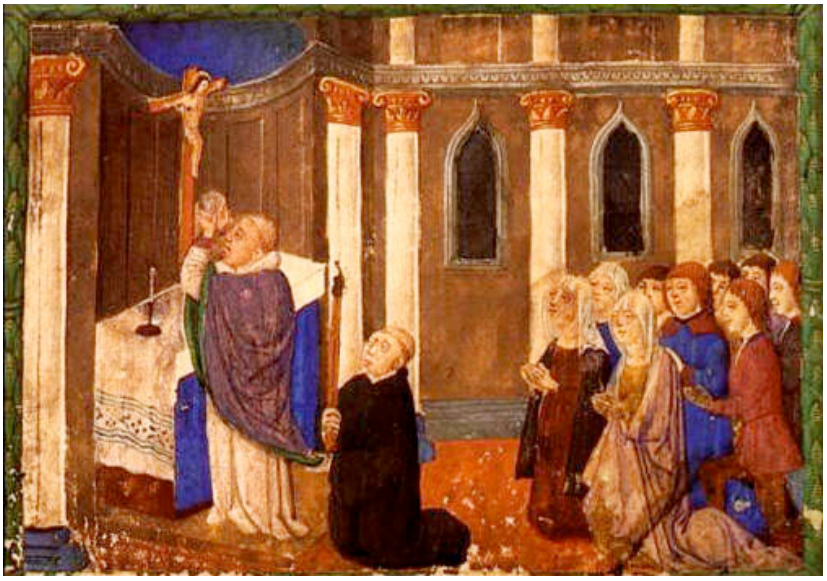
Excerpt:

AND of all here present, whose faith and devotion are known unto thee; for whom we offer, or who offer up to thee, this sacrifice of praise for themselves and theirs, for the redeeming of their souls, for the hope of their safety and salvation, and who pay their vows to thee, the eternal, living, and true God.

Excerpt:

WE therefore beseech thee, O Lord, to be appeased, and to receive this offering of our bounden duty, as also of thy whole household; order our days in thy peace; grant that we be rescued from eternal damnation and counted within the fold of thine elect. (*He joins his hands together*.) Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

WHICH offering do thou, O God, vouchsafe in all things. o bless ✠, consecrate ✠, approve ✠, make reasonable and acceptable: that it may become for us the Body ✠and ✠Blood of thy most beloved Son our Lord Jesus Christ.



WHO the day before he suffered took bread (*he takes the host*) into his holy and venerable hands (*he raises* p. 467 *his eyes to heaven*), and with his eyes lifted up to heaven, unto thee, God, his almighty Father, giving thanks to thee he blessed ✠, brake, and gave to his disciples, saying: Take and eat ye all of this, For this is my Body. In like manner, after he had supped, taking also this excellent chalice into his holy and adorable hands; also giving thanks to thee, he blessed ✠, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, and drink ye all of this; For this is the Chalice of my Blood, of the new and eternal testament; the mystery of faith: which shall be shed for you and for many unto the remission of sins. As often as ye shall do these things, ye shall do them in memory of me.

Excerpt:

Upon which do thou vouchsafe to look with a propitious and serene countenance, and to accept them, as thou wert graciously pleased to accept the gifts of thy just servant Abel, and the sacrifice of our patriarch Abraham, and that which thy high priest Melchisedech offered to thee, a holy sacrifice, a spotless victim.

We most humbly beseech thee, almighty God, to command that these things be borne by the hands of thy holy angel to thine altar On high, in the sight of thy divine majesty, that as many of us *(he kisses the altar*) as, at this altar, shall partake of and receive the most holy Body ✠and ✠Blood of thy Son (h*e makes the sign of the cross on himself*), may be filled with every heavenly blessing and grace (*he joins his hands together*). Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

One medieval theologian, Peter Lombard, whose tome called Sentences, was a standard theological text for theological students for some time, including Luther in his university days, commented on this understanding of the mass as an atoning (propitiatory) sacrifice:

> From these passages we gather that what is done at both altar both is called and is a sacrifice, and that Christ was offered once and is offered daily, but in a different manner then and now. [Senn, p.254]

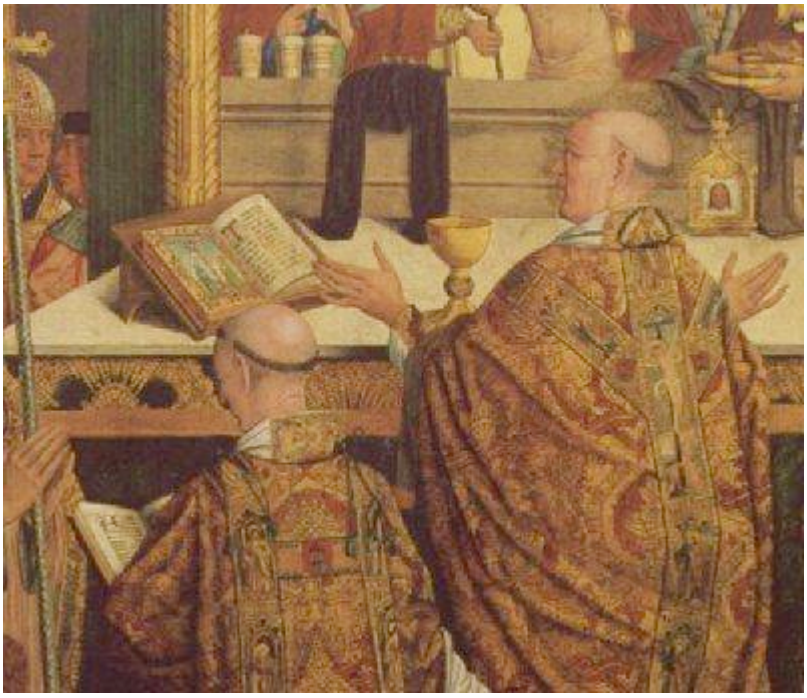
Frank Senn summarizes the theological separation between the Mass (or Lord's Supper) and Good Friday:

> The "crisis of the sacramental idea" is clear here: the cross and the altar have been pulled apart. The sacrament is not viewed as a reactualization of the sacrifice of Christ, with the same benefits won in the atoning sacrifice being bestowed on the communicants: for example, forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, participation in the risen life of Christ, eternal salvation. This set the stage for confusion over the benefits or "fruits" of the mass in relation to the benefits of Calvary. If the sacrifice of the mass is a different sacrifice than that of Calvary, then it bestows different benefits. [Senn, p.256]

Hence what we see as a result are masses being said for (not so much administered to) individuals, including the dead in purgatory. The benefits of masses were seen as different from Good Friday and Easter. While masses were celebrated

frequently in these days for various purposes, in public and private, seldom were they received with the mouth, out of fear and out of errant doctrine about the Supper and its benefits.

In contrast to all this, later Luther would recover the Scriptural and gospel-centered notion that in the Supper Christ Jesus is giving His very body and blood, the already-having-been-sacrificed body and blood, to distribute to us the very same blessings of Good Friday and Easter to us in the here and now. In this, Luther also seized upon the biblical understanding of "testament" or "last will and testament" as a more full New Testament understanding of covenant as fulfilled in Christ. A will distributes the promises of what is to be given in connection with a person's death.



CHURCHLY CONTINUITY: QUOTATIONS FROM MARTIN LUTHER ON THE USE OF A CRUCIFIX

Martin Luther did not reject everything from the Medieval Church. Here is one example regarding crucifixes:

"The custom of holding a crucifix before a dying person has kept many in the Christian faith and has enabled them to die with a confident faith in the crucified Christ." [Luther, M. 1999, c1957. *Luther's works, vol. 22 : Sermons on the Gospel of St. John: Chapters 1-4* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works. Vol. 22 (Jn 1:18). Concordia Publishing House: Saint Louis]

"It was a good practice to hold a wooden crucifix before the eyes of the dying or to press it into their hands.[40] This brought the suffering and death of Christ to mind and comforted the dying. But the others, who haughtily relied on their good works, entered a heaven that contained a sizzling fire. For they were drawn away from Christ and failed to impress His life-giving passion and death upon their hearts." [Luther, M. 1999, c1959. *Luther's works, vol. 23 : Sermons on the Gospel of St. John: Chapters 6-8* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works. Vol. 23 (Jn 8:22). Concordia Publishing House: Saint Louis]

"Now we do not request more than that one permit us to regard a crucifix or a saint's image as a witness, for remembrance, as a sign as that image of Caesar was. Should it not be as possible for us without sin to have a crucifix or an image of Mary, as it was for the Jews and Christ himself to have an image of Caesar who, pagan and now dead, belonged to the devil?[18] Indeed the Caesar had coined his image to glorify himself. However, we seek neither to receive nor give honor in this matter, and are yet so strongly condemned, while Christ's possession of such an abominable and shameful image remains uncondemned." [Luther, M. 1999, c1958. *Luther's works, vol. 40 : Church and Ministry II* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works. Vol. 40 (Vol. 40, Page 96). Fortress Press: Philadelphia]

"And I say at the outset that according to the law of Moses no other images are forbidden than an image of God which one worships. A crucifix, on the other hand, or any other holy image is not forbidden. ***Heigh now! you breakers of images, I defy you to prove the opposite!***" [Luther, M. 1999, c1958. *Luther's works, vol. 40 : Church and Ministry II* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works. Vol. 40 (Vol. 40, Page 85-86). Fortress Press: Philadelphia]

Part FIVE – THE REFORM OF LITURGY IN THE LUTHERAN REFORMATION and early Lutheran practice

Vilmos Vajta writes of the importance of liturgy in the Lutheran Reformation:

> Through the history of the church, worship and doctrine have developed in mutual dependence. The history of Christian worship reflects the confessional struggles of every age, as well as the theological differences within denominations. One need only point to the connection between the Roman mass and medieval theology or to the fatal relation of the decline of worship to certain theological trends in Protestantism. This link between worship and theology is most evident at the great watershed of the Reformation. Luther could not avoid coming to grips with the mass. The liturgical reforms which he touched off were the direct outgrowth of his rediscovery of the gospel. His newly found theological conviction led to a complete liturgical reorientation. It is therefore not enough to examine the actual liturgical reforms introduced by Luther and his collaborators. The inner motives for these reforms must be explored and set within the framework of his whole theology. [Vilmos Vajta. *Luther on Worship: An Interpretation.* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958), p.ix-x]

Justification by grace through faith for the sake of Christ's death and resurrection was restored by Luther and his colleagues, by God's grace, as the center and substance of all Christian teaching and practice. All theology is centered on Christ and His mercy shown in the cross. This clearly did not fit with the medieval Roman view of the Lord's Supper as an atoning sacrifice or as something we do for God.

Norman Nagel describes the beginning of Luther's reforms of the Mass order:

> What Luther did in liturgical reform did not spring from some liturgical theory or busy assortment of liturgical data, but from the Lord's Supper itself, that is, pure Gospel, gift of his giving his body and his blood just as he says to us. […] In 1523, at the urging of Nicholas Hausmann, pastor in Zwickau, Luther produced the *Formula Missae.* Attempts to put the Latin Mass into German were at this time regarded by him as only doing the job halfway. Sensitive genius of language that he was, this Mass was in Latin. He disavowed innovation, or the nation that this was a new sacrament seen for the first time, or now licked into shape according to some exemplary model at some time in the history of the liturgy. Return to some Golden Age was the way of the Humanists, not that of Luther. He did his work in the particularities of the place where he was put to serve in the continuity of the one holy catholic and apostolic church. So he carried forward everything that did not deny or deflect from the fact that it is the Lord's Supper --- Gospel, gift for you. [Norman Nagel. "Holy Communion" in *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice*. Edited by Fred Precht (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993), p.295-296]

Early in his writings, Luther had begun to advocate for communion "in both kinds" (the Lord's body and His blood from the chalice), rather than only the host (the Lord's body in, with, and under the bread). Luther had also been advocating for the Words of Institution to be spoken aloud for all to hear, rather than whispered at the altar with the priest facing away from the people. He also began attacking the Mass as a good work for God rather than a distribution of divine gifts. Even with these complaints, Luther never advocating jettisoning

the historic liturgy and ceremonies altogether. Luther Reed comments on this aspect of Luther's liturgical reforms:

> He reverenced the forms which faith had built and which enshrined the Lord's institution. He recognized the fact that the whole devotional and ceremonial system of the church was deeply impressed upon popular imagination. He was convinced that purification and not destruction was needed. The programs of Karlstadt, the Anabaptists, and other radicals with their different spirit strengthened him in this conviction. These radical procedures impelled Luther to leave the Wartburg secretly in March, 1522, [where he had been in secret protection since the Diet of Worms] and preach eight sermons in the parish church at Wittenberg. He counseled moderation and conservative reform of worship. He insisted that ministers omit the parts of the Mass which referred to the Sacrament as a propitiatory sacrifice. But the Service itself, with vestments, he restored, together with the singing of the Latin chants. [Reed, p.69-70]

It was in that context where Luther produced the *Formula Missae* (his Latin Mass) a year or so after his re-emergence from the Wartburg to preach those sermons urging conservative and gospel-centered reform. In all of Luther's reforms, he sought to change what must be changed to keep salvation by grace through faith clear and central while keeping as much as possible in the words and ceremonies so as not to give the impression of being something new in sacraments, liturgy, or the church.

While Luther was not the only theologian of the Lutheran confession offering revised orders of Mass, many were thought to be inadequate in various ways. Nagel describes the situation:

> The complaints soon came pouring in that the *Formula Missae* was a job only half done. Services in German of varying worth were already being produced in a goodly number of places. So, in 1526, Luther published the *Deutsche Messe* [German Mass], a Mass reflecting much greater care for the people and their need for instruction in the Gospel way of the Lord's Supper, and he looked forward to a congregation feeling at home in its use. The emergence of such congregations is recognized in the various church orders that came later and that included their respective Masses. […] Luther's work was then neither novel nor so drastic as some have asserted. What simply had to disappear was anything contrary to the Gospel, and that was quite a lot. So, because it is the Lord's Supper, not the Christians' supper nor the priest's, the priest's prayers disappear or became the prayers of all; in the *Deutsche Messe*, prayers of the priest which incorporated the *Verba Christi* [Words of Christ] disappeared, and our Lord's words to us are heard as his words to us. These matter more than any praying we may do. [Precht, p.296]

Later, after the death of Luther, by 1577, with the publication of the Formula of Concord (Solid Declaration, Article VII), the following is set as the Lutheran delivery of the Words of Institution in the Lord's Supper:

> Now, in the administration of the Holy Supper the words of institution are to be publicly spoken or sung before the congregation distinctly and clearly, and should in no way be omitted [and this for very many and the most important reasons. 80] First,] in order that obedience may be rendered to the command of Christ: This do [that therefore should not be omitted which Christ Himself did in the Holy Supper], 81] and [secondly] that the faith of the hearers concerning the nature and fruit of this Sacrament (concerning the presence of the body and blood

> of Christ, concerning the forgiveness of sins, and all benefits which have been purchased by the death and shedding of the blood of Christ, and are bestowed upon us in Christ's testament) may be excited, strengthened, and confirmed by Christ's Word, 82] and [besides] that the elements of bread and wine may be consecrated or blessed for this holy use, in order that the body and blood of Christ may therewith be administered to us to be eaten and to be drunk, as Paul declares [1 Cor. 10:16]: The cup of blessing which we bless, which indeed occurs in no other way than through the repetition and recitation of the words of institution.

In tandem with his two revisions of the historic Mass order, Luther also produced two revisions of the baptismal liturgy in the same years as the *Formula Missae* and the *Deutsche Messe*, 1523 and 1526, respectively. Our order in *Lutheran Service Book* reflects much of Luther's 1526 baptismal liturgy with a details being different. However, in the accompanying volumes there is the option of using Luther's rite as is.

What comes clear in this is a move from the Mass being the "work of the people" or the "sacrifice of the priest" to being God's service to us in His Word and Sacraments, or Divine Service (German: *Gottesdienst*). Anything we do for God in the liturgy comes as a response to what He does and gives. Thus to say "the Divine Service" is a way of saying salvation by grace alone through faith alone in a liturgical way and context. For our day, to go back to "worship service" or "worship" or "praise service" starts to go back to the medieval notion of the sacrifice of the Mass or the liturgy as the work of the people. That's when liturgical tinkering often comes in and obscures the gospel of justification by grace alone. What we do must be secondary that Christ and His mercy is foremost, central, and the chief thing and activity for our benefit.

THE FREESTANDING ALTAR VS. HIGH ALTAR AGAINST THE WALL – GOSPEL CLARITY

It was not until the middle ages that the altars of the Christian church were placed against the chancel wall. This was done for the purpose of accenting the medieval distortion of the Lord's Supper, which made it a propitiatory sacrifice. While Martin Luther strongly wanted to maintain the real presence of Jesus' body and blood in the sacrament as it is consecrated, distributed and received, he was adamant that the Eucharist was not a re-sacrificing of Jesus over and over again. In fact, Luther called that false teaching a blasphemy. And in His careful reforms of the Mass liturgy, one of the suggestions he made was that, like the early church, that Lutherans pull the altars away from the chancel wall so that the pastor can face the people for the consecration (the Words of Institution). After all, Jesus was sitting at table with the twelve in the upper room and spoke to them when He instituted the Blessed Sacrament. And so when the pastor speaks the Words of Institution "in the stead and by the command of Christ" he speaks them to the people over the bread and wine. Those words are Gospel ministry, our Confessions state (Ap. XXIV).

Luther advocated a free standing altar in his comments on his 1526 [*Deutsche Messe*] German Mass [*Luther's Works*, American Edition, Vol. 53 p.69]. His preference was for the pastor to face the people when proclaiming the words of institution since these words were the Gospel of the service of Holy Communion. **Luther wrote: "In the true mass, however, of real Christians, the altar should not remain where it is, and the priest should always face the people as Christ doubtlessly did in the Last Supper."**

The free standing altar is hardly an innovation in Christianity. It is the pattern of the house churches, before Christianity was legal in the Roman Empire, and the early church, after the conversion of Emperor Constantine. Historic research and a revival in reformation studies have led many congregations to bring the altar back to the people and have the pastor speak to the people instead of the wall. It is ironic, then, that it was the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church which initiated a popular return to a freestanding altar, taking Luther's suggestion seriously. Now, interestingly, many traditional Roman Catholics are reacting against this move, arguing that a freestanding altar does not emphasize a Roman Catholic understanding of the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice --- and they are right! It emphasizes a biblical, traditional, Lutheran understanding of the Eucharist as a means of grace, a mysterious meal in which Christ's body and blood are given for the forgiveness of sins.

The freestanding altar is both a table and a place of making the sacrifice of thanksgiving and prayer. In its design it should serve both functions. In this the freestanding altar may be used from both sides depending upon whether the liturgical element being carried out is sacramental or sacrificial. And so with a freestanding altar the sacrificial nature of prayer can be emphasized while also highlighting and making clear the Words of Institution as proclamation and Divine Service. This way, those words can be spoken or chanted more clearly before the people. This goes along with the notion of liturgy as "Divine Service" (Luke 22:27).

The 1531 Apology [Defense] of the Augsburg Confession states in Article XXIV:

> *Leitourgia*, they say, signifies a sacrifice, and the Greeks call the Mass, liturgy. Why do they here omit the old appellation *synaxis*, which shows that the Mass was formerly the communion of many? But let us speak of the word liturgy. This word does not properly signify a, sacrifice, but rather the public ministry, and agrees aptly with our belief, namely, that one minister who consecrates tenders the body and blood of the Lord to the rest of the people, just as one minister who preaches tenders the Gospel to the people, as Paul says, 1 Cor. 4, 1: Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God, i.e., of the Gospel and the Sacraments. And 2 Cor. 5, 20: We are ambassadors for Christ, as 81] though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God. Thus the term *leitourgia* agrees aptly with the ministry.

Senn observes that while freestanding altars did not gain wider acceptance until a bit later, it was not unheard of in some Lutheran territories:

> Lutheran architecture reflected the non-iconoclastic character of the conservative Reformation. Altars, candles, crucifixes, vestments, and organs were retained. In his *Deutsche Messe* of 1526, Luther recommended that "the altar should not remain where it is, and the priest should always face the people as Christ doubtlessly did in the Last Supper. But let that await its own time." Actually, its "own time" came rather quickly in southern Germany (e.g. Nuremberg, Rothenberg, and Ulm), where altars were placed in the middle of the chancel and were often adorned with carved reredoses (not especially those created by the master wood carver, Tilman Riemenschneider) and surrounded by a small circular fence. [Senn, pp.529-530]

OTHER FACETS OF LITURGICAL REFORM AMONG LUTHERANS

What should be remembered is that Lutherans had no intention of starting a "new church" and that plays out in their liturgical reforms or in what they kept in continuity with the church before Luther. Roman Catholic

liturgical scholar and historian Ernst Walter Zeeden observes about Lutheran continuation of historic rites and ceremonies:

> Concerning the chief service on Sundays, this retained the name Office or Mass. This remained the designation in northern Germany into the eighteenth century. The most important impetus for evangelically recasting the Mass came from Luther, but various efforts in the same direction can also be observed before and alongside of him. [Ernst Walter Zeeden. *Faith and Act: The Survival of Medieval Ceremonies in the Lutheran Reformation* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2012) p.10]

Zeeden also summarizes the general direction of Lutheran Mass reforms in continuity and distinction from the Roman Mass:

> If we ask what remained of the body of the Roman Mass, we find in the Lutheran service basically entire components from the Introit to the Creed, namely: the Kyrie, Gloria, collect, reading or Epistle, gradual, tract, sequence, Gospel. Afterwards the more severe abridgments set in. The preface, consecration words, Our Father (without its continuation Libera nos), and Agnus Dei were retained. Some conservative church orders preserved the prayers before and after Communion… […] Many church orders expressly provided for an address or exhortation to the communicants prior to the Communion. […] In place of the Confiteor before Communion, some church orders had a German formula for the public or general confession and absolution. Usually a psalm, a portion of a psalm, or a German hymn was found at this point instead of the Communion verse and was thoroughly in line with the sense of the Roman missal. A collect or thanksgiving is consistently found at the point of the post-Communion, followed by a blessing based on Numbers 6:24. [Zeeden, pp.17-18]

In regard to the place of the saints in the life of the Lutheran Church, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession summarizes this clearly:

> ***Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXI***
> Our confession approves giving honor to the saints. This honor is threefold. The first is thanksgiving: we ought to give thanks to God because he has given examples of his mercy, because he has shown that he wants to save humankind, and because he has given teachers and other gifts to the church. Since these are the greatest gifts, they ought to be extolled very highly, and we ought to praise the saints themselves for faithfully using these gifts just as Christ praises faithful managers [Matt. 25:21, 23]. The second kind of veneration is the strengthening of our faith. When we see Peter forgiven after his denial, we, too, are encouraged to believe that grace truly superabounds much more over sin [Rom. 5:20]. The third honor is imitation: first of their faith, then of their other virtues, which people should imitate according to their callings. The opponents do not require these true honors. They only argue about invocation, which, even if it were not dangerous, is certainly not necessary. Besides, we also grant that angels pray for us. For there is a passage in Zechariah 1[:12], where the angel prays, "O Lord of hosts, how long will you withhold mercy from Jerusalem . . . ?" To be sure, concerning the saints we grant that in heaven they pray for the church in general, just as they prayed for the entire church while living.

Where there was opportunity for architectural reform or new construction, the post-Reformation era saw some experimentation and simplified ways of expressing Lutheran theology:

> There were many experiments in church design during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but certain liturgical features characterize most of them. In many Lutheran church buildings there was a desire to bring the altar and pulpit into close juxtaposition. In Germany this often meant that the pulpit was placed behind and above the altar like a canopy, although the altar was still dressed with crucifix, candles, and paraments, and an architectural conservatism favored the longitudinal arrangement with the altar at the end of a long central aisle. In the still more conservative Scandinavian churches the altar retained its traditional position in a shallow apse, and the pulpit was located to its right (facing the nave). The baptismal font was also removed from a baptistery near the entrance and was placed in the front so that the congregation could see the baptisms. Galleries were built (sometimes multi-tiered as in theatres and opera houses) so that people could see and hear the preacher; and the pulpits were correspondingly elevated (often to the level of the second story). The favored place for the organ and choir in the Lutheran church was in a gallery at the opposite end of the building from the altar. In this

location musical forces could do what was required to support congregational singing and perform church music such as cantatas without creating too much disturbance or distraction to the worshipers. [Senn, pp.530-531]

EXPRESSIONS OF REVERENCE AMONG LUTHERANS: *DOCTRINAL BODY LANGUAGE*

Regarding the ceremonial that went along with the rites of the Lutheran Mass (Divine Service), Zeeden notes historically:

> As for the appearance and implementation of the service, Lutheranism in central and northern Germany retained the liturgical colors, vestments, and vessels of the ancient church. Further, the evangelical Mass took over a good part of the wealth of the Catholic liturgy's actions; it also took over the chanting of the priest and people, and principally also the Latin language, even if not to the extent of its use in the pre-Reformation Church. Alongside the liturgical actions, the church furnishings and fixtures were also retained to a certain degree, from the baptismal font and pictures to the banners and procession poles. [Zeeden, pp.30-31]

Zeeden also observes regarding the pastor's vestments, particularly the chasuble (the Eucharistic vestment worn over the alb):

> Lutherans continued to use the five ancient liturgical colors as well as the liturgical vestments in the service and for sacramental acts; this usage lasted amazingly long, partly up to the brink of the nineteenth century. Insofar as Calvinism hadn't discredited these earlier, they mostly disappeared first under the influence of the Enlightenment in the late eighteenth century. […] Chasubles, which were regarded as a worthy ornament and therefore gladly retained, were also occasionally reinstated even in the later evangelical period. Thus they were used in 1740 in Silesia into Mecklenburg, in order thereby to serve a counterblow to the "libertinism and negligence of divine worship (*libertinismo und negligentia cultus divini*), which unfortunately are growing ever more prevalent from day to day. The chasuble was, like the ceremonies, regarded as a symbol of the difference between Calvinism and as criterion for pure Lutheranism, just as conversely, wherever Calvinism gained access, it immediately insisted on abolishing the surplice and chasuble. In the realm of the Saxon territories, the celebrant removed the chasuble over his head before the sermon, laid it on the altar, preached in his alb, and afterward put on the chasuble again. The same happened in Schleswig-Holstein; it was similar also in the Halberstadt territory. [Zeeden, pp.31-33]

Regarding other assorted ceremonies attendant to the Divine Service order, Zeeden also notes the Lutheran practice:

> Of the objects for the service with which pre-Reformation churches tended to be furnished, they kept altars, candles, pictures, and sculptures; likewise baptismal fonts and basins, bells, procession poles and banners, as well as little bells, which were rung during the service as a signal, for example during the elevation [during the consecration]. Even the otherwise severely frowned upon monstrance remained in some churches, indeed remarkably long in Stendahl's Jacobi church. Censers remained more widely spread. In fact, some places used incense more out of health concerns, for example to improve the air or to guard against the plague; sometimes even to warm the church a

little during the cold season. At the same time, swinging the censer for liturgical purposes also remained in practice, for example in the Magdeburg cathedral before celebrating the Lord's Supper, or in the Duchy of Weimar during Christmas Matins. [Zeeden, pp.33-34]

Again, with regard to vestments, Paul Lang notes that different mindset between Lutherans and Calvinists (not to mention even more radical reformers):

> In the 16th century Reformation the Lutherans retained the traditional clerical vestments [see Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV], but the other reformers rejected these and adopted the black gown or robe instead. About two hundred years after the Reformation, Reformed rulers in Germany more or less forced the black gown also on Lutheran pastors. […] At the time of the Reformation, Luther retained the chasuble and the ancient vestments, while Zwingli and other reformers discarded them as "papistic," together with altars, candles, crucifixes, and the like. Since the earliest days, however, the chasuble has been "the vestment" for the celebration of the Holy Communion Service, was retained by the Lutheran Church at the time of the Reformation, and is still used by a large section of the Lutheran Church. [Paul H.D. Lang. *Ceremony and Celebration: An Evangelical Guide for Christian Practice in Corporate Worship* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965); pp.47, 52]

Lutherans continued to pass on the practices of earlier Christians in terms of reverence for the Word and Sacraments in the Divine Service. Bowing, the sign of the cross, kneeling and such were common among Lutherans prior to the Enlightenment era and remained so in many places. Zeeden again describes Lutheran practices:

> Many church orders expressly prescribed kneeling at the consecration, such as Prussia 1568, Schleswig-Holstein 1637, Hohenlohe 1700, and Mecklenburg 1708. The Gotha order of 1645 added to this that even the dignitaries had to kneel (though in their stalls), and likewise the men. In Isny the pastor kneeled at the consecration. It was still widely customary in the seventeenth century to genuflect or exercise other *"reverentia"* when the name of Jesus was spoken. [Zeeden, p.38]

In the post-Reformation era the process of "confessionalization" was taking place as distinctions were made between the practices of Lutherans, Calvinists, and Roman Catholics in Europe. Distinctive rites and ceremonies characterized each confession and the erosion or removal of certain ceremonies could often be a signal that a foreign theology was being taught and practiced in a territory. It became important then that even ceremonies that would otherwise be adiaphora (neither commanded nor forbidden in Scripture) in this context they took on theological significance. Therefore adiaphora were not merely a matter of preference but of either confessing or denying the truth of Scripture when a time of confessing came upon the church in a place.

One marked difference between Lutherans and Calvinists in the consecration and distribution of the Lord's Supper was the *"fractio panis"* (the ceremonial breaking of the bread during the consecration among the Calvinists). This was significant because the Calvinists (Reformed) held to a spiritualized and symbolic view of the Lord's Supper in contrast to our Lutheran view that the blessed bread is the body of Christ and the blessed wine is His holy blood. Therefore symbolism in the administration of the Holy Communion was much more theologically important for their liturgy and was also, therefore, something to be clearly distinguished among confessional Lutherans.

In the Calvinist celebration of Holy Communion according to their beliefs, the minister would ceremonially break the bread before the eyes of the congregation during the Words of Institution. The Lutherans did not do this. If bread was to be broken, it was done discreetly and not during the consecration. Historian, Bodo Nischan describes the situation:

> As Calvinism advanced further into Germany in the late sixteenth century, Lutherans and Calvinists alike came to view the fraction as a symbol of Calvinism itself. For example, in 1568 the Reformed Synod of Wesel in the duchy of Cleves considered the fraction as "absolutely necessary because it obviously was instituted by Christ." By contrast, the Lutheran Formula of Concord of 1577 specifically excluded the fraction from the communion service, defining the "whole action or administration of the sacrament" as follows: "we take bread and wine, consecrate it, distribute it, receive it, eat and drink it, and therewith proclaim the Lord's death." Lutheran pastors who used the fraction were regarded as Crypto-Calvinists. For instance, a Martin Trisner in Thorn, where Calvinism was spreading in the 1580s, was forced into early retirement by his congregation because he had urged the city's magistrates to introduce the fraction. [Bodo Nischan. Section IV "The 'Fractio Panis:' A Reformed Communion Practice in Late Reformation Germany" in *Lutherans and Calvinists in the Age of Confessionalism* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 1999), p.20 of Section IV]

The Calvinists consider the Lutheran confession of the Lord's Supper to be "papal superstition" and that they were not truly reformed or evangelical. The Lutherans considered that the Calvinists were denying what was most important in the sacrament and turning it into a human work of symbolic ritual. Nischan further explains:

> Precisely the same reasons that the Reformed gave for favoring the fraction rite – the *analogia sacramentaria* and the denial of the "real" presence – the Lutherans cited in rejecting it. At most, Lutherans were prepared to allow the *fractio panis* for practical purposes. Their position was well summarized by Hoe von Hoenegg, the Saxon court preacher, who noted that when Christ broke the bread in the Last Supper, "he did this for no other reason than to divide it among his disciples… However, if such small pieces had already been available, he simply would have distributed them without the fraction." Similarly, the theological faculty of the University of Wittenberg declared that the fraction may only be used for utilitarian purposes. It "can be introduced as a manner of Christian freedom, if it is done as an ordinary ceremony and solely as a preparation for the distribution [of the bread]…. But it must not be allowed to take the appearance of something necessary." Other Lutheran theologians such as Abraham Calov, Johann Gerhard, Balthasar Meisner, and David Hollaz likewise permitted the fraction for purely practical reasons but rejected it as a legalistic requirement with symbolic significance. Lutherans noted that if the Reformed really wanted to do everything exactly the way Christ had done it, then, to be consistent, they not only had to add the fraction, but also had to use Palestinian wine in the Lord's Supper and celebrate it in Jerusalem, in the late evening, in an upper room, in a tavern, in the company of disciples, while sitting at a table. That, of course, was not only impractical but also unnecessary. [Nischan, p.27 of Section IV]

This contention over liturgical practice between Lutherans and Calvinists is indicative of the nature of clear liturgical confession of doctrine in ceremony. This sort of thing also occurred in relation to other Eucharistic practices, the Baptismal ceremonies, and other facets of worship life.

PART Six – THE DEGRADATION AND DESTRUCTION OF LUTHERAN LITURGY IN THE ERA OF PIETISM AND RATIONALISM

From the years 1618 to 1648, Europe endured the horrendous trial known as the Thirty Years War. The Thirty Years War started mostly as a religious conflict between Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists as they were divided among the territories of Europe, especially in central Europe. Later the war evolved into more of a political rivalry among elite families as the Roman Empire was fading away. In addition to the war, famine, disease, and poverty were rampant. In many cases clergy were conscripted into military service and church life suffered much for this long period of time. Instruction in the faith and liturgical practice suffered greatly. For the purposes of this study, we will briefly note the religious and liturgical impact of the Thirty Years War and how other movements of the time were impacting the church, most especially Pietism as well as Rationalism, the theological and philosophical outgrowth of the Enlightenment.

Fred Precht characterizes the religious situation of the Thirty Years War this way, especially as it was seen in Germany:

> New political structures – Germany was divided into more than three hundred territories, or states, each governed by a separate prince or ruler – caused church and state to become so united that the state controlled the church, and pastors became officials of the state. Generally, a ruler, who could decide whether his territory would be Lutheran or Reformed [Calvinist], exercised authority over the church through the consistory, the members of which were appointed by and responsible to him. [Precht, p., 78]

Luther Reed further elaborates on the devastation of the Thirty Years War in regard to church life:

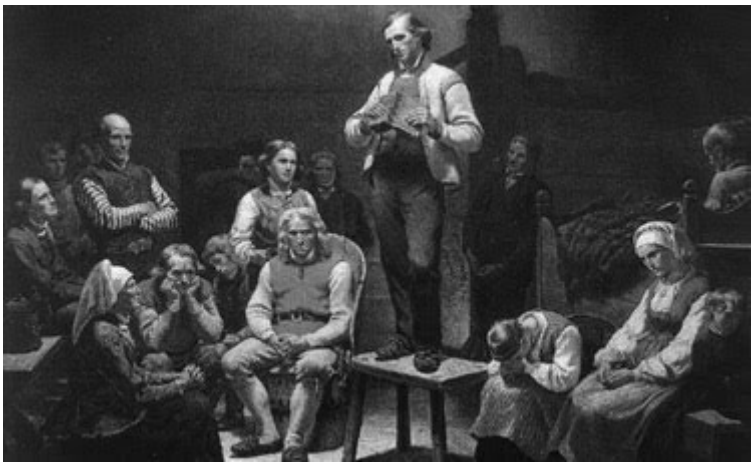
> The church suffered irreparable losses. Protestant pastors who were not slain were driven into poverty and exile. Those permitted to stay ministered to their people in barns or in the forests. Ordered church life was disrupted, churches were closed, wrecked, or defiled. Liturgical books, music, and sacred vessels were destroyed, together with vernacular translations of the Scriptures. [Reed, p.,141]

With the intertwining of church and state, the lack of consistent church practice and teaching during the war, poverty and disease, the attempts to restore sound teaching and practice sometimes fell short while a generation of Lutherans was not well-versed in their own faith. Reed explains the situation in the aftermath of the war:

> Efforts were promptly made to restore orderly church life. Many church orders were reissued, but with modifications and additions. The people, demoralized by war and its effects, were not as responsive to the gospel as they had been in the days of the Reformation. The effort to lead the church out of disaster produced a new scholasticism among the clergy. […] Practical difficulties arose from the destruction not only of the church

orders, but of the missals, breviaries, graduals, and other pre-Reformation books which had been kept in the churches before the war. Many of the church orders, though prescribing the Introit, Collect, Gradual, etc., had not included the complete texts of these propers. The clergy and the choirmasters were expected to find them in the older liturgical books. In addition to losing these books, the new generation was untrained in liturgical and musical tradition and understanding. So far as the people were concerned, attendance at the services and the Holy Communion was insisted upon. Fines were imposed for non-attendance. Civil offenders were sentenced by the courts to come to confession and receive the Sacrament. The church became more and more a department of the civil government. With the hardening and narrowing of its intellectual life went externalization of worship and neglect of spiritual quality in everyday life and conduct. [Reed, p.142-143]

The First Reaction: Pietism and the Pietists



As one might expect, there was a reaction to the attempt to re-establish orthodox teaching and practice after the Thirty Years War. That movement to emphasize feeling and personal holiness became known as Pietism. Of course, Christians should always be interested in and promoting piety, but Pietism as a movement and a peculiar theology cannot be equated merely with an emphasis on piety.

The liturgical impact of Pietism has been lasting and problematic. Luther Reed observes:

> So far as ordered public worship was concerned, Pietism's influence was unfavorable. Beginning with the attempt to supplement the regular services and usages of the church, it soon supplanted these by meetings in private homes which included religious discussions and administration of the Sacrament. As its spirit entered into the established church, the services of the latter became more and more subjective and emotional. The struggle for personal consciousness of conversion and regeneration led to an undervaluation of the objective means of grace. The historical and the formal in liturgical worship gave way to expressions of individual ideas and emotions. The liturgy and the church year were too objective and constraining. The formal common prayer of the church gradually disappeared under a flood of extempore utterances by ministers and laymen. Hymns based on the objective facts of redemption were discarded for others expressive of immediate, personal experience. New and emotional tunes displaced the more vigorous chorales. [Reed, pp.145-146]

Despite common misconceptions the black gown was not a typical Lutheran vestment for the clergy. In *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice*, John T. Pless observes:

> The research of Günther Stiller and Arthur Carl Piepkorn demonstrates that the historic vestments (alb, chasuble, stole) continued to be used in many places within the Lutheran Church well into the 18th century. For the most part these vestments were rejected by the proponents of Calvinism, Pietism, and Rationalism. It was under these alien influences that the black gown of the academy entered into liturgical usage in the Lutheran Church. [Precht, p.222]

In an essay entitled, "Liturgy and Pietism: Then and Now," Pless notes the significance of Pietism for later theological developments encountered by the Lutheran church:

> For the most part, Pietism did not produce new liturgical orders. What Pietism did introduce was a shift away from the centrality of the divine service in the life of the church. This shift was necessitated by a prior shift from justification to sanctification, from the objective reality of the means of grace to the subjective experience of the believer, from *beneficium* to *sacrificium*, from the Office of the Holy Ministry to the priesthood of believers. This is the crucial shift which prepares the way for later developments in Pietism's offspring, revivalism and

Pentecostalism, which in turn have exercised a destructive influence in the liturgical life of North American Lutheranism. The central themes of Pietism are unable to sustain the liturgical life envisioned in the Book of Concord. [John T. Pless. "Liturgy and Pietism: Then and Now" in *Pietism and Lutheranism (1998 The Pieper Lectures)* edited by John A. Maxfield. (St. Louis & Crestwood, MO: The Luther Academy & Concordia Historical Institute, 1999), p.144]

Finally, we note Reed's observation on the ongoing problems of Pietism in the wider life of Lutheranism:

> In opposing the institutionalism of the established church, Pietism produced an unbalanced type of Christianity which overemphasized personal experience and relatively minor details of life and conduct. By its violent opposition to dancing, card-playing, the theater, etc., it encouraged a new type of asceticism and justification by works which led to self-complacency and severe criticism of the "unawakened." [Reed, p.145]

Because of the emphasis of subjective, interior spirituality and behavior over doctrine or the Divine Service, Pietists often felt more comfortable with other like-minded folk of other denominations (Calvinists, etc) than with traditional, confessional Lutherans. This led to further doctrinal and liturgical erosion in the Lutheran Church and made her more susceptible when another reaction arose, namely, Rationalism.

Another Reaction: Rationalism, the Exaltation of Human Reason and Philosophy

Rationalism is a by-product or a particular aspect of the Enlightenment. Rationalism is the exaltation of human reason above the divine revelation of Holy Scripture. Consequently this philosophical movement rejects assertions of divine revelation whether direct or mediated, sacraments, creedal assertions, miracles, etc. When this movement came into contact with the Church in Europe, its effects were devastating.

While in society and in the development of science, many aspects of the Renaissance and following Enlightenment period were positive, the impact on the church's theology was often destructive. Reed notes:

> The knowledge of God and the pursuit of virtue which did not require divine revelation but could be attained by rational reflection were regarded as the essentials of religion. Christianity was regarded as superior to other religions because of its greater reasonableness. The church was thought of as without divine authority – more superfluous than evil. Thus Rationalism sought to derive religious essentials from reason. It opposed supernaturalism and the idea of positive revelation from God. Authority was the primary question at issue. [Reed, p.147]

Reed further describes the radical transforming leaven of Rationalism in the Church:

> An ideal of happiness was substituted for the divine plan of redemption. Practical interests rather than orthodox doctrines or high spirituality were stressed in the pulpit. The stream of hymnody which had continued to flow through the Pietistic era now dried up completely. Toleration and the practice of virtue in ordinary life and civil service were cherished ideals. Scriptural inspiration was minimized, miracles explained by natural causes, original sin repudiated or defined as a limitation of nature. The moral aspects of the life of our Lord were emphasized and theories of satisfaction and forgiveness rejected. In the matter of justification, Rationalism moved toward Catholicism; on the doctrine of the sacraments it approximated the Reformed. In the theological field its logical development was Unitarianism; in the political field, the French Revolution.
>
> Within the sphere of worship, Rationalism was wholly destructive. Pietism had rejected or neglected many of the ancient forms but had not denied their content. Rationalism rejected content and form alike. The church year with its annual festivals and seasons had no meaning for those who disbelieved the resurrection and other

historically recorded facts. The altered view of the Word and Sacraments made the liturgy and the great hymns of the church unintelligible. The Service was mutilated beyond recognition. The church building became a mere place of assembly, and the pulpit a lecture platform from which the minister gave moral instructions. The Sacrament was reduced to an empty form and was observed in Reformed fashion four times a year. [Reed, pp.147-148]

To close this section on this overwhelmingly destructive chapter of liturgical history, we cite Precht's summary:

> The cumulative effects of the Thirty Years War, Pietism, and Rationalism, spanning almost two centuries, left worship and the life of the churches of the Reformation at a low ebb at the opening of the 19th century. Removed from the sound theology of the Reformers and the Lutheran symbols, there occurred, as someone has said, a depopulation of the congregations. Worship was manward instead of Godward; moral perfection was exalted above the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Freedom in matters of worship, coupled with the desire for relevance to the *Zeitgeist* [spirit of the times], resulted in rare celebrations of Holy Communion – considered to be an appendage – with the sermon, or address, given chief emphasis. [Precht, p.83]

THE PRUSSIAN UNION: A FORCED LUTHERAN AND CALVINIST MERGER TO MAKE A NEW GENERIC PROTESTANT RELIGION

Frank Senn describes the situation which led up to the so-called Prussian Union in 1817, what was considered the 300th anniversary of the Reformation, 300 years after the posting of the 95 Theses on the Church door in Wittenberg.

Kaiser Friedrich Wilhelm III

The aftermath of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars required a reorganization of church life in Germany. The Congress of Vienna, in redrawing the map of Europe after the defeat of Napoleon, awarded territory to the Kingdom of Prussia that it had lost during the Napoleonic Wars, including the predominantly Roman Catholic province of Westphalia. King Friedrich Wilhelm III now had substantial Lutheran, Reformed, and Roman Catholic populations in his territory. At the same time, the old Holy Roman Empire, which Napoleon had abolished in 1806, was never restored. Prussia began to embark on a policy that would lead eventually to a new German empire under Prussian (and Hohenzollern) leadership rather than under Austrian (and Hapsburg) leadership. Within this empire, as in the kingdom of Prussia itself, there would have to be a united Protestant (Evangelical) church that could embrace the whole population (thereby expressing one meaning of "catholicity). [Senn, pp.577-578]

This political desire to have a united "Protestant" Church in Prussia, so as to be more manageable, would have dire consequences for Lutherans and it would also have considerable liturgical impact. The Evangelical Lutheran churches would be forced into a union with the Reformed (Calvinist) churches. This is the beginning of the modern state church which blended separate confessions and watered down theology of both. This also marked distinct liberal agenda for modern ecumenical movements between Christian confessions. Senn elaborates on the implementation of this Lutheran/Calvinist "union":

> King Friedrich Wilhelm III declared his desire for the constituting of the Prussian Union Church at the celebration of the tercentenary in 1817 of Luther's Ninety-Five Theses. The desire for a Union Church was on a collision course with the confessional revival that was taking place in reaction to the religion of reason [Rationalism]. The popular preacher, Klaus Harms, archdeacon of Saint Michael's Church in Kiel, had used the occasion of the Tercentenary to publish Luther's Ninety-Five Theses and he added ninety-five of his own that attacked Rationalism and indifferentism. Thesis 32 stated, "the so-called religion of reason is without reason, or without religion, or both." But some of his theses also took aim at Lutheran-Reformed union. Thus, Thesis 71 stated, "If at the Colloquy at Marburg, 1529, the body and blood of Christ was in the bread and wine, it is still so in 1817." The Prussian King, however, proposed that the anniversary be marked by joint Lutheran-Reformed communion

services. When the ministers agreed, […] Friedrich Wilhelm presented his own liturgy, which produced almost unanimous disagreement on the part of the clergy, both Lutheran and Reformed. [Senn, p.578]

Senn describes the response of the Lutherans to this forced ecclesial and Eucharistic union along with the union liturgical books:

> …the Lutherans resisted altar and pulpit fellowship with the Reformed. In areas of Silesia and Saxony now annexed to Prussia, the old orthodox Lutherans still regarded Calvinists as heretics. Congregations could be closed down and pastors suspended or jailed for refusing to use the king's liturgy. Not until the accession of Friedrich Wilhelm IV in 1840 were they given permission to emigrate. These Lutherans moved to the United States and setup the Buffalo, Ohio, and Missouri Synods. [Senn, p.579]

About the liturgical concerns Lutherans had about the union liturgy, one historian has noted:

> For Lutherans this change [in the union liturgy] meant that they would no longer hear the minister say, "Take, eat, this is the true body of our Lord Jesus Christ." Instead, the communicant would be told, "Jesus Christ says, 'This is my body.'" The effect would be to leave the interpretation of Christ's presence in the sacrament up to the individual believer. [*The Lutherans in North America*. E. Clifford Nelson, ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975, 1980), p.132]

While the first attempt at a Prussian Union was not a complete success, in 1830 King Friedrich Wilhelm II would act again:

> King Friedrich Wilhelm III did not give up his plans for a Lutheran-Reformed union. On April 4, 1830, the tricentennial observance of the Augsburg Confession [which was presented June 25, 1530], he issued an edict stating that the power of the state would be used to enforce a union Agenda (liturgy) and to introduce the Reformed practices of the breaking of bread in the communion. Differences in the [denominational] names of evangelical congregations were to be abandoned. What happened in Prussia spread to all Germany: a systematic attempt to unite Lutherans and Reformed was under way. [David A. Gustafson. *Lutherans in Crisis: The Question of Identity in the American Republic.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), p.106]

It was clear that the state outwardly had the upper hand in this situation as life was made miserable for those who did not give in to the demands of the Prussian King and this movement:

Many confessional Lutherans refused to enter into it. Johann Gottfried Scheibel (1783-1843), a pastor in Breslau in Silesia was suspended as a result of his opposition to the union. Many pastors were imprisoned for refusing to conduct services according to the union Agenda. Laity who refused to cooperate with the union had their homes confiscated and sold by the government. When Lutherans in Breslau petitioned for a separate Lutheran church, they were denied. With conditions like these and no hope in sight, many Germans who opposed the union came to America.

> In 1840, however, the government began to reverse the pro-unionist policies. When Friedrich Wilhelm IV came to the throne in Prussia, one of his first actions was to revoke the suspensions of the pastors who had refused to comply with the Union Church. The General Concession of 1845 allowed Lutherans to organize free churches without loss of privileges. Organizations had to be approved by the state, but Lutherans did not have to contribute to the state church. [Gustafson, p.107]

To this day, Lutheranism feels the effects of the Reformed-Lutheran Prussian Union and its predecessor movements of Pietism and Rationalism. An historian has noted:

> The nineteenth-century revivals, like the pietism of an earlier era, together with national feeling, fostered an indifference toward doctrinal distinctions between the Lutheran and Reformed churches. The Prussian Union, which joined the two bodies, at first was looked upon as both a natural union and an antidote to rationalism. The union, however, soon came under severe attack and criticism. From the Reformed side there was objection to liturgical aspects and to the role of the king of Prussia in creating the union. Lutherans, particularly those influenced by the [confessional] revivals, became convinced that the emphases of the revivals were in essence those of the Lutheran confessions, which they began to see threatened by the union's doctrinal indifference. Thus spiritual awakening led to a revival of confessional consciousness among Lutherans. [Nelson, p.151]

Out of a desire to preserve a distinctly Lutheran church life of teaching and practice, including liturgical practice, the forefathers of the Missouri Synod and other synods began to leave Germany in the mid 1880s for North America and Australia.

The Saxon Lutheran Memorial, Frohna, Perry County, Missouri

PART seven – THE RENEWAL OF LITURGY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY CONFESSIONAL RENEWAL AND THE EARLY MISSOURI SYNOD

Even while many Lutherans in Germany were dealing with state church issues, a distinctly Lutheran confessional renewal along with a liturgical renewal movement was gaining ground. This was happening on both sides of the Atlantic. While the earlier emigrations of Lutherans to North America may have been more tentative and lacking resources, by the time of the 19th century some Lutherans had a sense of being bolstered in their confessional fidelity even amid calls to water-down and "Americanize" Lutheranism for the new world and its primarily Protestant religious context.

John Pless notes with regard to the influence of Pietism on North American Lutheranism that would also encounter American Revivalism that emerged out of the Methodist confession:

> The Pietism of Spener and Francke was to have far-reaching effects on the liturgical ethos of Lutheranism not only in Germany and Scandinavia but eventually in North America. While Pietism may not be the direct source of the liturgical chaos that has come upon North American Lutherans, it surely has provided contemporary Lutherans with an orientation which is predisposed toward an anti-liturgical bias. This orientation can be observed in the history of American Lutheranism in a wide spectrum of Lutherans of both German and Scandinavian descent as it embraces a spectrum from the revivalism of Hauge to the milder Pietism of Muhlenberg to the more neo-Pietism of Schmucker. [Maxfield, p.151]

Samuel Simon Schmucker

Of note for our purposes is the devastating program of Samuel Simon Schmucker of Gettysburg who, like Philipp Melanchthon before him, proposed a revision of the Augsburg Confession, to put it mildly. Pless describes this "Americanized Lutheranism":

> In Schmucker the central motifs of Pietism are given an American expression. Indifference to doctrinal distinctions where there is unity in spiritual experience marked the thought of Schmucker as it had for the Pietists. Like the earlier Pietists, Schmucker defines Lutheranism in opposition to Roman Catholicism. What Rome is, Lutheranism is not. For Schmucker as for the Pietists, the Reformation was a return to the primitivism of genuine Christianity. "The Reformation restored the church to the 'primitive, simple ordinances of the Gospel' instead of corrupted sacraments." Schmucker, like earlier Pietists, believed that the Reformation was fundamentally unfinished; Luther and his colleagues had not gone far enough. [Maxfield, p.154]

This view that Luther and the early Lutherans had not gone far enough is also something held in common by non-Lutheran protestants. Traditional, confessional Lutherans, even C.F.W. Walther, the first Missouri Synod president, were often accused of being "too catholic." So it is well within our heritage to endure this accusation, false as it may be. This is where Luther's careful and conservative reformation did not seek to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Pless further describes S.S. Schmucker's proposal for an "Americanized Lutheranism":

> The essence of Lutheranism was to be found not in the confessional documents but in the brave, reformatory spirit of Luther who replaced the pope with the Bible and freed believers to engage in genuine spirituality unhampered by external ritualism. This can be seen in Schmucker's Definite Platform as it identifies five errors in the Augustana: (1) the approval of the ceremonies of the mass; (2) private confession and absolution; (3) the denial of the divine obligation of the Christian Sabbath; (4) baptismal regeneration; (5) the real presence of the body and blood of the Savior in the Lord's Supper. Schmucker's rejection of these confessional teachings as remnants of Romish error echo similar sentiments in Pietism. Schmucker's Pietism makes it possible for him to adapt the new measures of revivalism for Lutheran use. […] While Schmucker and his co-religionists in the General Synod were not the only perpetrators of the Pietistic legacy, their efforts in the ecclesiastical establishment of Pietism as a clearly-defined element within American Lutheranism; an element that would be hospitable to and further shaped by revivalism, ecumenism, and eventually the charismatic movement. Pietism's theological orientation provides a context for the impulse of these three movements to shape both the theological understanding of liturgy as well as actual liturgical texts, practices, and hymnody among modern North American Lutherans. [Maxfield, p.155]

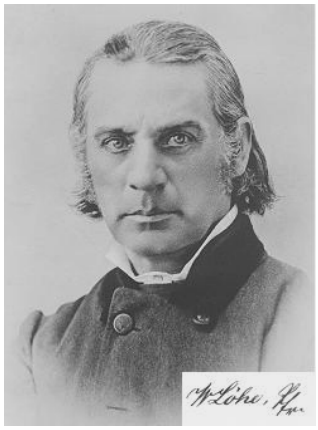
One can easily see, then, how the modern contemporary worship and Church Growth Movement grew out of these things as they interacted with revivalism and then the charismatic movement and so adopted its theological assumptions and liturgical practices as well as songs and hymns. Many of the hymns some consider "old favorites" or even "old Lutheran hymns" are not old Lutheran hymns at all, but hymns of the Pietistic tradition or those that come later out of revivalism and Methodism. Contemporary Christian music is but the modern development from that tradition.

Even in terms of preaching, Pless notes the decisive difference in perspective between confessional Lutheranism vs. Pietism:

> The chief aim of preaching in Pietism was not the delivery of the forgiveness of sins but the spiritual edification of the believer. The goal of the sermon was to change the life of the hearer. Preaching was seen as an appeal to the heart which would result in a changed life. […] Pietistic preaching demands visible results. Such results are best achieved by preaching which inspires or motivates. Narrative preaching or stories from the life of the preacher become a fundamental medium for such preaching, not unlike the place of the preacher's own testimony in Pietism. Gerald Krispin aptly summarizes this trend within Pietism: "Ultimately only that pastor who himself is a true Christian can lead people rightly in the ways of God. As a guide, he therefore become the primus inter pares, who is in fact the director, the older brother to all priests in the faith. Thus the pastoral office is not so much a *Predigtamt* as the means by which a godly example and encouragement provide concrete help for the formation of the inner man." [Maxfield, p.158]

In Germany, a liturgical renewal began among Lutherans who went back to the older liturgical books of their forefathers, especially those in use prior to the Thirty Years War. These books were used as models for the re-establishment of confessional Lutheran liturgical practice where there was theological renewal taking hold. Fred Precht describes the work of Pastor Wilhelm Löhe of Neuendettelsau, Bavaria, who is of great significance to the Missouri Synod and North American Lutheranism in general:

> Of special note is the *Agende für Christliche Gemeinden (1844)*, prepared by Wilhelm Löhe, pastor in Neuendettelsau, Bavaria, the founder of the Synod's Concordia Theological Seminary, since 1976 located at Fort Wayne, Indiana. In the foreword, directed to pastor Friedrich Conrad Wyneken (1810-76), a missionary who came to America in 1838 and who began serving Lutheran congregations at Friedheim and Fort Wayne, Indiana,



Rev. Wilhelm Loehe

Löhe says that he looked through 200 old agendas in order to arrive at a consensus of best usage. The liturgical completeness of the *Hauptgottesdienst* (Chief [Divine] Service) contained therein can readily be seen.... […] In addition to the above [communion] service, the agenda includes Matins and Vespers, Lauds, Prime, Compline, the Litany, General Prayers, rites of Installation of a Pastor, Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, and Communion of the Sick. Prepared especially for Lutherans in America, this book was used largely by congregations in Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana, until it was gradually supplanted by the official agenda of the Synod, published twelve years later. [Precht, p.84-85]

In the preface to Wilhelm Löhe's *Agenda* he asserts the following most pointedly and insightfully:

> The Lutheran Liturgy is an outgrowth from the Roman. The Lutheran Church itself is not a new building, but the old, cleansed from the unauthorized additions. For more than three centuries the Church has advanced no new doctrines, but on the contrary has been purifying the old systems from added perversions. In a liturgical way, likewise, no new path has been marked out; but after the removal of inexpedient innovations, that which has proved valuable from the beginning has been preserved. It is for this reason that our Church possesses in common with the Roman the principal parts of the Communion Service. For the same reason it was possible for the framers of the Augustana to assert: --"Nor has any perceptible change taken place in the public ceremonies of the mass." Also: -- "It is well known that the mass is, without boasting, celebrated with greater devotion and sincerity among us than among our adversaries." If anyone is inclined to charge this Order with a Romanizing tendency, the same must then be brought against every Lutheran Order, if not against the whole Church. It would, however, be more correct to say, that the Romish Church had a tendency to Catholicize in those parts of the Liturgy which it holds in common with us, because in those parts the Romish Church stands high above its own standard, and agrees with that which is truly universal [catholic]. [Wilhelm Loehe. *Liturgy for Christian Congregations of the Lutheran Faith – Third Edition.* Translated by F.C. Longaker (Newport, KY, 1902 – Reprinted by Repristination Press, 1993); p.ix]

As far as the production of a hymnal for what would become the Missouri Synod in 1847, the Saxon immigrants, first led by Martin Stephan, and now led by C.F.W. Walther saw a high priority for the life of the church in the new world:

> As early as November 1845, the need for producing a new hymnal for the confessional groups of Lutherans was presented to Trinity congregation (*Gesamtgemeinde*: federated congregation) in St. Louis by C.F.W. Walther, its pastor. After giving its ready approval, the congregation soon proceeded to appoint a committee to implement the project. In August 1847 the hymnal appeared with the title *Kirchengesangbuch fur Evangelische-Lutherische Gemeinden ungeänderter Augsburgischer Confession*, the work of "several Lutheran pastors in Missouri," with Walther undoubtedly as the leading figure. Simply a text edition, it included 437 hymns, prayers, antiphons, Luther's Small Catechism (Enchiridion), and the Augsburg Confession. [Precht, pp.88-89]

Rev. Dr. C.F.W. Walther

Note also the careful and specific criteria for hymns to be included or excluded as it was described in *Der Lutheraner*, a predecessor to *The Lutheran Witness*:

> In the selection of the adopted hymns the chief consideration was that they be pure in doctrine; that they have found almost universal

acceptance within the Orthodox German Lutheran Church and have thus received the almost unanimous testimony; that they had come forth from the true spirit [of Lutheranism]; that they express not so much the changing circumstances of individual persons but rather contain the language of the whole church, because the book is to be used primarily in public worship; and finally that they, though bearing the imprint of Christian simplicity, be not merely rhymed prose but the creation of a truly Christian poetry. [cited in Precht, p.89]

Like the preface to Wilhelm Löhe's Agenda, C.F.W. Walther, writing in *Der Lutheraner*, expressed similar thought as to how the Lutheran liturgical confession is shown in relation to other churches:


Der Lutheraner.

Herausgegeben von der Deutschen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten.

Jahrgang 28. St. Louis, Mo., den 15. Januar 1872. No. 8.

Whenever the divine service once again follows the old Evangelical-Lutheran agendas (or church books), it seems that many raise a great cry that it is "Roman Catholic": "Roman Catholic" when the pastor chants "The Lord be with you" and the congregation responds by chanting "and with thy spirit"; "Roman Catholic" when the pastor chants the collect and the blessing and the people respond with a chanted "Amen." Even the simplest Christian can respond to this outcry: "Prove to me that this chanting is contrary to the Word of God, then I too will call it `Roman Catholic' and have nothing more to do with it. However, you cannot prove this to me." If you insist upon calling every element in the divine service "Romish" that has been used by the Roman Catholic Church, it must follow that the reading of the Epistle and Gospel is also "Romish." Indeed, it is mischief to sing or preach in church, for the Roman Church has done this also . . .Those who cry out should remember that the Roman Catholic Church possesses every beautiful song of the old orthodox church. The chants and antiphons and responses were brought into the church long before the false teachings of Rome crept in. This Christian Church since the beginning, even in the Old Testament, has derived great joy from chanting... For more than 1700 years orthodox Christians have participated joyfully in the divine service. Should we, today, carry on by saying that such joyful participation is "Roman Catholic"? God forbid! Therefore, as we continue to hold and to restore our wonderful divine services in places where they have been forgotten, let us boldly confess that our worship forms do not tie us with the modern sects or with the church of Rome; rather, they join us to the one, holy Christian Church that is as old as the world and is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. [*Der Lutheraner*, July 19, 1853, issue, volume 9, number 24, page 163].

Walther was even pointed about this in a district convention essay in 1871:

We refuse to be guided by those who are offended by our church customs. We adhere to them all the more firmly when someone wants to cause us to have a guilty conscience on account of them. The Roman antichristendom enslaves poor consciences by imposing human ordinances on them with the command: "You must keep such and such a thing!"; the sects enslave consciences by forbidding and branding as sin what God has left free. Unfortunately, also many of our Lutheran Christians are still without a true understanding of their liberty. This is demonstrated by their aversion to ceremonies. It is truly distressing that many of our fellow Christians find the

difference between Lutheranism and Roman Catholicism in outward things. It is a pity and dreadful cowardice when a person sacrifices the good ancient church customs to please the deluded American denominations just so they won't accuse us of being Roman Catholic! Indeed! Am I to be afraid of a Methodist, who perverts the saving Word, or be ashamed in the matter of my good cause, and not rather rejoice that they can tell by our ceremonies that I do not belong to them?

It is too bad that such entirely different ceremonies prevail in our Synod, and that no liturgy at all has yet been introduced in many congregations. The prejudice especially against the responsive chanting of pastor and congregations is of course still very great with many people -- this does not, however, alter the fact that it is very foolish. The pious church father Augustine said, *"Qui cantat, bis orat*--he who sings prays twice." [C.F.W. Walther*, Explanation of Thesis XVIII, D, Adiaphora, of the book The True Visible Church, delivered at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Indianapolis, Indiana, Beginning August 9, 1871, at the 16th Central District Convention, translated by Fred Kramer, printed in Essays for the Church* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992); I:193-194].

GOING TO CONFERENCE.

Other Factors that Presented Challenges to Re-Establishing Lutheran Liturgical Practice in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries

+ frontier conditions – few ordained and educated Lutheran clergy; dispersed Lutheran congregations served by "circuit rider" who could only make the rounds over long periods of time, limiting catechesis and communion celebrations to less-than-ideal frequency

+ imposter Lutherans – very often revivalist preachers would obtain a Lutheran book or two and claim to be an ordained Lutheran preacher

+ the ongoing effects of Pietism, Rationalism and the encounter with American revivalism and other non-Lutheran protestant movements

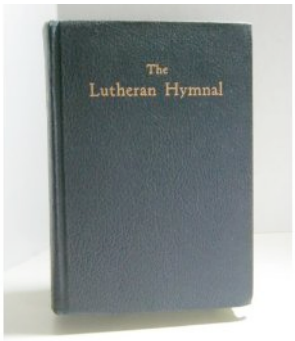
+ the early twentieth century changeover to English and the lack of solid Lutheran materials in English, with even translated materials being of inconsistent quality and accuracy. Sometimes this led to borrowing of materials from non-Lutheran sources, which, in time, led to theological erosion and lack of doctrinal fidelity.

+ A general American bias against things perceived to be "too Catholic" – a trend suffered by Roman Catholics and Anglicans (Episcopalians) along with Lutherans in America

+ Limited publishing and church supply capabilities (especially early on)

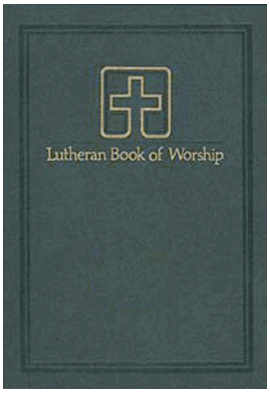
Over the course of World War I and World War II, the impetus came for the German and Scandinavian churches to move into English. Of course there were already English speaking Lutherans in North America for some time, but especially among Germans, the societal pressure to seem more American helped push the move into English along with the cause of outreach. During World War I there was considerable suspicion against people of German background in the United States and even so to a certain degree during the Second World War. The first English hymnal of the Missouri Synod was published in 1911, appearing for sale in 1912, with a mission

predecessor of just hymns appearing in 1905. The 1911 hymnal was called *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* and was published by Concordia Publishing House.



While there was much good in the 1911 hymnal, a desire for better translation and more historic liturgical material encouraged a movement toward a new hymnal to service not only the Missouri Synod but also members of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference, which included also the Wisconsin Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (Little Norwegian Synod). This new hymnal expanded the number of hymns, made more liturgical resources available for the seasons of the Church Year, and broadened the hymnody to include not only German Lutheran hymns but also Lutheran hymns from Slovakia, Scandinavia, as well as some English hymns. Some texts borrowed from non-Lutheran sources had the texts modified to remove false or unclear doctrine (usually indicated next to the hymn author's name with "alt." – meaning "altered from the original text"). This hymnal came to be known as *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941). Notable also is the fact that while the pastor's chant was not included in the hymnal itself, it was intended to be sung from an accompanying book, *Music for the Liturgy*. This saved space or size in the hymnal for the pew. Also notable is the fact that *The Lutheran Hymnal* was the exception to the rule that it had Amens included at the end of hymns, which the predecessor hymnals did not include.

In the decades since the publication of *The Lutheran Hymnal* and its companion volumes, other hymnals and supplementary worship books began to appear on the scene with other theologies beginning to influence the contents.

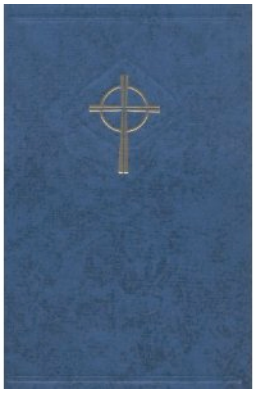


The Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship in 1978 published *Lutheran Book of Worship* (LBW), recognized by its green cover. The Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship was comprised of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), the American Lutheran Church (ALC), the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), the Slovak Synod, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada. The ILCW produced the *Worship Supplement* paperback in 1969 and then LBW in 1978. Not participating in the ILCW were other synods of the former Synodical Conference (WELS, ELS) that broke fellowship with the Missouri Synod. At this time the Missouri Synod was in altar and pulpit fellowship with the American Lutheran Church, ALC, which would come to an end in the early 1980s over serious doctrinal matters.

By the time that *Lutheran Book of Worship* appeared on the scene, it was being examined by many and it definitely reflected the theology of compromise among the various synods involved in the ILCW and the theological troubles of the various synods. However, things were beginning to turn around to a certain degree in the Missouri Synod and it declined to approve *Lutheran Book of Worship* "as is." There were many problems in terms of the Eucharistic liturgy, church year calendar's selection of questionable "saints" and in terms of the method of biblical interpretation used in the formation of the new three year lectionary of Bible readings, among other troubles.

The Missouri Synod required by resolution at its 1977 Synod Convention to produce a revision of *Lutheran Book of Worship* with certain prescribed modifications. For better or for worse the relevant commissions and committees and musicians were given rather short period of time to do a monumental amount of work.

There is much too much to recount here about this period in LCMS history but it has many consequential implications for the Missouri Synod today. About 5% of the Missouri Synod had adopted (purchased) *Lutheran Book of Worship*, and the speedy production of the revision, *Lutheran Worship*, to be published by Concordia Publishing House in 1982 was urgent so as not to have more congregations using a problematic hymnal in LBW.



Over time, while many good things from *Lutheran Book of Worship* were kept and many old treasures were added by English translation to the heritage of the previous hymnals, some troublesome spots began to be recognized:

+ formatting difficulties (too many options)
+ translations that differed too much from the familiar
+ musical settings that were modified just enough to be jarring to those familiar with TLH, 1941
+ the loss of many simple four part harmonizations
+ many refused to adopt the 1982 LW and kept the 1941 TLH, having more variation within the LCMS along with LBW in some places and sundry liturgical tinkering

The 1980s also began to see the more wide-spread borrowing of liturgical forms from non-Lutheran sources under the nomenclature of "contemporary worship" or "folk service." This, in addition to format troubles, helped encourage a "do-it-yourself" liturgical practice on photocopiers, etc. There also had not been much purposeful instruction on liturgy in most LCMS churches for some time. But the heat of controversy would soon begin to make us relearn our own history and theology, as well as historic Lutheran liturgical practice. The struggle continues, and deep divisions continue.

How far we have drifted from our Lutheran Confessions in these matters! These are key parts of our confessional subscription and oath:

Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV

Falsely are our churches accused of abolishing the Mass; for the Mass is retained among 2] us, and celebrated with the highest reverence. Nearly all the usual ceremonies are also preserved, save that the parts sung in Latin are interspersed here and there with German hymns, which have been added 3] to teach the people. For ceremonies are needed to this end alone that the unlearned 4] be taught [what they need to know of Christ]. And not only has Paul commanded to use in the church a language understood by the people 1 Cor. 14:2-9, but it has also been so ordained by man's law. 5] The people are accustomed to partake of the Sacrament together, if any be fit for it, and this also increases the reverence and devotion of public 6] worship. For none are admitted 7] except they be first examined. The people are also advised concerning the dignity and use of the Sacrament, how great consolation it brings anxious consciences, that they may learn to believe God, and to expect and ask of Him all that is good. 8] [In this connection they are also instructed regarding other and false teachings on the Sacrament.] This worship pleases God; such use of the Sacrament nourishes true devotion 9] toward God. It does not, therefore, appear that the Mass is more devoutly celebrated among our adversaries than among us.

Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV

At the outset we must again make the preliminary statement that *we* 1] *do not abolish the Mass, but religiously maintain and defend it*. For among us masses are celebrated every Lord's Day and on the other festivals, in which the Sacrament is offered to those who wish to use it, after they have been examined and absolved. And the usual public ceremonies are observed, the series of lessons, of prayers, vestments, and other like things.

PART eight – THE ORDER OF THE DIVINE SERVICE IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH

The order of the Divine Service as we have received it historically, as we have seen, is not the product of one person, one church body or synod, nor one ethnic background. It spans the entire history of the church and even has roots into the Old Testament. It has served the needs of the church to deliver the means of grace in a context of reverence, joy, catechesis, prayer, and repentance. Now, with this background in mind, we will examine the structure and order of the Divine Service as we know it

SOME BASIC DISTINCTIONS

A. Propers vs. Ordinaries

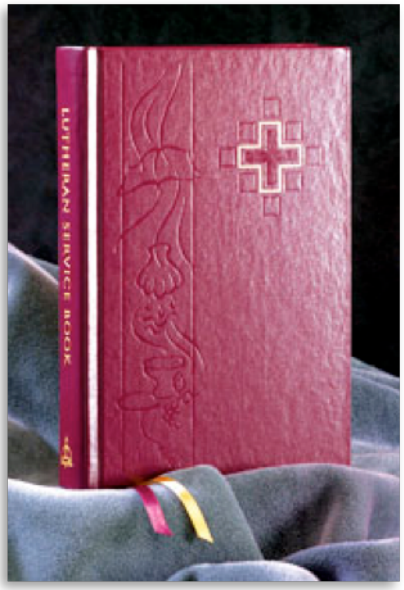
a. **Propers** – are the variable elements of the Divine Service that are "proper" to the day or season in the liturgical calendar (e.g. Introit, Gradual, Readings, collect of the day, hymns, proper preface)

b. **Ordinaries** – are the regular parts of the liturgy that are "ordinarily" there (Kyrie, Gloria in Excelsis, Creed, Preface, Agnus Dei, Benediction, etc).

B. *Beneficium* (Sacramental/Blessing Acts) vs. *Sacrificium* (Sacrificial Acts)

a. **Sacramental Acts** – Word and Sacrament elements that God is doing for us. The liturgist typically faces the congregation for Sacramental Acts. Typically Sacramental Acts are reserved for those men who are called and ordained pastors, or those men (like deacons) serving auxiliary to the pastor.

b. **Sacrificial Acts** – responses of repentance, prayer, thanksgiving, praise, that are prompted by the Sacramental Acts. The liturgist typically faces the altar or cross for Sacrificial Acts or may signify such with hands uplifted in a prayer or sacrificial position (extended from the shoulders outward or upward). Some sacrificial acts are part of the congregation's response (Scripture responses or songs of praise, some are done or led by the pastor or liturgist (certain prayers, etc.).



THE GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE DIVINE SERVICE

I. The Preparation

a. Hymn of Invocation
b. Invocation
c. Confession & Absolution

II. Service of the Word

a. Introit (to enter) with Gloria Patri (Glory be to the Father…)
b. Kyrie Eleison (Lord have mercy)
c. Gloria in Excelsis Deo (Glory to God in the Highest) or This is the Feast
d. Salutation and Collect
e. Old Testament, Gradual and Epistle
f. Holy Gospel
g. Creed
h. Hymn of the Day
i. Sermon
j. Offering and Offertory
k. Prayer of the Church

III. Service of the Sacrament

a. Preface
b. Proper Preface for Day or Season
c. Sanctus (Holy)
d. Prayer of Thanksgiving
e. Lord's Prayer
f. Words of Institution (Verba Domini – Words of the Lord)
g. Pax Domini (Peace of the Lord)
h. Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)
i. Distribution
j. Nunc Dimittis (Now dismiss) or Post-Communion Canticle
k. Benedicamus and Benediction
l. Dismissal Hymn

THE PREPARATION

The historic beginning of the mature development of the liturgy is the Introit. For much of Christian history the confession and absolution and other preparation was done individually by Christians or within the household or family. The practice of private confession and absolution provided a regular means for living in one's Baptism and for preparing for Holy Communion. Private confession, unlike public or general confession provided an opportunity to confess sins on an individual basis and to deal more specifically in a confidential context with spiritual illness and the conscience.

HYMN OF INVOCATION

The hymn of invocation is customarily a hymn of preparation and a hymn calling upon (invoking) the Lord's presence and blessing upon the gathered congregation. Sometimes, especially on festival days, the hymn of invocation becomes more of a celebratory hymn for a procession of the clergy and assistants for the service that day. The hymn of invocation is not a "call to worship" but preparation of the baptized to be nourished in the Word and Sacraments.

INVOCATION – Matthew 28:19

P In the name of the Father and of the ✢ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

To invoke means to "call upon." In the invocation of the Divine Service, the name of the Triune God, as we know it from Holy Baptism, is called upon. Matins and Vespers have different invocations based upon Psalms. The invocation is a remembrance of Holy Baptism and marks the Divine Service as the gathering of the baptized. It is a holy assembly gathered in the name of Jesus through His holy Word.

However, despite the name "invocation" we are not here calling down God, as if we are summoning Him. Rather, we are summoned together by God as His people, because Holy Baptism is something that God does. Calling God down would be a pagan understanding of worship. Our worship does not begin with our activity but the Word of God, which is His activity for us (Divine Service). There is no question that in this liturgy we are not worshiping a "generic god" but the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. More than this, He has gathered us, not we Him.

This helps explain why the invocation is an incomplete sentence, grammatically speaking. "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," is an echo of your Baptism, with God speaking and doing. Sometimes pastors are tempted to add something to the beginning of this, "We make our beginning" or "we begin…" but this betrays a lack of understanding about what is going on. It is not "we" making "our beginning." These sorts of additions to the liturgy should be discouraged.

Question: What is the significance of God's name being at the forefront of the liturgy? Read the following Scripture passages:

Exodus 20:24

Matthew 18:20

It wasn't until about the 14th century that the invocation came into usage at the beginning of the liturgy, and then it was only part of private preparatory prayers by the clergy. It was in the Reformation that a private

preparatory act of the clergy became part of the common preparation of the whole congregation, remembering that they are gathered by the Holy Spirit as the baptized, holy people of God, the communion of saints. And so the invocation stands as a marker of baptismal blessing and reverence, reminding us that we are on holy ground wherever the Divine Service is celebrated. Charles Evanson writes of the invocation in *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice:*

> The invocation of the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and the use of the sign of the holy cross, words first spoken and marked on us in Baptism, confess that the God upon whom we call is the God who calls his baptized people together by Word and Sacrament. We do not come before him as those who deserve to come because of what we have been or what we have done. We come because he has called us through the Holy Spirit, who calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the church. The Spirit keeps us in the true faith and unites us to Christ, covering us with his righteousness, innocence, and purity. While non-Christians may be present – and it is hoped that there are such – when we gather for corporate worship, the Divine Service is first and foremost an activity of a Christian congregation, members of which have been joined to their Lord by the work of the Holy Spirit in Baptism. [Precht, p.402]

Of course, the people respond with "Amen" to the baptismal, triune invocation of God's name. Amen is a stamp of approval, closely related to the Hebrew word for "truth." Therefore it is a word that should be spoken or sung with boldness.

GENERAL CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P O almighty God, merciful Father,

C **I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.**

P Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

OR

P Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

C **Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

We refer to general confession and absolution in distinction to private confession and absolution. Again, the earliest orders did not contain confession and absolution, but assumed preparation as a personal and/or family practice done outside of the Divine Service itself. Much of what we are accustomed to in this regard is derived from private practices adapted for general usage with the congregation. If private confession and absolution and general preparation is being practiced, it is not inappropriate to begin with the Introit or omit confession and absolution. Typically if a Baptism is administered in the Divine Service, confession and absolution is omitted, because confession and absolution is a remembrance and living in one's Baptism into Christ.

In the medieval era the priest would have an individual confession of sins apart from the congregation. In some of the early Lutheran orders, such as those produced by Luther's pastor, Johannes Bugenhagen, a confession of sins and absolution was provided following the sermon, before the communion part of the liturgy. David Kind notes regarding the form we are most used to:

> We find the *Confiteor* [confession] first used as a public preparatory rite in Philip Melanchthon's Church Order for the city of Mecklenburg of 1552 [or possibly 1545] that introduced this practice to the Church. Since that time it has gained general acceptance as a congregational act not only in the Lutheran Churches, but also has found its way into the Roman and Anglican rites, though in different forms. What makes the Lutheran Confiteor especially distinctive is that the confession addresses not only our sinful acts, but our sinful nature, showing just how deep our need is for the grace of Christ, and how utterly dependent we are upon Him. [David A. Kind. *About Our Liturgy: Meaning, History and Practice.* (Minneapolis: Musolf Press, 2003), 8]

We should note a few things historically about confession and absolution:

- the early and preferred practice is private confession with the pastor
- general confession and absolution became more prominent as private confession waned in usage
- the Lutheran Confessions fully intend to maintain private confession as a free usage in the Lutheran Church
- the later practice of "confessional services" or "communion announcing" was a remnant practice of an earlier time, half-way between private confession, making announcement for Holy Communion for examination with the pastor, and the later practice of registration cards, verbal announcements Sunday morning, and general confession.

James 5:16a – "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed."

Question: What do these Psalms teach us about confessing our sin?

a. **Psalm 32**
b. **Psalm 51**

Note that when people came to John the Baptist to be baptized they came confessing their sins. The word for the confession of sins here indicates that they confessed them out loud (Matthew 3; Mark 1). To confess in Greek, the language of the New Testament, means to "say the same thing as" God says about our sin (*homologein*). It is not to explain it or excuse it or merely to tell how it makes us feel. The expression of sorrow or remorse or guilt accompanies the admitting or saying the same thing God does about our sin (the divine verdict on it).

Absolution – John 20:19-23

℗ Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

Sometimes visitors will not only be offended to speak such a direct and comprehensive confession of sins, but also some of a protestant background will be offended at the direct pronouncement (indicative operative) absolution from the pastor.

Why is it that some may be offended at the pronouncement of absolution? See the following Bible passages:

a. Matthew 9:1-8
b. 2 Corinthians 4:5-12
c. 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

SERVICE OF THE WORD

INTROIT (Enter) – *In-tro-it*

The historic beginning of the liturgy in its mature form is the Introit or Psalm as a time of entrance or procession. The word "Introit" comes from the Latin word for "enter" and is opposite of "exit." Typically this may be when the pastor moves from the main level of the nave after the absolution to approach the altar during the chanting of the Introit or entire Psalm. Charles Evanson notes regarding the Introit:

> The Introit (from the Latin *introitus*, entrance) is a psalm or portion of a psalm, preceded and followed by an antiphon that summarizes the theme of the day. Originally the Introit was sung as the ministers entered the church and processed to the altar. The congregation sang the antiphon as a response to each verse of the psalm or to a group of verses. The Gloria Patri serves as a doxology at the end of the psalm verses. Except for Holy Week, it is the practice of the church always to include the Gloria Patri. [Precht, p.408]

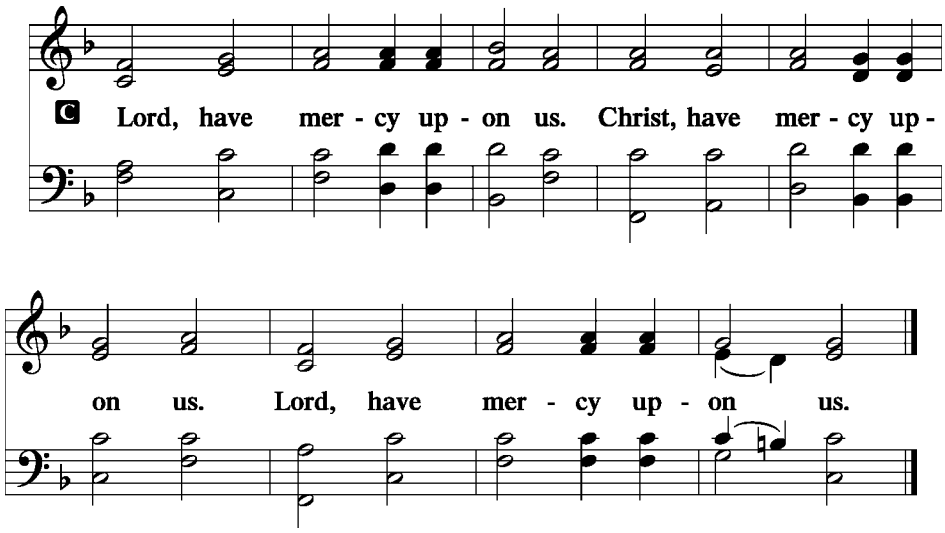
Luther Reed notes, "In old Lutheran circles the custom has been maintained to the present time of bowing the head in 'due and lowly reverence' at the Gloria Patri and at the Name of Jesus throughout the Service" [Reed, p.264]. The structure of the Introit is as follows:

-Antiphon
-Psalm or portion of Psalm
-Gloria Patri (Glory be to the Father…)
-Antiphon (repeated)

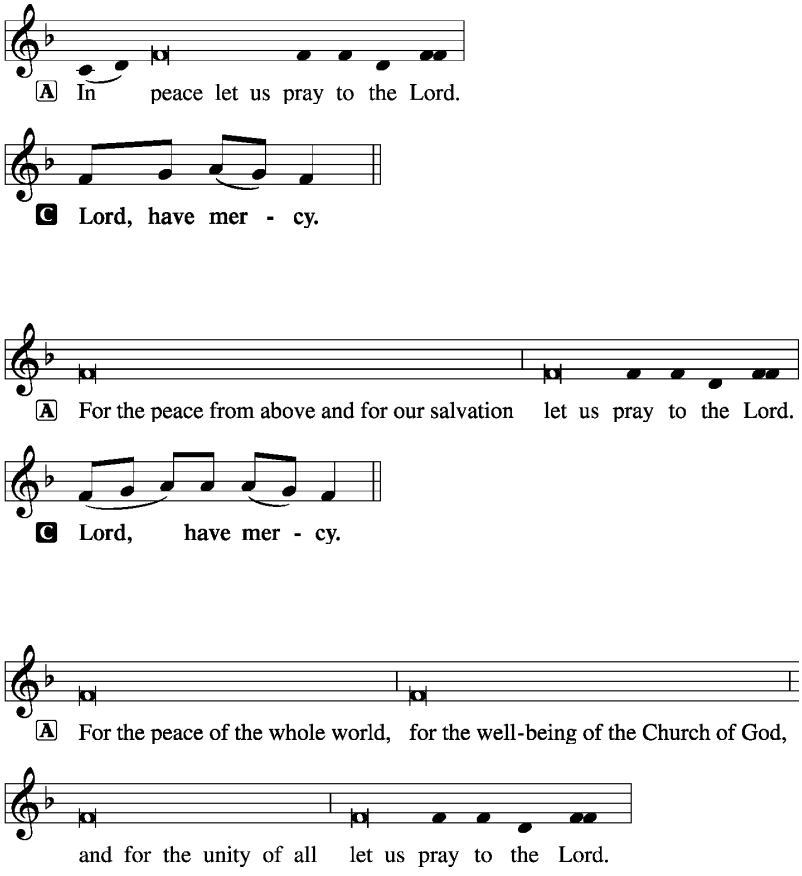
QUESTION: What should be our attitude as we enter the Lord's House for the Divine Service?

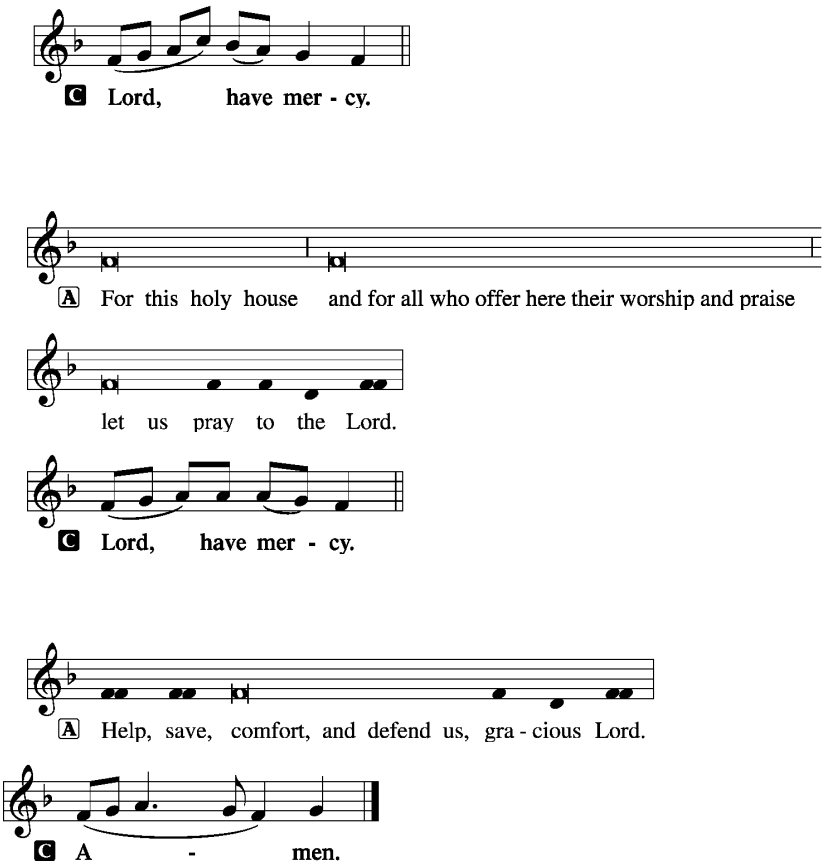
a. Psalm 100
b. Psalm 84
c. Psalm 26:8
d. Hebrews 12:18-29

KYRIE ELEISON (Lord, have mercy) – keer-ee-eh eh-lay-sohn



The *Kyrie* is one of the parts of the liturgy that still bears a Greek name, rather than a Latin name, like many parts of the Western Mass. The *Kyrie* is a prayer of intercession by the people of God, led by the pastor serving as a priest at the altar, having processed there during the Introit. The *Kyrie* (Lord have mercy) is not so much a prayer for forgiveness as it is a prayer of the forgiven for the church and the world. The shorter version to which we are accustomed is a later version that developed in the Western Church in the middle ages. It is basically the more ancient form of the *Kyrie* with only the responses. The historic form of the *Kyrie* is more of a Litany form of prayer. Our concern when approaching the altar is not only ourselves but the congregation begins a priestly intercession (1 Peter 2:9).





John Pless describes the *Kyrie* in this way:

> Since the Lord had proclaimed that He was a gracious, merciful God (Exodus 34:6-7), the people of Israel appealed to His mercy as their heavenly king with this formula in the psalms which they prayed at the temple (See Psalms 6:2; 9:13; 31:9; 41:4,10; 56:1; 86:3 etc). It is the prayer of beggars in the presence of merciful Benefactor and Lord. The Kyrie is a cry for mercy to the King who comes to save us. See Matthew 15:22; Mark 10:47; Luke 17:13. Just as citizens in the ancient world would line the streets to greet the arrival of their ruler with supplications for mercy, so the church implores our Lord for mercy as He comes to us in His words. It appears that the Kyrie comes into the Western liturgy from the East where it was used in the form of an earnest and insistent litany called *Ektenia* (or *Ektene*). In this litany, *Kyrie, eleison* was the congregation's response to bids prayed by a deacon. By the time of Gregory the Great (c.540-604) only the response *Kyrie elesion* was used as in the threefold Kyrie of [Divine Service III (LSB)] and TLH. The earliest evidence we have for the use of the Kyrie is from Egeria's description of the liturgical life in Jerusalem in the middle of the 4th century where it was used in the Vespers. Luther prepared a hymn based on the Kyrie, "Kyrie, God Father" [942 LSB]. [Pless, class syllabus, CTS Fort Wayne]

QUESTION: Why do we pray for the Lord's mercy and help upon approaching the altar?

- **a. 1 Timothy 2:1-6**
- **b. 1 Peter 2:4-5**
- **c. Philippians 2:1-4**
- **d. Psalm 141:1-28**

Arthur Just observes with regard to the wording of the *Kyrie*:

> The cry for mercy in the Kyrie is a cry for peace. The entire Kyrie is prayed "in peace," and two of the first three petitions are for "peace from above" and for "the peace of the whole world." The petition for "Peace from

above" acknowledges that peace came from heaven to earth through the incarnation of Jesus Christ and petitions the Lord to continue to be present among us in our worship. […] Peace is also the new greeting of the Church of the New Testament that provided the foundation for the post-Pentecost Church in mission. Jesus sent the seventy out to greet households in peace, and His first greeting to the eleven after the resurrection was the greeting of peace as He ate roasted fish before them (Luke 24:36). [Just p.190]

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO (Glory be to God on high…) - Luke 2:8-20

P Glory be to God on High,
C **and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.**
We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee.
we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee, for Thy great glory.
O Lord God, heav'nly King, God the Father Almighty.
O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ;
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.
Thou that takest away the sin of the world, receive our prayer.
Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.
For Thou only art holy; Thou only art the Lord.
Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost,
art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Charles Evanson notes regarding the liturgical usage of the *Gloria in Excelsis*:

> Like the Kyrie, the Gloria in Excelsis came into the Eucharistic liturgy from the Eastern Church. When introduced into the West, it was first used as a song of thanksgiving. The earliest record of its inclusion in the Mass is found in the *Liber Pontificalis* (c. 530 A.D.). Tradition has that it was first used by the pope on Christmas Eve, since it is the hymn of the angels celebrating the incarnation. Its common use, however, was not permitted for another 600 years. The Middle Ages witnessed a profusion of plainsong melodies, as well as textual elaborations and tropes. Some Lutheran liturgies of the 16th and 17th century prescribe the use of the Gloria, with the simple "et in terra pax" ("and on earth peace") on ordinary Sundays, reserving the rest of the piece for special occasions. [Precht, p.410]

Arthur Just describes the significance of the *Gloria in Excelsis*:

> From the beginning, the Gloria has been associated with the feast of Christmas and therefore with the incarnation itself. Although there is no conclusive evidence that the Gloria entered the Divine Service as a prelude to the Service of the Word to balance the Sanctus, the prelude to the Words of Institution, there may be some evidence for such a suggestion from none other than the evangelist St. Luke. This may be an example of the biblical

character of the liturgical development of the historic liturgy. In Luke's Gospel the Gloria in Excelsis is a foreshadowing of the Entrance Hymn of the people of Israel when Jesus finally arrives in Jerusalem for His death. The parallels between the song at Jesus' birth and the song of the people as He enters Jerusalem are striking, especially in view of Luke's version of the entrance hymn:

> Luke 2:14: ***"Glory in the highest to God***, and **on earth *peace*** among men of His favor."
>
> Luke 19:38: "Blessed the Coming One, the King, in the name of the Lord! **In heaven *peace***, and ***glory in the highest!"***

[…]At the birth of Jesus, there is glory in the highest; this same highest glory is proclaimed as He enters Jerusalem for His death. The great mystery here concerns peace: at Jesus' birth, there is peace on earth; as He enters into Jerusalem for His Passion and resurrection, there is peace in heaven. Thus earth and heaven are joined together in peace through the incarnation and atonement of Christ. This incarnational and biblical reality recorded by Luke is exactly the same reality that happens every time God's people gather for the Divine Service, where Christ's presence in Word and Sacrament joins heaven and earth together in peace. [Just p.191-192]

As to the rest of the text of the *Gloria in Excelsis*, beyond the direct reference to the Nativity of our Lord, it is a hymn of praise that is nearly creedal in character. Just further elaborates on the meaning of the *Gloria in Excelsis* in the context of the Divine Service as a whole:

> The main body of the hymn is a liturgical text that is Trinitarian. […] That this is a hymn of praise is clear from the opening acclamations. The reason for our worship, our thanksgiving, and our praise is that the glory of our Father, the heavenly King and almighty God, now dwells on earth in the flesh of Jesus Christ who is present among us in Word and Sacrament. This glory is described in the center of the hymn, a proclamation of what Jesus Christ, the only Son of the Father, the Lamb of God, has done for the world through His death. On account of this we ask for His mercy, and because of His exaltation to the right hand of the Father, we ask Him to receive our prayer (an echo of the Kyrie). He the Gloria announces what is at the center of the Divine Service: the heavenly conversation of the Lamb who was slain and raised again in the Word and the ongoing feast upon this very Lamb in the Lord's Supper. [Just, p.193]

This hymn of the ordinaries concludes in proper Trinitarian manner:

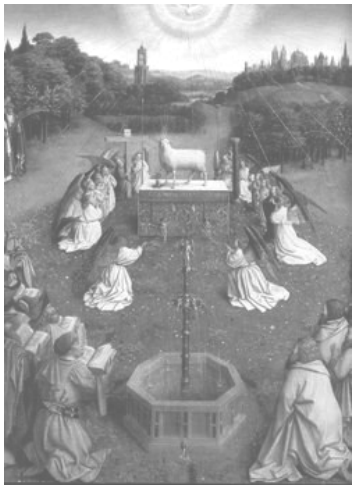
> This final designation leads us to the Holy Spirit through whom Jesus Christ is present in the glory of God the Father. Christ's presence through the Spirit concludes the hymn, so that the Trinitarian portion of the Gloria begins and ends with the glory of God, whose presence we worship, give thanks, and praise. [Just, p.194]

QUESTION: What parallels are there between the original narrative of the birth of Christ, and what coming up in the Divine Service? What is announced at the first Christmas and what is here announced by analogy? (Think of what comes later in the Divine Service.)

John 1:14 – "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

WORTHY IS CHRIST THE LAMB ("This is the Feast") – Revelation 5; 11:17; 15:3-4; 19:4-9

Worthy Is Christ the Lamb, or as it is popularly known, "This is the Feast," is a recent composition and among the most recent additional options to the ordinaries in two of our Divine Service musical settings. A version of the text for Worthy Is the Lamb (*Dignus est Agnus*) actually was found on p.122 in *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941). The text we are familiar with first appeared in an ILCW resource in 1970 and became popularized in *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978) and *Lutheran Worship* (1982).



A question arises with the singing of this canticle, especially with Lutheran ears: If the feast referred to here is the Lord's Supper, should we really be singing "the feast of victory **FOR** our God" rather than "the feast of victory **OF** our God"? This is a legitimate question. The Lord's Supper is something God does for us not something we do for Him. The Divine Service is God's liturgy for us first and foremost. It is crucial to maintain this distinction as it relates to the proper distinction between law and gospel and justification by grace alone. Consider the theological reflection of Arthur Just:

> "Worthy is Christ" proclaims "the feast of victory for our God," and so a legitimate question is this: "What is this feast of victory?" It is not, as some might think, simply a reference to the Lord's Supper but to all God's acts of table fellowship stretching back into the Old Testament where God's redemption is often accompanied by a meal. There is common ground between these Old Testament meals, especially the Passover, Jesus' meals during His earthly ministry, Jesus' Passover on the night in which He was betrayed, the breaking of the bread and opened eyes as Emmaus, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper in the Church since Pentecost. The feast of victory not only refers to the Liturgy of the Lord's Supper, but to both Word and Sacrament, because table fellowship with God in both Old and New Testaments and in our own churches today involves three essential elements: the presence of God in Jesus, in His teaching at the table, and in the breaking of the bread. The feast always includes breaking open His Word as well as the breaking of the bread. And because we share this fellowship at table with Him now, we have a "foretaste of the feast to come" where we shall "celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in his kingdom, which has no end." [Just, p.196]

QUESTION: What is the cause of worship in Revelation 5? What is being celebrated?
See also: Isaiah 25:6-9; Psalm 116:12-19; Psalm 96:1-9

The Apology of the Augsburg Confession (Article XXIV) speaks of our response in faith as a sacrifice of thanksgiving ("Eucharistic" coming from the Greek word for giving thanks):

> Now the rest are eucharistic sacrifices, which are called sacrifices of praise, Lev. 3:1f.; 7:11f.; Ps. 56:12f., namely, the preaching of the Gospel, faith, prayer, thanksgiving, confession, the afflictions of saints, yea, all good works of saints. These sacrifices are not satisfactions for those making them, or applicable on behalf of others, so as to merit for these, *ex opere operato*, the remission of sins or reconciliation. For they are made by those who have been reconciled. 26] And such are the sacrifices of the New Testament, as Peter teaches, 1 Pet. 2:5: *An holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices*. Spiritual sacrifices, however, are contrasted not only with those of cattle, but even with human works offered *ex opere operato*, because spiritual refers to the movements of the Holy Ghost in us. Paul teaches the same thing Rom. 12:1: *Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, which is your reasonable service. Reasonable service* signifies, however, a service in which God is known, and

apprehended by the mind, as happens in the movements of fear and trust towards God. Therefore it is opposed not only to the Levitical service, in which cattle are slain, but also to a service in which a work is imagined to be offered *ex opere operato*, The Epistle to the Hebrews 13:15, teaches the same thing: *By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually*; and he adds the interpretation, *that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name*. He bids us offer praises, i.e., prayer, thanksgiving, confession, and the like. These avail not *ex opere operato*, but on account of faith. This is taught by the clause: *By Him let us offer*, i.e., by faith in Christ.

The Apology (Article XXIV.71f) also speaks of the response of faith in gratitude for the mercies of God given in the Lord's Supper, as a means of grace connecting us to Christ's work on Good Friday and Easter:

And such use of the Sacrament, in which faith quickens terrified hearts, is a service of the New Testament, because the New Testament requires spiritual dispositions, mortification and quickening. [For according to the New Testament the highest service of God is rendered inwardly in the heart.] And for this use Christ instituted it, since He commanded them *thus to do in remembrance of Him*. 72] For to remember Christ is not the idle celebration of a show [not something that is accomplished only by some gestures and actions], or one instituted for the sake of example, as the memory of Hercules or Ulysses is celebrated in tragedies, but it is to remember the benefits of Christ and receive them by faith, so as to be quickened by them. Psalm 111:4-5 accordingly says: He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion. He hath given meat unto them that fear Him. For it signifies that the will and mercy of God should be discerned in the 73] ceremony. But that faith which apprehends mercy quickens. And this is the principal use of the Sacrament, in which it is apparent who are fit for the Sacrament, namely, terrified consciences, and how they ought to use it. 74] The sacrifice [thank-offering or thanksgiving] also is added. For there are several ends for one object. After conscience encouraged by faith has perceived from what terrors it is freed, then indeed it fervently gives thanks for the benefit and passion of Christ, and uses the ceremony itself to the praise of God, in order by this obedience to show its gratitude; and testifies that it holds in high esteem the gifts of God. Thus the ceremony becomes a sacrifice of praise.

WHEN WHICH IS USED…

Both hymns of praise are omitted during Advent and Lent. Regarding the rubrics on when the Gloria in Excelsis is used and when "This is the Feast" might be used:

> The Gloria in Excelsis is appointed to be used as a hymn of praise during the Christmas and Epiphany seasons; minor festivals of the incarnation such as the Presentation, the Annunciation, and the Visitation; and throughout the Pentecost season. "Worthy is Christ" is reserved for Easter Sunday through Pentecost Day, All Saints, and the Sunday of the Fulfillment. There is wisdom in these rubrics, giving preference to the Gloria, the more ancient of these two hymns of praise, but recognizing the paschal character of "Worthy is Christ." [Just, p.197]

THE SALUTATION – "The Lord be with you." - Luke 1:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:16; Ruth 2:4; Galatians 6:18; 2 Timothy 4:22; Philippians 4:23;

The salutation precedes the Collect of the Day in the Divine Service. This exchange is one of the oldest parts of the liturgy and is used in various rites. The salutation is more than simply a churchly or liturgical way of saying "hello." That this was even an exchange or dialogue was clouded in understanding due to the recent strange liturgical practice of the pastor speaking his part and the congregation chanting theirs, as was the mistaken practice of many using *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941), assuming there was no chant for the pastor (which was really in another companion book).

The most ancient response to the salutation is "and with your spirit." "And also with you" is more of a modern innovation reflecting the influence of the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church. Interestingly, in the last few years, the United States Council of Catholic Bishops has produced and authorized a new translation of the Mass that undoes the salutation response from "and also with you" back to "and with your spirit." So those who influenced our change to "and also with you" no longer use that response.

The salutation is not so much a wish, but a declaration, as there is no word "may" in the salutation. It is a proclamation of the Lord's presence in terms of a blessing, that is, a bestowal of divine gifts. The speaking and teaching of the Word of God is about to begin after the Collect of the Day. The salutation and collect are spoken in preparation for this activity. This is a divine activity through the earthly means that God has appointed.

> The "Lord" is here is not so much the Father or the Son; it is the manifestation of the Lord in the Spirit (Cf. 2 Cor 3:17), and interpretation of an OT text). The greeting is a declaration that the Spirit of God is really present. The response of the congregation is very much to the point: When the minister assures them of the presence of the Spirit who "is with them," i.e., with their spirit as Christian folk, they in turn assure him of the same divine assistance with his spirit, he having the special charisma [gifts] and standing in need of that assistance because of his prophetic work. [W.C. van Unnik. "Dominus Vobiscum: The Background of a Liturgical Formula," *Sparsa Collecta. The Collected Essays of W.C. van Unnik, part 3* (Supplements to Novum Testamentum 31) (Linden: E.J. Brill, 1983), p.382]

He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me." Luke 10:16

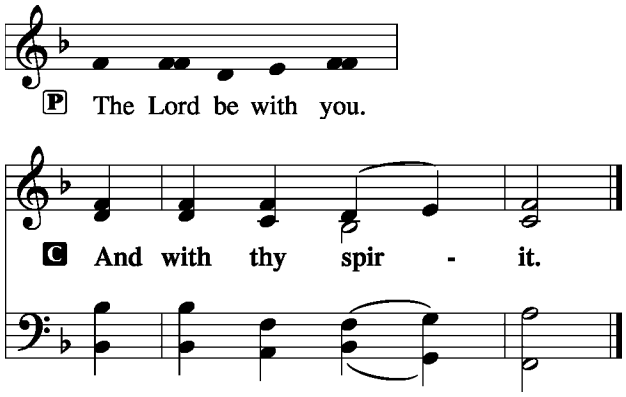
21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." 22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. John 20:21-22

To say "The Lord be with you" in this context declares the promise of the Spirit to be present fulfilling His promises and giving out His gifts through the office in the fellowship of the Church. The use of the verb "to be" is not limited to expressing only the present moment. The salutation is predicating the Spirit's presence to the hearers, the baptized. In many cases in this greeting, the word "peace" is used interchangeably with the word "Lord." When the Scriptures speak of the Lord being with someone, it most often indicates a blessing of the Holy Spirit in particular. And this comes by the hearing of the Word of God.

13 Until I come, devote yourself to the
public reading of Scripture, to
exhortation, to teaching. 14 Do not neglect
the gift you have, which was given you
by prophecy when the council of elders
laid their hands on you. 1 Timothy
4:13-14

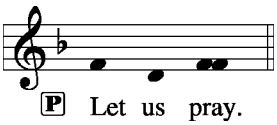
QUESTION: What is the significance of the Lord's promise to be "with" His representatives and ministers as they sense and protest in their personal weakness? What does such blessing mean also when spoken to the congregation in the salutation or a benediction? Why is it more than a wish or prayer?

a. Exodus 3:10-12 and Exodus 4:10-12
b. Joshua 1:9
c. Jeremiah 1:6-8
d. Isaiah 41:10 & 43:5
e. Acts 18:9-10
f. Matthew 28:16-20
g. Luke 1:28



THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

The collect of the day is one of the propers connected with the lectionary and church year calendar. Presently, in *Lutheran Service Book*, we have two options for lectionaries – the historic lectionary (one year) and the three year lectionary. Each has their own set of designated collects that go along with the readings, Introit and Gradual. The term "collect" (accent on first syllable in this context) refers to a "collecting" of the petitions of the congregation into one prayer. The *Kyrie* is the first prayer of the congregation and the collect of the day is the opportunity of the pastor to pray on behalf of the congregation. For this reason, the entire congregation reading a collect in unison is really contradictory. Part of the reason the collect is called such is because there the pastor exercises the priestly side of his calling in the name of the people. By definition, collects are not read corporately. Besides this, for most of the history of the church, the collects would not have been printed out for the congregation to read but were something heard and therefore were intended to be spoken by the liturgist.



While there might be some variation from this pattern on occasion, typically, a collect follows a basic pattern like what follows:

1. **Address to a Person of the Holy Trinity** – naming the particular person of the Holy Trinity to whom the prayer is addressed. This reminds us that we are not praying to a "generic God," but specifically the only true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as baptized believers in Christ.

2. **Basis/Rationale** – a promise of God in Scripture or a characteristic of God upon which the petition is grounded. This keeps the prayer grounded not in our desires or imagination but in Scripture and what God has specifically promised as well as what God has already done.

3. **Petition/Request/Thanksgiving** – the request being made upon the basis or possibly thanksgiving.

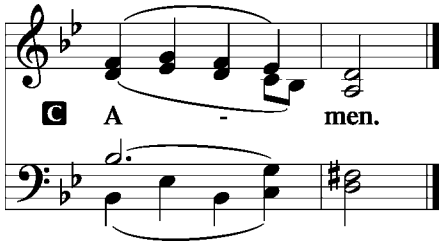
4. **Reason/Benefit** – the goal or ultimate blessing upon which the request is based. This helps keep the prayer focused upon divine priorities and not merely what we desire in a moment.

5. **Trinitarian Termination/Conclusion** – an appropriate Trinitarian doxology that is coordinated with the address to properly give praise to the three persons of the Blessed Trinity.

This pattern of the collect is a very commendable way to learn to speak one's own prayers in a structured and Scripture focused way. Using written collects for individual devotions can also be helpful in cultivating one's own prayers. One could even learn to compose prayers in writing in this pattern, very easily. If prayer is conversation, then the basis/rationale portion of the collect encourages our prayers to remain founded on God's speaking, which always comes first. Scripture is God's initiating portion of the prayer dialogue. In this way all genuine prayer is liturgical, that is, dialogical. As it says in Psalm 51, *"O Lord, open my lips; and my mouth will declare Your praise."*

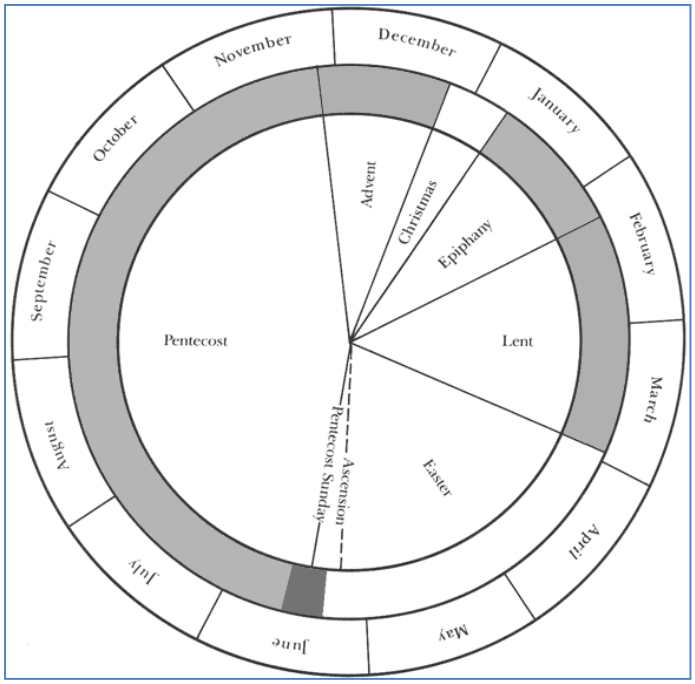
Arthur Just notes with regard to the collect:

The greeting of the pastor that announces the presence of the Lord to bless and give gifts precedes the collect: "The Lord be with you." This greeting occurs here, before the gifts are given in the Liturgy of the Word, and in the preface to the Liturgy of the Lord's Supper, where the gift given is the very body and blood of Christ. The greeting and response of the people announces the special relationship between the pastor and his flock, for as one who stands in the stead and by the command of Christ, he is the one through whom the gifts are given. The collect, following upon this pastoral greeting, is itself an intensely pastoral prayer and should be spoken by the pastor and not said in unison by the congregation. For the pastor, standing in the stead and by the command of Christ, prays in Christ on behalf of the people, presenting to the Father through the Son by the Spirit the deepest longings of God's holy people. Here is the pastor as intercessor, preparing the people of God to hear the Word of God through prayer. [Just, 197-198]



"Amen" means "so be it" and is a stamp of approval and confidence. It is related also to the Hebrew word for "truth." It is a word of the congregation and so at blessings, prayers, and such, it should not only be spoken by the pastor. Given the character of the word, Amen isn't a word that should be muttered or mumbled.

THE READINGS FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE AND LECTIONARIES



The readings from Holy Scripture follow one of two lectionaries in our Church: the one year historic lectionary or the three year lectionary. Each lectionary has its own benefits and weaknesses. The one year lectionary has the longest lineage and has many theological and liturgical resources from earlier church fathers and musicians, and it has the catechetical value of repeating the same readings year after year. It is the lectionary referenced in our Lutheran Confessions. The three year lectionary is much more recent in its development but offers the opportunity for more variety of Scripture over the course of its three year rotation. One may find both of these lectionaries in use in the LCMS. Regardless of which lectionary is used, the discipline of submitting to a lectionary helps the pastor and the church to teach the "whole counsel of God" over the course of the year, gives variety and depth to the observance of the church year calendar, and protects the congregation from the pastor merely preaching on favorite topics or themes. The pastor does have opportunity to choose which of the readings he might preach on, though the Gospel is to be normally expected as the favored reading, as is traditional. When there are midweek Advent and Lenten services there is no designated lectionary system for those services, so these take special planning (with the exception of Ash Wednesday). There are also readings provided for special major and minor festivals and other holy days and commemorations in the church year. These are usually provided in the hymnal or other companion volumes to the hymnal (altar book, lectionary books, etc.). Depending upon which lectionary is followed, certain customs and

variations in the church year may be expressed differently (for example Sundays after Trinity vs Sundays after Pentecost; a pre-Lenten season in addition to Epiphany season, etc).

QUESTION: Why might a lectionary tied to the days and seasons of the church year be helpful from Scriptural principles?

a. Matthew 28:19-20
b. Acts 20:25-27
c. 2 Timothy 1:13
d. 2 Timothy 2:15
e. 2 Timothy 3:16-17
f. 2 Timothy 4:1-5

St. Paul wrote to Pastor Timothy in I Timothy 4:13, "Until I come, devote yourself [singular] to the public reading of Scripture, to comforting, to the teaching activity." The Greek word here, reading [Ἀναγνώσει], means not simply to read quietly to one's self (or study) but reading out loud, the *public reading of Scripture*. It bespeaks the oral delivery of Holy Scripture. It is a pastoral responsibility (1 Cor. 4:1-2) and a serious consideration with regard to "how" and "by whom" (Romans 10:17). David Scaer notes the orality of Scripture:

> When Paul spoke of faith coming from hearing the Word of God (Rom 10:14), he most likely was referring to the public reading of the Scriptures (see also 1 Tm 4:13), perhaps to Matthew and Luke and some of his own epistles. Most of our New Testament was first given orally as sermons, which were transcribed into what we know as the Scriptures. So distinguishing the oral from the written word may be a distinction without a real difference. A public reading of the Scriptures in the church or elsewhere is a proclamation of the gospel able to create faith and on that account should be done with reverence and clarity. Spoken aloud or read privately, the Scriptures and discourses based on them, that is, sermons, homilies, and devotional writings, are all means of grace. [David P. Scaer. *Law and Gospel and the Means of Grace: Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics Volume VIII* (Saint Louis: The Luther Academy, 2008); p.114]

The Liturgy of the Synagogue [Just, p.68]

Invocation
"Bless the Lord who is to be blessed."
The Sanctus
(Isaiah 6 and Psalm 118 – one of the earliest hymns)
The Shema or Old Testament Creed
Deuteronomy 6:4-9: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord…."=
The Eighteen Benedictions
A series of blessings also known as the "Amidah" or the "Tefillah" [The Standing Prayer]
The Priestly Blessing or Aaronic Benediction
Numbers 6:24-26
The reading of the Word
Torah [Genesis through Deuteronomy - "the law"]
Psalm
Prophets
Psalm
[Historical Writings]
[Psalm]
Interpretation of the Word (Preaching/Teaching)
Also known as Midrash [sermon]
"Alenu leshabeah"
"We must praise [the Ruler of all]"

When we consider the Structure of the Scripture readings in the Divine Service, we have the following form, which in many ways is the mirror image of the synagogue service:

Old Testament Reading
Gradual (based on a Psalm or other passage of Scripture)
Epistle
Alleluia (and Verse)
Holy Gospel

Whereas the synagogue service would have started with the most important (foundational) reading first, in the Christian order, the Holy Gospel comes as the fulfillment and center, and therefore last. The synagogue service was looking forward with a continuity of teaching, and the New Testament order reflects a fulfillment in Christ who is among us in the Divine Service and who will appear again in glory on the Last Day. In our lectionaries, there is a often a strong prophecy-fulfillment correspondence between the Old Testament Reading and the Holy Gospel text, with the epistle serving either as commentary or as churchly application.

THE OLD TESTAMENT READING OR FIRST READING

The Old Testament Reading comes first as it is the oldest and gives the first Word of God out of which the others come in fulfillment and application of God's law and gospel. Sometimes, instead of an Old Testament Reading, a reading from the Book of Acts is provided (for instance, during the Easter season). The use of an Old Testament reading, while not always done in the history of the church, provides a connection to the fact that there is one God, who is the Triune God, and He is the God of the Old and the New Testaments. To say Jesus is Lord is not only to identify Him as God but it is also to identify Him as Yahweh, or I AM, the true God of the Old Testament as well. This use of the Old Testament also declares that God is the God of both the law and the gospel, which are both taught in both testaments, and that there is a unity of the entire Bible by virtue of the Holy Spirit serving as the ultimate author behind both the prophets and the apostles.

QUESTION: What do the following passages teach us about how we should listen to and study the Old Testament?
Read: Matthew 5:17-18; Luke 24:13-17; John 5:39

After the Old Testament Reading and the Epistle the following is said:
A This is the Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

QUESTION: Why do we say this after these readings of Holy Scripture?
Reading the following Scripture passages:
a. Romans 10:17
b. Psalm 119:41, 65, 97, 105
c. Isaiah 55:10-11
d. John 17:17
e. 2 Timothy 3:14-17
f. 2 Peter 1:16-21

THE GRADUAL

What in the world is the Gradual? The gradual is somewhat of a remnant of an earlier practice that in most places has dissipated because of changes in church architecture. Like the Introit, the Gradual was originally a time of movement in the chancel. Burnell Eckardt writes:

> The Gradual, which consists in the chanting of a psalm or part thereof, is so called because there was formerly a step, called the *gradine [or gradus]*, on which the reader stood to chant the psalm following the First Reading, or Epistle. Traditionally there have been four parts of the Mass sung by the choir: Introit, Gradual, Offertory, and Communion. Unlike the other three, the Gradual did not arise from the desire or need to fill up the time during which something was being done in the Mass, but is probably as old as the Readings themselves. The idea of interspersing a psalm or psalms with the Readings appointed for the day is a practice carried over from the synagogue. The insertion of a psalm between the Readings helps to provide a stream of faith's "language," a mind-set or "zone" of thought springing primarily from the Psalter, in the midst of which the Readings are heard. [Burnell F. Eckardt Jr. *Why? A Layman's Guide to the Liturgy.* (Malone, Texas: Repristination Press, 1998-2005), p.37]

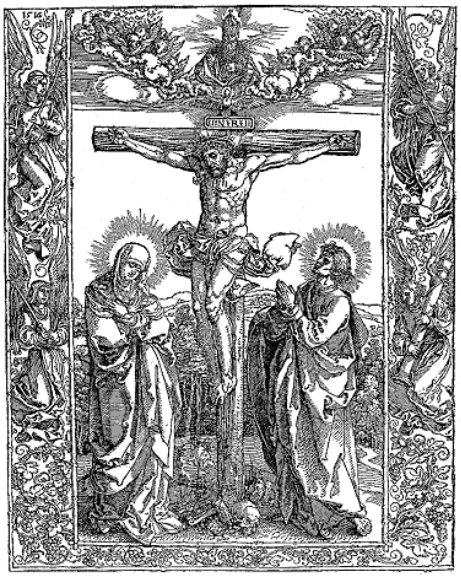
EPISTLE - Letter from an Apostle to the Church

The second reading is normally an Epistle selection from one of the letters of the Apostles (or Hebrews). The epistle selections in the lectionary are often directed toward the application of law and gospel in the life of the Church. As a technicality, the proper term here is simple "epistle" and not "epistle reading." Arthur Just comments:

> Our reading and preaching of Scripture not only resembles the practice of the ancient Church but also carries the same sense of Christ's bodily presence. Through God's Word read and proclaimed, Christ chooses to make Himself present and the reality in which we dwell is heaven itself with all its gifts. The pattern of reading is the same, with the movement of the entrance rite and the liturgy of the Word culminating in the reading of the Holy Gospel. [Just, p.204-205]

THE HOLY GOSPEL AND ITS CEREMONIES

The focal point of Scripture comes last among the three readings in the Divine Service. In that respect, while all Scripture is inspired, errorless, and the Word of God, Scripture is not "flat." All the Scriptures point to Christ and His work as Savior. This is why special ceremony is associated with the reading of the Holy Gospel text appointed for the day. Usually we sing "Alleluia" before the reading of the Holy Gospel, since "Alleluia" comes from the Hebrew language and means "Praise the LORD" or "Praise Yahweh." "Hallelujah" and "Amen" are two Hebrew words that have carried over into New Testament usage through Greek. Of course in the earliest times of the church, the congregation would have been standing for the entire service (apart from the elder, ill, or pregnant women who sat on benches), so something in addition to standing for the Gospel was called for to recognize the proclamation of Christ in His visible ministry. Just comments:



> In our congregations, we acknowledge this climactic moment [the reading of the Holy Gospel] by singing the alleluia, or what Luther called "the perpetual voice of the church," and we rise to our feet. On festival days, the climactic character of the reading of the Holy Gospel may be honored by a Gospel procession where the book of the Gospel is brought down into the midst of the people, showing how Christ abides among them in both His divine and human natures. In our ears we hear His words of grace. We greet the Gospel reading with the acclamation,

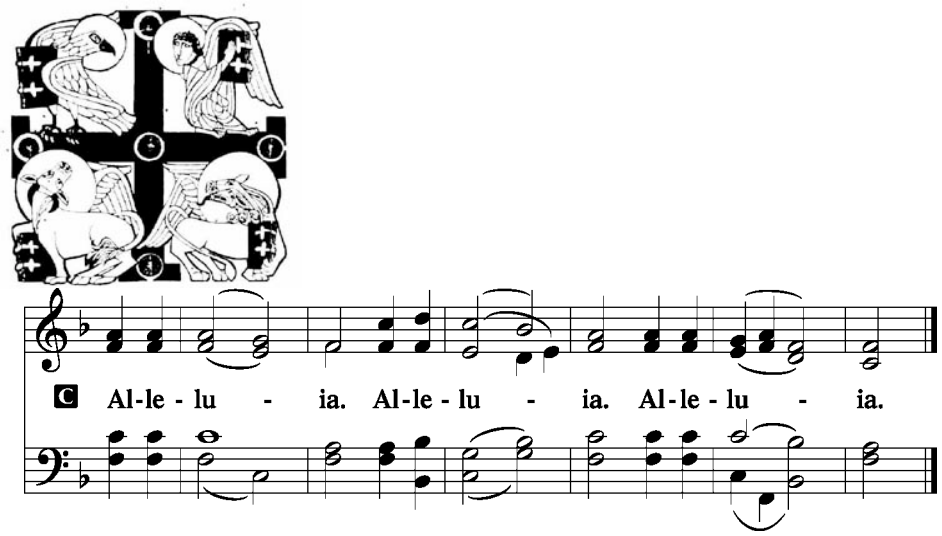
> "Glory to You, O Lord," and acknowledge its conclusion with "Praise to You, O Christ," showing once again that it is the very words of Jesus that now bring us to the highest point of worship. We would do well in our congregations to teach our children and catechumens to recognize the climactic character of the Gospel, and carry out our liturgies in such a way that the Gospel is experienced by the congregation as climactic. [Just, p.205]

In the hearing of the Gospel, we learn to confess that "Jesus Christ is Lord," and the responses before and after the reading of the Holy Gospel for the day proclaim this. First we say, "Glory to You, O Lord," and then through the hearing of the Gospel of Christ we learn to confess, "Praise to You, O Christ." Jesus is the fulfillment of Scripture and in the hearing of the Holy Gospel we are given the confession "Christ is Lord" that will be spoken soon after in the confession of the Creed either before or after the sermon (Matthew 16:13-18; Philippians 2:5-11).

When it was more universal that by custom church buildings were positioned to face East, the Holy Gospel procession represented the movement of the Gospel from Jerusalem out into the world. Now, regardless of which direction the sanctuary faces, one can say, at least, that the Holy Gospel procession is a movement of the Word of Christ into the midst of the people. Note the following description of the procession:

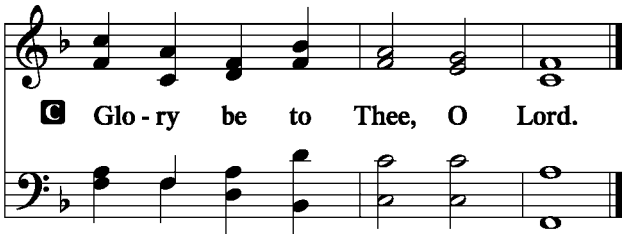
> On festivals a Gospel procession is appropriate so that the Gospel is read in the midst of the congregation. The reader should be accompanied by someone to carry and hold the book and by two torchbearers. The procession begins during the Verse; as the procession moves to the center of the nave, the people turn to face the reader as an acknowledgement of the presence of Christ in the reading. When there is a Gospel procession, an instrumental introduction in the form of a modest fanfare may introduce the singing of the first acclamation. [Philip H. Pfatteicher & Carolos R. Messerli. *Manual on the Liturgy: Lutheran Book of Worship.* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979), p.221]

QUESTION: How might the ceremony of the Gospel procession express visually what is described in these passages of Holy Scripture? See John 1:14 and Acts 1:8.



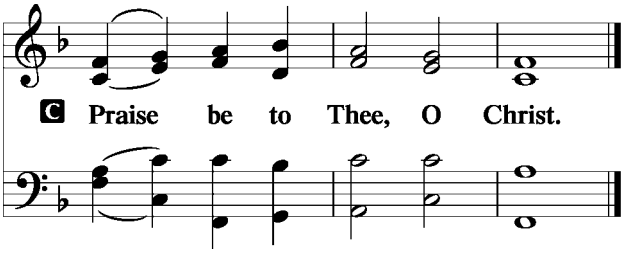
Holy Gospel

℗ The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the seventh chapter.



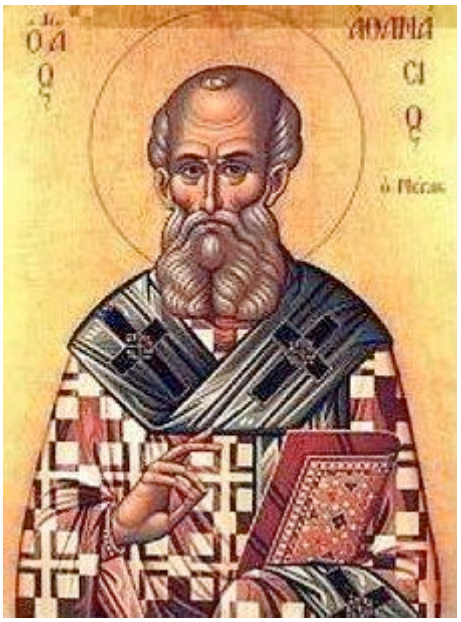
(the Holy Gospel appointed for the day is here read)

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.



THE CREED IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

Historically, the Nicene Creed is the one associated with the Liturgy of the Mass or Divine Service. The Apostles' Creed was chiefly used for instruction, especially as it is derived from the questions and answers in the baptismal liturgy. The use of the Apostles Creed with "page 5" in *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941) is exception in the grand sweep of liturgical history. "Page 5" is the Divine Service of Holy Communion with Holy Communion snipped off, as such, it is a half-way house. Matins is the true morning service without Holy Communion, but was never meant to be the main service of the church for Sunday morning, but simply was a prayer office.



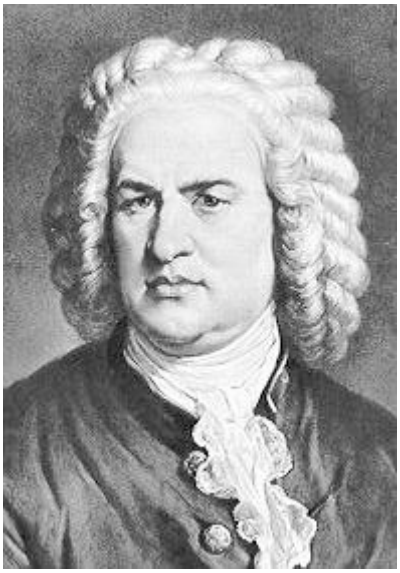
As a confession against error and an expression of unity for the faithful church, the original wording of the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed (from the Council of Nicaea in 325 and the Council of Constantinople in 381) was "We believe" and the Apostles' Creed, since it was the baptismal creed, was worded, "I believe." Therefore, for the celebration of the Divine Service in the fellowship of the congregation, the Nicene Creed is the natural one to be used, especially since this is the gathering for Word and Sacrament.

The inclusion of the Creed in the liturgy took place for the purpose of guarding against errors on the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and the two natures in Christ. The continuing confession of the Creed serves to teach and remind the congregation of the right biblical understanding on these matters and to identify the congregation as one which holds to this truth. The creed is spoken after the readings of Holy Scripture to give voice to the church to confess what she has received and believed from the Word of God, whether before or after the sermon.

In some settings of the Mass [Divine Service], the Creed is confessed before the Sermon, and in others, it comes after the Sermon. In the former case, where the Creed comes before the Sermon, we express the conviction that the Sermon should be rooted in the Gospel as we have confessed it, and that it should not deviate from this faith. In the latter case, however, where the Creed comes after the sermon, this former conviction is simply assumed to be the case, which, by some reckoning, actually makes the conviction a stronger one. At the same time another conviction is implied, namely, that the Gospel when it is preached is as much the Gospel as when it is heard in the Readings. In either case, to confess the Creed immediately upon hearing the Word is to imply that faith comes by hearing, that is, to acknowledge the power of the Word to create the faith we confess. [Eckardt, p.38]

QUESTION: Why is it important that the church's universal Creeds be used rather than a self-written "confession of faith" or personal statement of belief? See Matthew 16:1-18; 2 Timothy 1:13-14; Jude 3; 2 Thess. 2:15; 2 Peter 1:16-21

HYMN OF THE DAY



Hymns in the historic usage of the Christian church and in the traditional usage of the Lutheran Church are not the same as in other Christian denominations. In the Lutheran Church sermons are "sung sermons" in many ways, an application of the Word of God, neither simply a quotation of the Bible nor a mere expression of sentiment. In this sense, as much as hymns give joyful praise and thanks to God (doxology), they are also catechetical (instruction) and expressions of prayer and reverence. The Hymn of the Day is the hymn in the context of the liturgy that is most tied to the particular readings for the day and the theme of the sermon, not only the season in the Church Year. Gregory Wismar notes:

From the earliest decades of the Reformation era, specifically chosen hymns sung by the congregation were incorporated into the standard order of worship used in Germany and later throughout Northern Europe in Lutheran congregations. In the *Deutsche Messe* (German Mass) of 1526, Martin Luther provided for the singing of a hymn by the congregation in the place of the Gradual, which had customarily been sung by the choir between the reading of the Epistle and the Holy Gospel. Over time, this Gradual Hymn became known by a variety of titles, such as the *de tempore hymn* (hymn of the day) or the *Hauptlied* (principal hymn) for the service. A specific list of hymns appropriate to a given sequence of appointed readings, usually chosen to complement the theme of the Gospel for the day, was chosen and ultimately standardized to a great extent for use among the first Lutherans. Although the custom of a specific Hymn of the Day fell into disuse in Lutheran churches for an extended period of time, the tradition was revived in the middle of the twentieth century, first in Germany and then a few years later in the United States as new worship books were adopted by Lutheran church bodies. [Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. *Lutheran Service Book: Hymn Selection Guide.* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), p.4]

SERMON OR HOMILY

The sermon or homily (same thing) is a proclamation of the Word of God in terms of God's law and gospel. It acknowledges that the power of the sermon is in its faithfulness to the Word of God, whose proclamation is powerful unto salvation (Romans 1:16). A faithful sermon should be regarded as God's Word derived from Scripture. This is why the sermon should not be simply thought of as "the pastor's message" as it is

sometimes called. This thought goes along with the reasons why pastors wear vestments because they are serving "in the stead and by the command" of Christ, especially in the liturgical context. This is true in the pronouncement of absolution, the proclamation of the Word, the administration of the Lord's Supper, and even in the sacrificial aspects of the liturgy. They do not represent themselves but serve in an office.

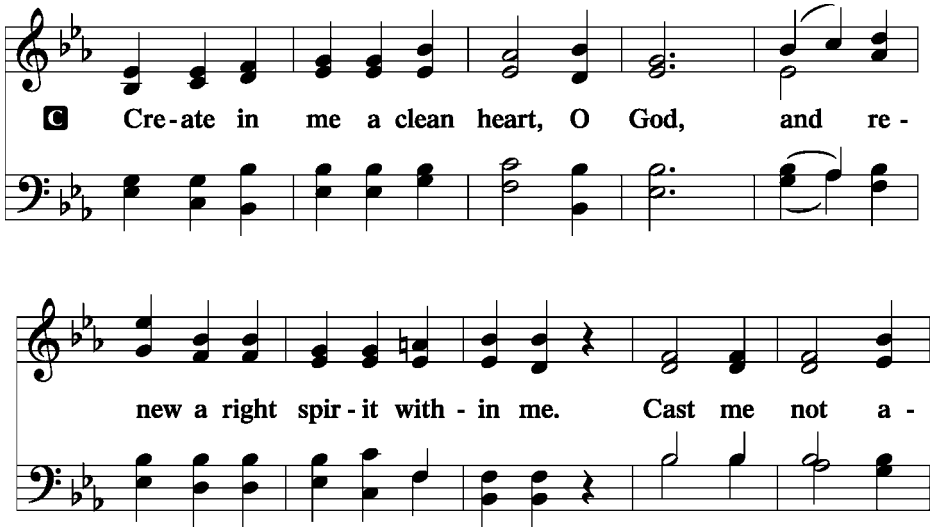
QUESTION: What do the following passages tell us about the nature of the preaching of the Word?

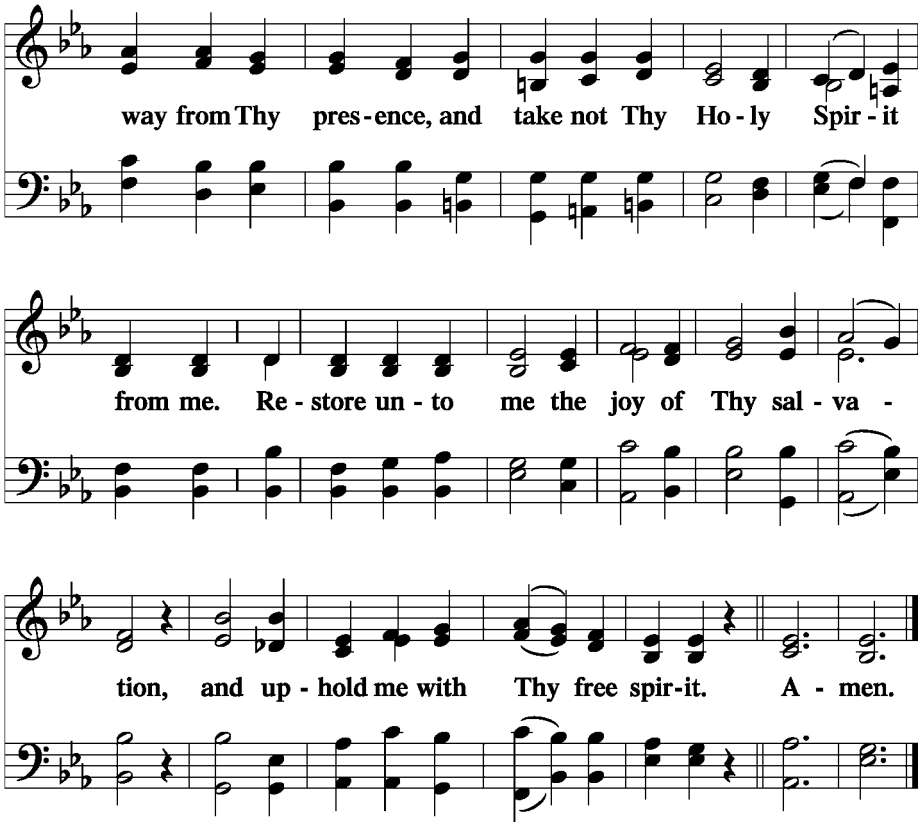
a. **1 Timothy 4:13-16**
b. **2 Timothy 2:15**
c. **2 Timothy 3:14-17**
d. **2 Timothy 4:1-5**
e. **Romans 10:14-17**
f. **Luke 10:16**
g. **Hebrews 13:17**

P The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. [Philippians 4:7]
C **Amen.**

OFFERING AND OFFERTORY

Between the various settings of the Divine Service there is a little variation in the order after the sermon until the Service of the Sacrament. But following the Creed and the sermon there follows the offering, Offertory, and the Prayer of the Church or General Prayers. These are sacrificial elements in the liturgy, responses to the grace of God received in His Word. In the early church, this time in the service was only for the communicants, others such as visitors, catechumens, those under discipline were dismissed with a "little benediction" after the sermon.





In earlier centuries of the church, the altar was not set up with the communion elements ahead of time before the liturgy, but rather the elements were brought in procession to the altar at the singing of the Offertory. Bread and wine were prepared locally for the Divine Service and so the bread was fresh from week to week. In the earliest centuries the setting of the altar for the Lord's Supper was very simple, especially when the congregation met in a house. In the time of legalized Christianity the ceremony at this point was much more elaborate. Typically a Psalm was chanted during this time of movement or procession to the altar. In our rites, we typically make use of Psalm 51 ("Create in me…") or Psalm 116 ("What shall I render to the Lord…").

The procession of the sacramental elements and the singing of an appropriate Psalm were also accompanied by the presentation of gifts of thanksgiving (offerings). Just notes:

> The bringing forward of the bread and wine is part of the sacrificial part of the liturgy where we offer our gifts to God, including our tithes and offerings. These gifts are given in response to the hearing of the very words of Jesus in the Gospel and are given in thanksgiving for the gift about to be received in the Lord's Supper, as we give back to the Lord what He has given us, acknowledging that we are unable to "outgive" the Lord. The people of God respond by bringing forward their gifts with the bread and wine as the table is set for the meal. The offering of our gifts for the extension of God's kingdom begins with the gifts of bread and wine that will be used as the means by which we will receive the very body and blood of Christ. [Just, pp.209-210]

Reed also notes on the early church usage of the offering:

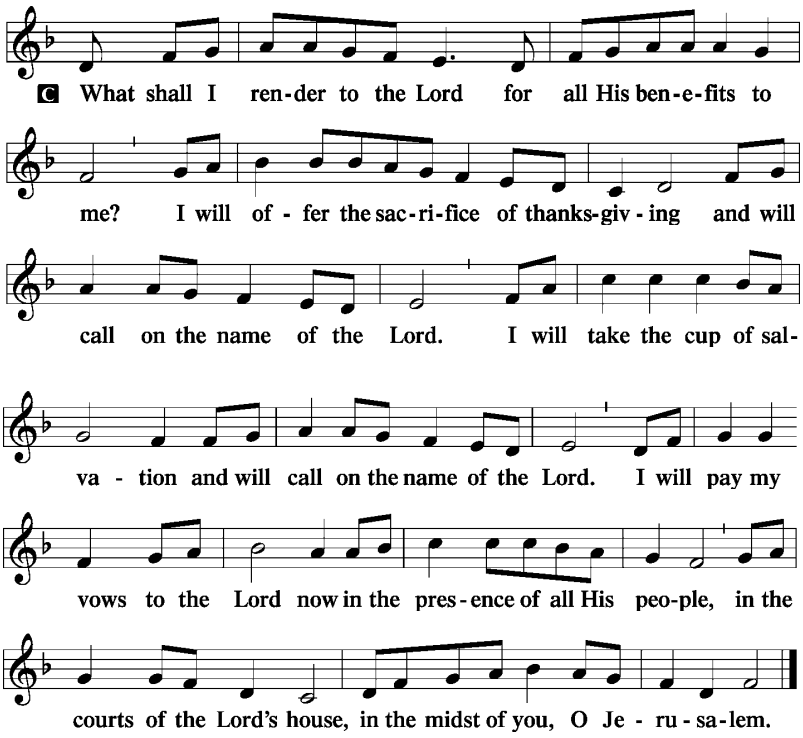
> In the primitive church at this point in the Service the people brought food and other gifts for the poor and for the support of the clergy. They came in an offertory procession and placed their gifts on a table (prothesis) near the altar. [Reed, p.311]

The prothesis (*Προθησις]* or credence table is a small side table that is placed near the wall on the epistle (liturgical south) side of the sanctuary (to the right of the altar, facing the front). It serves as an auxiliary table

for the vessels for Holy Communion. It is not commonly used in Lutheran churches. Sometimes this is called an offertory table. The collection of alms (funds and material items such as food or clothing) for the needy also may customarily take place during the offertory. In Christian usage, the giving of alms is firstly done for those of the congregation in need, and if resources allow, for others. This follows the principle of St. Paul: *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.* (Galatians 6:10)

QUESTION: What is the purpose of thank-offerings presented to God in the liturgy?

a. Acts 2:44-45
b. Galatians 6:6-7
c. 1 Corinthians 9:14
d. 1 Corinthians 16:2-3
e. 2 Corinthians 8:1-9
f. 2 Corinthians 9:5-13
g. Acts 6:1-7
h. 1 Timothy 6:17-19



With all this said regarding the offertory we should also be mindful of taking such elements as the main thing or to make them into things that merit God's favor. The Lutheran Reformation was particular cautious in the usage of the offertory. John T. Pless notes:

> The church's liturgical practice should not obscure the gift character of God's Word and sacraments. These are not the pious actions of men, but the very gifts of God that give and bestow the forgiveness won at Calvary. Thus confessional Lutherans will reject the anthropological understanding of ceremonial that sees the liturgy as ritual reenactment, representation, or remembrance of "salvation history." Jesus Christ is our servant and liturgist in the Divine Service as he bestows the fruits of his death and resurrection by means of Word and Sacrament. Faith, not participation in ritual action, is the key to a proper understanding of the place of ceremonies in the liturgy. Ceremonies serve the rite (i.e., the liturgical texts) in tutoring the worshiper in a faith

that is reverent and receptive in the presence of the Lord, who is in the midst of the congregation as its servant. [Precht, p.229]

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH OR GENERAL PRAYERS

The Prayer of the Church is the key intercessory prayer of the congregation, in communion with the whole church, that is offered after the hearing the Word of God proclaimed. God has spoken to us and now the Church replies on behalf of "the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs."

QUESTION: What guidance do the Scriptures give us on the practice of these general prayers of the congregation?

a. 1 Timothy 2:1-6
b. Acts 2:42
c. Ephesians 1:15-23
d. Revelation 8:3-5
e. Psalm 141:1-2
f. Mark 13:33
g. Acts 4:29
h. Romans 12:9-16
i. Ephesians 6:17-19
j. Philippians 4:6-7
k. James 5:16
l. 1 Peter 4:7
m. 1 John 5:14-15

There are two forms that may be followed in this regard:

Liturgist: Lord in your mercy, **Congregation: Hear our prayer.**
Or
Liturgist: Let us pray to the Lord. **Congregation: Lord, have mercy.**

This way of petition and response follows the pattern of the Litany. The Litany or the Bidding Prayer might also be used for intercession at this point in the liturgy. Prayer requests submitted ahead of time or in an orderly way during the Divine Service can be incorporated as pastor and congregation join in their responsive work as members of the royal priesthood of the baptized (1 Peter 2). Kenneth Korby describes the Christ-centered life of prayer in the Church:

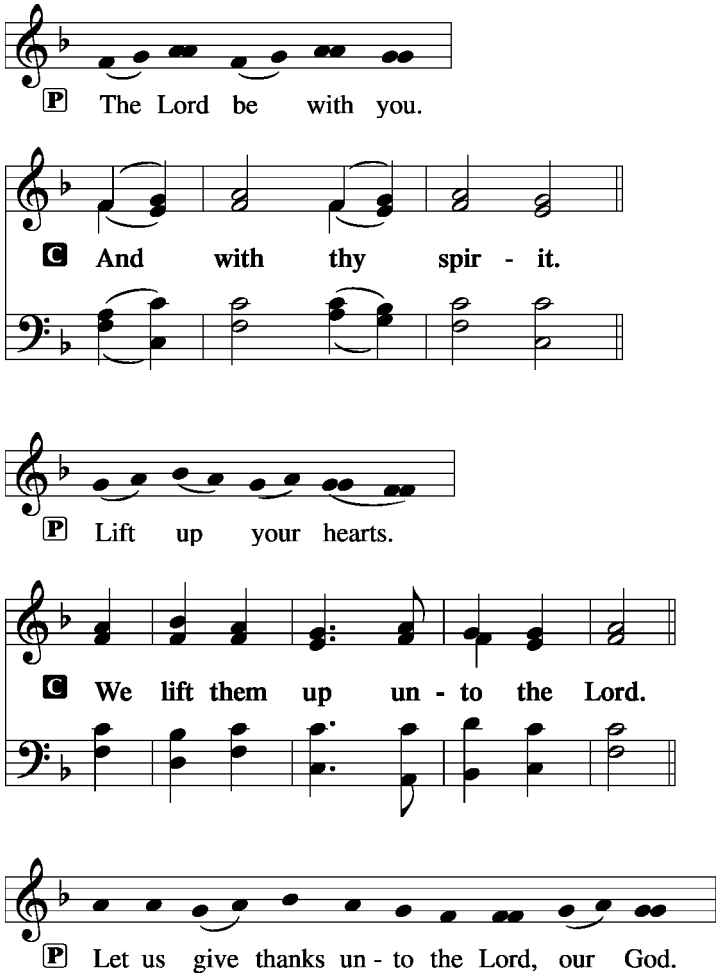
> Liturgical prayer originates with the faithful reception of the *leitourgos*-intercessor Jesus Christ. As Savior he comes to serve; faith is to be served by him, and thus united with him in the great exchange he effects. As Priest he prayers on our behalf; to be united with him is to be made a priestly people in the reciprocity of praying with him. Jesus Christ is not a priest for himself, but for the glory of the Father's will to grace us with the blessing of eternal life. Believing is receiving this life, living only on him. Hence, as priestly people, we are not priests for ourselves. The formation of the inner man in prayer is the formation of an intercessor in union with the Intercessor. Whether in private or public such prayer is in community. It is "churchly" in that we are called into fellowship with Jesus Christ and through him with the Church. [Kenneth F. Korby. "Prayer: Pre-Reformation to the Present" in *Christians at Prayer*. Edited by John Gallen. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), p.131]

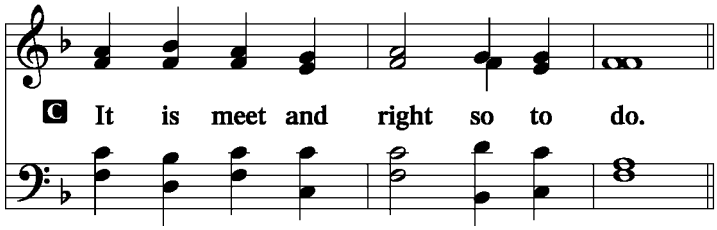
Korby also notes how prayer is involved in the life of repentance and faith, while also in the fellowship of the congregation and the whole Christian Church:

> We are called to care for one another and for mankind. We are not called, even in our public prayers, to care simply for ourselves in each other's presence. The formation of this community of priestly people must be set in time, space, and work. Those who live from the perfected work of God, caring for their lives in fellowship and loving each other, must learn to care for the holiness of life in time, space, and work. God swears by himself to bless us utterly through Jesus Christ, as the promised Word was enfleshed and done for us in time and space in this Jesus. To live in fellowship with the faithful God is to trust him to be true, not a liar. All the other quests for bless and happiness, all other foundations for surety and meaning, must be crucified that they may be raised in holiness. To pray in faith is to pray from the answer to the questions, which if left unanswered, destroy our lives because they are the idols of our own desires and the enemy of God. [Gallen, p.131]

SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT

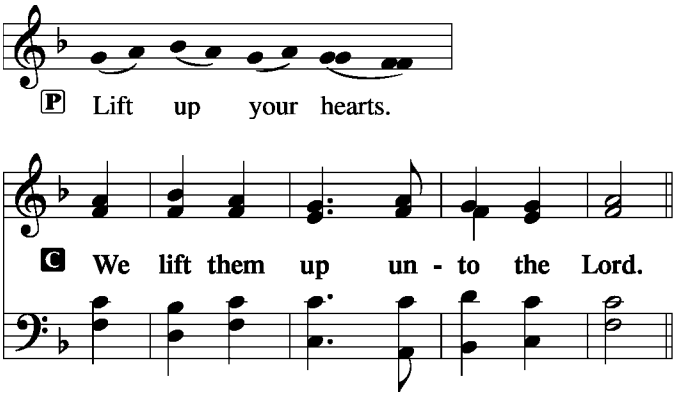
THE PREFACE



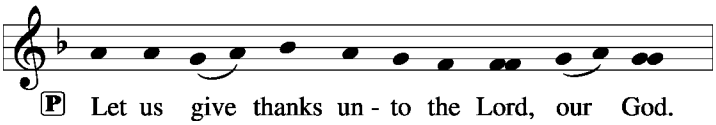


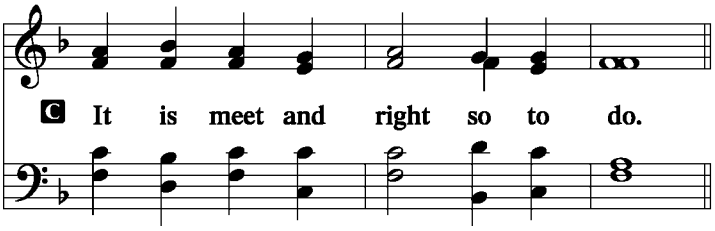
The Preface dialogue is one of the oldest parts of the liturgy. The Preface introduces the Service of the Lord's Supper and leads into the Proper Preface, a seasonal prayer of thanksgiving that forms a bridge to the Sanctus. Arthur Just describes the meaning of the Preface dialogue chant:

> The Preface is one of the oldest parts of the liturgy, and could have been used by the apostles. We have already observed how the pastoral salutation, "The Lord be with you," preceded the Liturgy of the Word. Now the same greeting begins the Liturgy of the Lord's Supper. The pastor says, "Lift up your hearts," calling us to lift them up into heaven with Christ and all the company of heaven, which is exactly what we do when we enter into this holy meal. "We lift them to the Lord," we exclaim, for the Preface teaches us that the Lord's Supper is a joining together of heaven and earth in one great liturgy. "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God," proclaims the celebrant, for the Church throughout the ages gives thanks to God for the divine gifts of grace which flow to us from the sacrificial life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. "It is right to give Him thanks and praise," we respond, and so our Lord's Supper begins with Eucharistic joy, for all thanksgiving and praise come from the joy of our union with Christ." [Just, pp. 211-212]



BIBLICAL BASIS: Lamentations 3:41; Colossians 3:1





BIBLICAL BASIS: Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29; Psalm 136

THE PROPER PREFACE – Hebrews 12:22-24; Revelation 7:9-17; Ephesians 5:20; Psalm 103:22

The Proper Preface is a seasonal prayer of thanksgiving that flows from the Preface into the Sanctus. The roots of offering thanksgiving before God's meal go back to the customs of the Passover. The Altar Book provides various seasonal versions of the Proper Preface that accent the particular themes of each festival and season.

P It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who on this day overcame death and the grave and by His glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

As the Lord gave thanks before the meals He celebrated and in the feeding of the 4,000 and the 5,000 plus, and as the Lord gave thanks in instituting the Sacrament of the Altar, so we give thanks in preparation for administering the Lord's body and blood. In so doing, the Proper Preface also recognizes the time so as to confess that it is always meet (fitting or proper) and right to give thanks to the Lord. As we noted in the section on the Lutheran Reformation and the reforms of the Mass, here is one of the places where we see a trimming back of undue growth of the liturgy toward not only the sacrificial but also the works-righteous. The Roman Mass here saw the growth of the Canon of the Mass (called the Eucharistic Prayer in modern times). This prayer also included the Words of Institution and turned their direction around from being a gift of blessing over the bread and wine and to the congregation, into an offering of priest and people to God.

Here we must maintain the clear distinction between law and gospel especially in the context of the liturgy. There is a distinction between what we do and what God does, between His speaking and ours. Note the observation of Kenneth Korby in this regard:

> Prayer that is this kind of conversation must distinguish between God's Word and man's word. To confuse those words mistakes the desires, longings, and aspirations of religion's "I" with the Word of God. Such confusion leads to an acoustical illusion: what we hear is the echo of our own utterances. What happens, for example, to the great emphasis that Holy Communion, Eucharist, is our prayer and offering to God? We may be only victims of imprecise language. If the entire worship service, in which the Lord's Body and Blood are received, is meant, that service includes proclamation, the word of forgiveness of sins, as well as praise, thanksgiving, prayer, and intercession. But what of the heart of that service, the words of our Lord's final will and testament, the heart of the Good News, where our living Lord gives us his very Body and Blood for the forgiveness of sins? Is that the word of the faithful to God? Real confusion has been inserted if the cry of the faithful to the Lord cannot be distinguished from the faithful promises of the Lord to us. Our prayer life is in trouble if we cannot make that

distinction. And the distinction is not the basis for precluding union between God and man; rather, the distinction is the basis for a genuine union of wills and lives. [Kenneth F. Korby. "Prayer: Pre-Reformation to the Present" in Christians at Prayer. Edited by John Gallen. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), p.132]

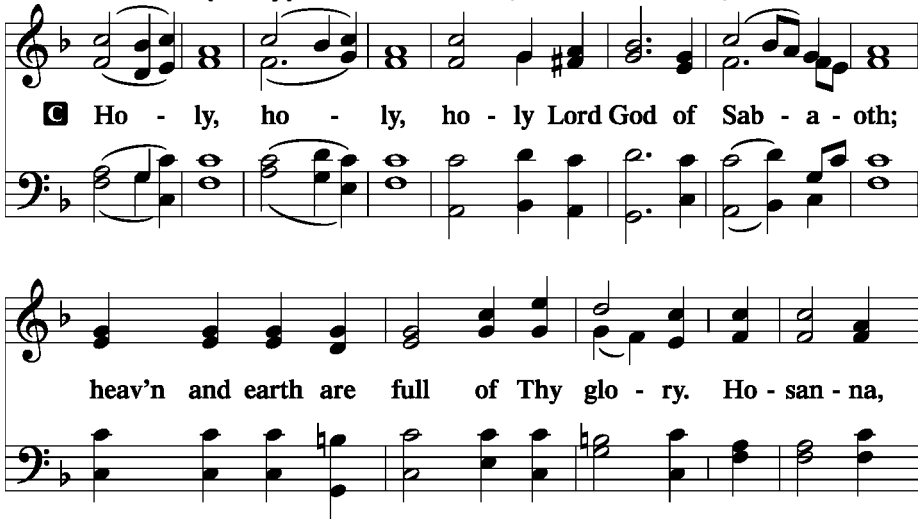
The confession of justification by grace through faith or the distinction between God's law and gospel in the liturgical context becomes critical at this juncture in the order of the Divine Service because the nature of the Lord's Supper is in play. Is the Lord's Supper something we do for God or is it His gift to us, something God is doing? Because of these concerns, the historic tradition of the Lutheran Church would left them separate and examine the content of the prayer carefully so that it does not refer to the Lord's Supper as our sacrifice to God to pay for sins. This is a point in liturgical practice where traditionally Lutherans will differ from other liturgical churches or denominations, like the Roman Catholic, Anglican/Episcopal and Eastern Orthodox. The Gospel is held most clearly where the Words of our Lord are not placed into a prayer of thanksgiving but are kept distinct. The Words of Institution (consecration) are Jesus' words to us and blessing of the bread and wine, not our words to the Father. Early Lutheran father, Martin Chemnitz, in his *Examination of the Council of Trent*, notes an important distinction in this regard:

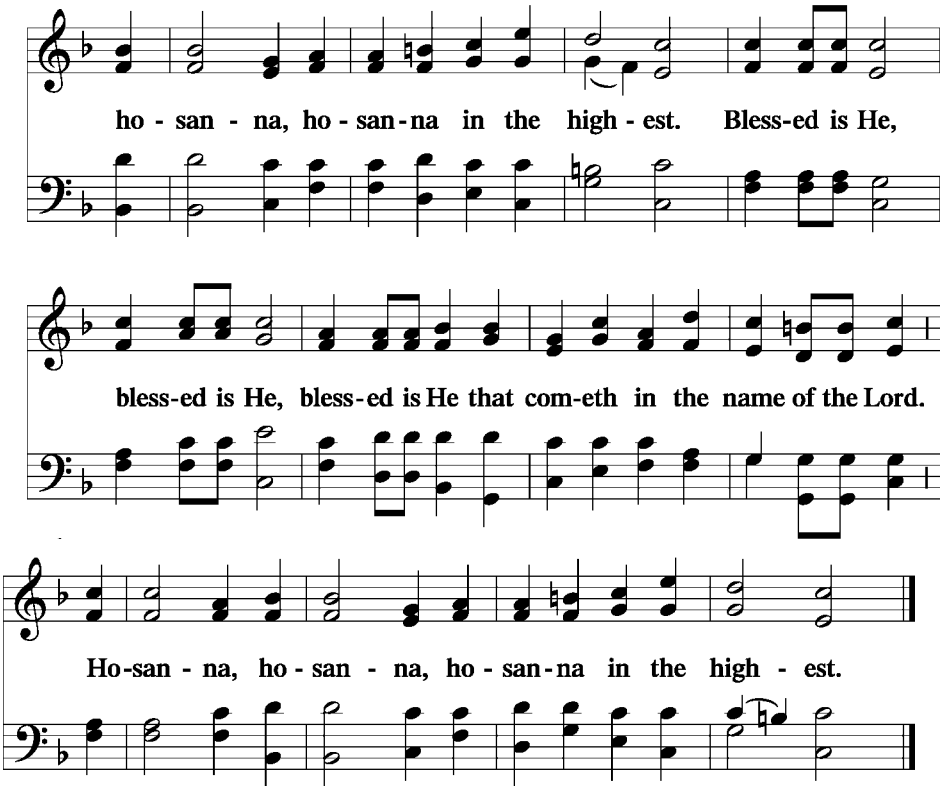
> And surely this blessing or consecration is not to be divided between the Word of God and words handed down by men. For it is not just any word, but the Word of God, which is necessary for a sacrament. And to the Word of God, seeing it has been tried with fire, nothing is to be added (Prov. 30:6). And especially, nothing is to be added to the testament of the Son of God (Gal. 3:15-27). In short, Christ has commanded us to do in the action of the sacrament what He Himself did. He did not, however, perform a mute action, but spoke. And what He said is reported to us in Scripture, as much as the Holy Spirit judged to be necessary for us [*Examination of the Council of Trent: Volume II*, p.226].

Some years earlier, Luther had also stated quite clearly regarding the purpose of the Words of Institution:

> This word is the whole gospel. You will observe and understand that it says nothing about a sacrifice or a good work but about a present and a gift, which Christ offers and gives to us, and which we should receive and with faith appropriate and hold fast. He tells you to take and keep, and would you make an offering of it and give it away? How can you say to God: "I will give You your word"? Neither can you say to another person: "I am offering God his Word on your behalf." On the contrary, you should say: "Dear Lord, since you say that you freely give it to me, I receive it with gratitude and joy." [Martin Luther. *Luther's Works – American Edition* - "The Adoration of the Sacrament" (AE:36; pp.288,289)]

THE SANCTUS (Holy) – Isaiah 6:1-7; Revelation 4; Matthew 21:1-11; John 12:12-19





The *Sanctus* is also among the more ancient elements of the liturgy, with roots in the Old Testament and the prayer life of the Hebrews. *Sanctus* is Latin for "holy." The Sanctus is actually made up of two songs – one from Isaiah 6 and the other from Matthew's account of Palm Sunday. The combination of these two songs from Scripture in the context of the Lord's Supper is particularly profound. The *Sanctus* is one of the most awe-inspiring songs of the Divine Service order. The glory of the vision in Isaiah with the seraphim combined with the humble procession of joy on Palm Sunday catechize the congregation week after week in the joining together of heaven and earth in the Divine Service, especially in the Lord's Supper. In many ways the *Sanctus* provides a counterpart to the Gloria in Excelsis in the two main sections of the Divine Service.

In the text of the *Sanctus* we clearly have some important biblical words. Holiness is from God alone and anything else that is called holy outside of God is so on a derived basis from Him. "Sabaoth" (not "Sabbath") in some translations of the Sanctus means "hosts" or "armies" of the heavenly angels. Hosanna is a Hebrew word (see Psalm 118:25-26) that means "save us now." It is a word that we associate with the beginning of Holy Week with its use at Palm Sunday. Luther Reed notes in his book *The Lutheran Liturgy*:

> The earliest church fathers refer to the Sanctus, and it is found in various forms in the earliest liturgies. It probably originated in North Africa about A.D. 200, with the Benedictus added in Syria at the beginning of the fifth century. The frequent use of Isaiah 6:2-3 in Jewish rituals, particularly in the *Kedushah* (Sanctification) of the daily synagogue service, may have influenced this addition to the Christian liturgy. [Reed, p.331]

In *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice*, Charles Evanson also notes:

The liturgical text of the Sanctus is built on the opening verses of Isaiah 6, adding "God" to "Lord," "heaven" to the reference to earth, and the festal "Hosanna in the highest." The Benedictus is Ps. 118:26, by which we greet the Lord who comes to us in his body and blood. This Scripture passage was retained in Lutheran liturgies but was omitted in Reformed churches, which rejected the doctrine of the bodily presence of Christ in consecrated bread and wine. As late as the beginning of the 17th century, the Roman book of episcopal ceremonial placed the Benedictus after the consecration, emphasizing its relationship to the consecration. Similarly, Luther's Latin service put both Sanctus and Benedictus after the consecration with the elevation of the consecrated Sacrament at the Benedictus. Luther does the same with the elevation in the German service, paraphrasing the Latin Sanctus in his German hymn, "Isaiah mighty seer". [Precht, pp.422-423]

QUESTION: How does the text of the Sanctus/Benedictus confess the doctrine of the bodily presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper? How does it inspire and teach reverence?

With respect to reverence and ceremonial, Arthur Just makes the following observation:

Luther permitted the singing of the Sanctus during the consecration with the elevation occurring during the Benedictus. Luther's concession shows that for him the Sanctus affirms his belief in the bodily presence of Jesus at the Lord's Supper, though the traditional placement of it as the conclusion to the Preface/Proper Preface is preferred. Along with the elevation during the Benedictus in Luther's rite there would be the ringing of the bells and genuflection.

From the beginning, Lutherans have observed the practice of bowing during the Sanctus and making the sign of the cross at the Benedictus, though this custom has fallen out of use in most Lutheran churches today. We bow at the holy, bodily presence of Christ crucified and risen, present for us, for the forgiveness of our sins, for our salvation. We make the sign of the cross to acknowledge that we are baptized, that this same crucified and risen Christ dwells in us bodily by Baptism and faith, and that only because He is holy and gives that holiness to us bodily are we now called holy. This was and is one of the most sacred and reverent moments in the liturgy and Christians have always acknowledged, both with their minds and bodies, such moments of high sanctity. To bow and make the sign of the cross is to simply express with our whole beings both the reality of Christ's indwelling presence, and the single most important fact about us; we are baptized. [Just, pp.217-218]

On the principle that what we believe is to shape what we practice and how we worship, and the reverse, namely, that the way we worship will positively or negative influence what we believe, the following observation of Just is also notable, especially when we see such liturgical changes among some Lutherans:

> The association of the Sanctus with the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper caused some churches in the Protestant communion to drop it from the liturgy, including some Anglicans. This was especially true of the Benedictus. Lutherans, however, have remained steadfastly attached to the Sanctus as an affirmation of Christ's bodily presence in the Sacrament. [Just, p.218]

QUESTION: How can liturgical changes be either a sign of liturgical renewal or theological degradation or false teaching? Could a lack of reverence indicate a loss of adherence to sound teaching?

We also note the clear statement of the Lutheran Confessions in the Formula of Concord-Solid Declaration:

> FC SD VII.126 – We reject and condemn … the teaching that the elements (the visible forms of the blessed bread and wine) are to be adored. **Of course, no one except an Arian heretic can or will deny that Christ himself, true God and man, who is truly and essentially present in the Supper when it is rightly used, should be adored in spirit and in truth in all places but especially where his community is assembled.** *[Emphasis added]*

THE USE OF THE LORD'S PRAYER IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

Depending upon which setting of the Divine Service is used, at this point one may encounter the Lord's Prayer or the Our Father (Latin: *Pater Noster*), or a prayer of thanksgiving (distinct from the Words of Institution). Arthur Just observes:

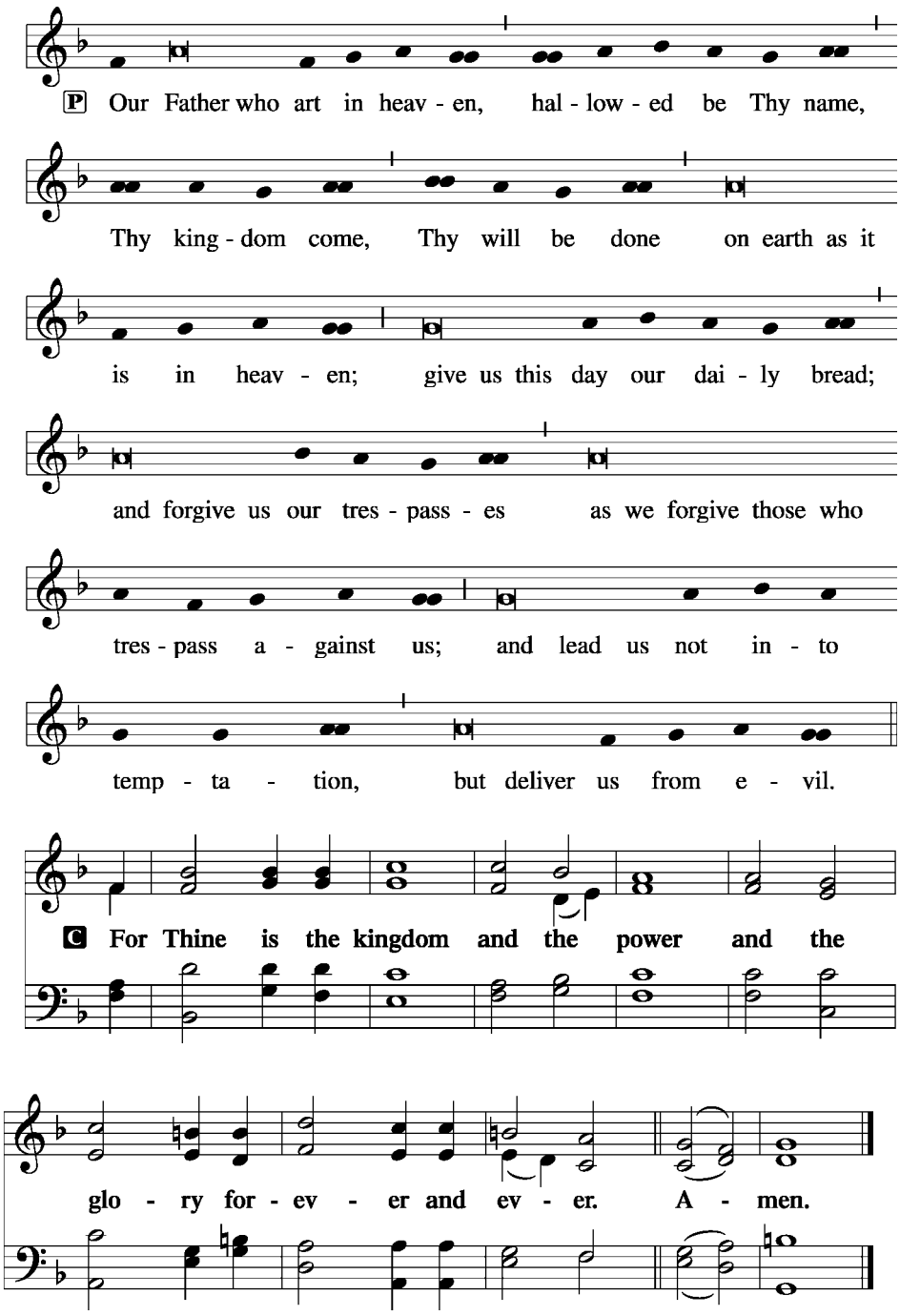
> The Lord's Prayer has always been associated with the Liturgy of the Lord's Supper and precedes the eucharistic prayer. Since it only occurs here in the Divine Service, it was a prayer that only the baptized prayed, with catechumens first learning to pray it during their final preparations for Baptism. In the ancient Church, the Lord's Prayer followed the eucharistic prayer as a summary of that prayer in the words that Jesus taught His disciples to pray. [Just, p.218]

Not only was the Lord's Prayer associated with the celebration of the Lord's Supper, but there is patristic testimony from the early church to suggest that no other prayers were said in proximity to the Words of Institution, other than the Lord's Prayer. St. Gregory the Great writes in Epistle XII to John, Bishop of Syracuse, a passage also cited by Chemnitz in his Examination of the Council of Trent and by Friedrich Lochner, a theologian and scholar of the early Missouri Synod in his book, *Der Hauptgottesdienst*:

> [I]t was the custom of the apostles to consecrate the host oblation to that same prayer only. And it seemed to me very unsuitable that we should say over the oblation a prayer which a scholastic had composed, and should not say the very prayer which our Redeemer composed over His body and blood [*A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: Volume XIII.* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989); p.9].

Citing Gregory the Great, the Lutheran father, Martin Chemnitz, asserts more than once that the Apostles celebrated the Lord's Supper with the Lord's Prayer and the Words of Institution alone. This practice is not surprising especially considering the analysis of Josef Jungmann, in his book, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, that the purpose and function of the Our Father in the Mass is eucharistic, that is giving thanks [*The Mass of the Roman Rite: Volume II*; p278f].

Of course, notable when comparing Divine Service: Setting Three in *Lutheran Service Book* with the other orders of the Divine Service is the fact that the Lord's Prayer is sung, with the doxology being sung by the congregation, and the main part of the Lord's Prayer sung by the pastor.



Commenting on the exceptional use of the Lord's Prayer in this setting of the Divine Service, Burnell Eckardt notes:

> …an ancient and venerable custom elevates [the Lord's Prayer's] significance during the Mass, by providing a rubric that has the celebrant alone chanting or saying these words aloud, while the congregation prays them silently. This distinguishes the Mass from the prayer offices of Matins and Vespers, which have the congregation saying all the words of the Lord's Prayer together. The custom provides a special adornment for this prayer at a time when it is used in connection with the Sacrament, a connection which can be discerned quickly by virtue of the celebrant's chanting or saying also the Verba (the Words of Institution) in immediate proximity, either following or preceding. [Eckardt, p.45]

Prayer of Thanksgiving *LSB 161*

℗ Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

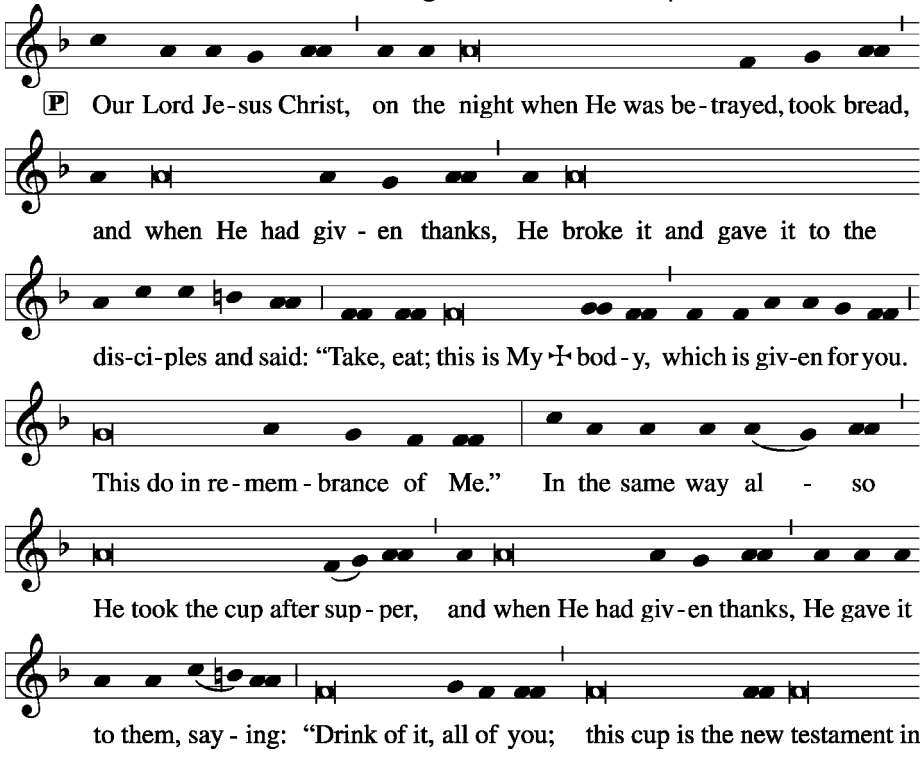
℗ As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. [1 Corinthians 11:26]

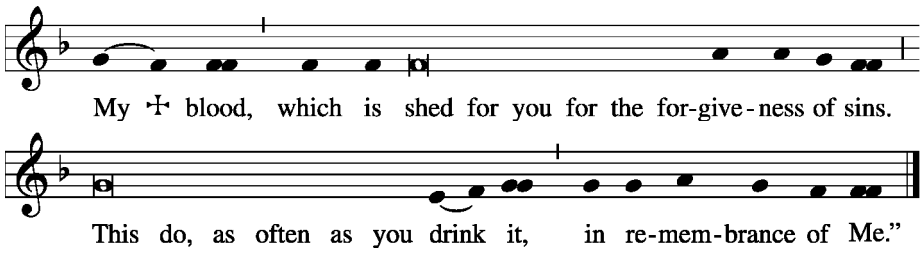
C **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!** [Revelation 22:20]

℗ O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment…

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION (Consecration of the Sacrament)

The Words of Institution are the foundation of the Sacrament of the Altar. Without these words there is no sacrament. Therefore they are given due prominence and reverence within the celebration of the Divine Service. These are words from Jesus to us over the bread and wine to give us the gifts promised in these words. Even when spoken by the mouth of the pastor we understand that these words are spoken by Jesus. The pastor serves as spokesman, representative and ambassador "in the stead and by the command" of Christ in the administration of the Holy Supper of Christ's very body and blood. As we are familiar with them, the Words of Institution as a conflation of Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; and 1 Corinthians 11:23-25. A conflation is used to give the fullest Scriptural account of what the Lord said in the Upper Room.





Note the statement of our Formula of Concord regarding the liturgical use of these words (FC-SD VII.79-82):

Now, in the administration of the Holy Supper **the words of institution are to be publicly spoken or sung before the congregation distinctly and clearly, and should in no way be omitted** [and this for very many and the most important reasons. 80] First,] in order that obedience may be rendered to the command of Christ: This do [that therefore should not be omitted which Christ Himself did in the Holy Supper], 81] and [secondly] that the faith of the hearers concerning the nature and fruit of this Sacrament (concerning the presence of the body and blood of Christ, concerning the forgiveness of sins, and all benefits which have been purchased by the death and shedding of the blood of Christ, and are bestowed upon us in Christ's testament) may be excited, strengthened, and confirmed by Christ's Word, 82] and [besides] that the elements of bread and wine may be consecrated or blessed for this holy use, in order that the body and blood of Christ may therewith be administered to us to be eaten and to be drunk, as Paul declares [1 Cor. 10:16]: The cup of blessing which we bless, which indeed occurs in no other way than through the repetition and recitation of the words of institution. [Emphasis added]

These words are not something that may be safely tinkered with out of a sense of "creativity" or boredom or keeping the congregation interested in some new thing (novelty). Note the warning of Martin Luther in that regard:

> When the pastor celebrates mass diligently, note this difference: Insofar as he observes the institution of Christ and also administers the sacrament to others, be assured that Christ's body and blood are certainly there on account of Christ's ordinance and not on account of the pastor's work or holiness. Insofar, however, as he does not observe the ordinance and intention of Christ but changes and perverts them, it is not necessary for you to believe that it is Christ's body and blood. [Martin Luther. *Luther's Works – American Edition*, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper" (AE:37; p.184)]

Here also, lay celebrations of the Lord's Supper are not condoned by Luther, even in some difficult situations.

> And what must the Christians do who are held captive in Turkey? They cannot receive the sacrament and have to be content with their faith and desire which they have for the sacrament and the ordinance of Christ, just as those who die before baptism are nevertheless saved by their faith and desire for baptism. What did the children of Israel do in Babylon when they were unable to have public worship at Jerusalem except in faith and in sincere desire and longing? Therefore, even if the church would have been robbed completely of the sacrament by the pope, still, because the ordinance of Christ remained in their hearts with faith and desire, it would nevertheless have been preserved thereby, as indeed now in our time there are many who outwardly do without the sacrament for they are not willing to honor and strengthen the pope's abomination under one kind. For Christ's ordinance and faith are two works of God which are capable of doing anything. ["The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests" (AE:38; p.207)]

Luther's teaching here in 1533 is consistent with *Augsburg Confession* XIV (1530), that no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the sacraments unless he be *rite vocatus* (or *ordentlicher beruf*). This is a position which belongs to the mature Luther. So in the Formula of Concord's denial that, "No man's word or

work, be it the merit or speaking of the minister," brings about the real presence is not to deny that the body and blood are, "distributed through our ministry and office" (cf. *FC-SD*, VII.74-77). Chemnitz states clearly that, "it is with those who are legitimately chosen and called by God through the church, therefore with the ministers to whom the use or administration of the ministry of the Word and the sacraments has been committed" [*Examination of the Council of Trent: Volume II*, p.97]. The office is not the source of the authority but the means by which Christ serves His people in the Lord's Supper, the Divine Service. They have His authority in the mandates He has given the holy office. Thus we may point to *Apology* XXIV, under the discussion of the term "Mass," where the liturgy is identified with "the public ministry." Even if the "emergency" case is cited from the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, it must be pointed out that this emergency only mentions Baptism and Absolution and not the Holy Supper. C.F.W. Walther, the first president of the Missouri Synod also writes:
writes:

> The great majority of our theologians, Luther in the forefront, believe that the holy Supper should never be administered privately by one who is not in the public preaching office, by a layman. That is partly because no such necessity can occur with the holy Supper, as with Baptism and Absolution, that would justify a departure from God's ordinance (I Cor 4:1; Romans 10:15; Heb 5:4); partly because the holy Supper "is a public confession and so should have a public minister"; partly because schisms can easily be brought about by such private Communion…. [C.F.W. Walther. *Pastoral Theology*. Trans. John M. Drickamer. (New Haven: Lutheran News Inc, 1995); p.134]

And so, we apply this to the doctrine and practice of the Lord's Supper. The further one departs from the institution of Christ, the more doubt creeps into the picture and consequently the certainty and foundation of faith begins to fall away. Nothing can be more certain than that which is done according to the mandate and institution of Christ. This is true also in regard to other changes to the clear institution of the Lord's Supper. That the blessed bread is the holy body and the blessed wine is the holy blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, can only be ascribed to the word, command, and institution of Christ and not to our personal faith. It would be true, regardless of *whether we believed or not.* It is due to the powerful Word of Christ. When celebrated according to what is entailed in the Lord's command "this do", it is the effective Word of our Lord that brings this miracle about. With this said, we must not take the words to be "magic" in the occult sense that we can substitute any or "similar" earthly elements we want in place of the bread and grape wine, say the words, and still have the real presence. That would not be true or reliable. In fact, it would be an abuse of the sacrament and contradict the clear command of Christ. Again, it is not our personal faith, nor simply saying the words over any element that has the promise and blessing of Christ that it be His body and blood. The pastor does not have the ability or authority to change the elements (I Cor. 4:1-2). As St. Paul says in I Corinthians 11 about the Holy Supper: "That which I *received* from the Lord I also delivered unto you…". The Lord attached His Word and promise to a particular way of observing this sacrament. What is used in the sacraments is a doctrinal matter, not simply a matter of convenience. Since the Lord's Supper is not merely symbolic, what we use in the Lord's Supper is not merely a case of using something that resembles wine or even resembles blood. It is a matter of faithfully carrying out the institution of the Lord Jesus. While acknowledging that there may be some circumstances in which an individual may have a physical difficulty with alcohol, there are

better and worse ways to pastorally work with this situation. If we are to deal with these situations pastorally, then we must deal with them in such a way as to respond compassionately to the physical health situation of the individual communicant, but also be theologically faithful to a biblical and confessional understanding of the Lord's Supper. The Word comes to the element Christ designated, and it becomes the sacrament.

We recall the strong words of Luther in *the Large Catechism*:

> It is the Word (I say) which makes and distinguishes this Sacrament, so that it is not mere bread and wine, but is, and is called, the body and blood of Christ. For it is said: *Accedat verbum ad elementum, et fit sacramentum*. If the Word be joined to the element, it becomes a Sacrament. This saying of St. Augustine is so properly and so well put that he has scarcely said anything better. The Word must make a Sacrament of the element, else it remains a mere element. 11] Now, it is not the word or ordinance of a prince or emperor, but of the sublime Majesty, at whose feet all creatures should fall, and affirm it is as He says, and accept it with all reverence, fear, and humility.
>
> 
>
> 12] With this Word you can strengthen your conscience and say: If a hundred thousand devils, together with all fanatics, should rush forward, crying, How can bread and wine be the body and blood of Christ? etc., I know that all spirits and scholars together are not as wise as is the Divine Majesty in His little finger. 13] Now here stands the Word of Christ: *Take, eat; this is My body; Drink ye all of it; this is the new testament in My blood*, etc. Here we abide, and would like to see those who will constitute themselves His masters, and make it different from what He has spoken. It is true, indeed, that if you take away the Word or regard it without the words, you have nothing but mere bread and wine. 14] But if the words remain with them, as they shall and must, then, in virtue of the same, it is truly the body and blood of Christ. For as the lips of Christ say and speak, so it is, as He can never lie or deceive.

A FEW POINTS ABOUT "INDIVIDUAL CUPS" FOR THOUGHT

1. Individual cups are a relatively new phenomenon. They were imported into Lutheran usage from non-Lutheran churches who do not confess that the sacrament is Christ's body and blood.
2. The institution of the sacrament is clear in using "the cup."
3. Christ our Lord knew of germs and diseases when instituting the sacrament with one cup. He is the Lord God in the flesh and our Savior. He did not intend harm by instituting the sacrament with one cup. We confess the faith by asserting that this gift, when used in faith, is not to our harm.
4. Scientifically speaking, the combination of alcohol, air exposure, and precious metal greatly mitigate any concern about things contagious. One is more likely to catch a germ from a handshake.
5. The only Scriptural account of someone being harmed from the Holy Supper is not from a chalice (common cup) but from "not discerning the Lord's body" (I Corinthians 11).
6. The practice involved with the common cup or chalice better and more easily confesses visually and otherwise a belief in the real presence of Christ's body and blood, than does the use of individual cups, especially disposable ones. The use of the chalice also better emphasizes unity and fellowship.
7. The practice of the chalice also better expresses fidelity and continuity with the church of past ages, including our Lutheran forefathers. Martin Luther restored the chalice to the people when the Roman Catholic Church had removed it to the usage of only the clergy. The use of individual cups represents a move away from this reform of Luther.
8. With all this said, the use of the individual cup does not negate the real presence of Christ's body and blood. Individual cups might be used carefully as an exception where needed with pastoral oversight and discretion. When used, in order to confess what we believe, it is strongly preferable that disposable cups be avoided and that they also are cleaned reverently.

A FEW OTHER POINTS REGARDING THE CONSECRATION AND FITTING PRACTICE

1. In earlier times of Lutheran history, it was not uncommon for the congregation to reverently kneel at their pew for the chanting of the Words of Institution. Kneelers in the pews are not uncommon in Lutheran churches in many places.
2. If in the celebration of the Lord's Supper there is a shortage of consecrated elements, the respective element may be brought to the altar, but short be consecrated with the appropriate portion of the Words of Institution before distributing to the communicants.
3. The sign of the cross in the consecration is not necessary but is often used as a visual indication of the particular elements being consecrated via the words of Jesus.
4. Where there is a freestanding altar the pastor will be standing behind the altar facing the people for the Words of Institution, if not at an earlier point in the Service of the Sacrament (very often at the Preface).
5. Spills and dropped hosts (the blessed bread that is the body of Christ) are to be dealt with in a way that confesses what we believe, teach, and confess regarding the Lord's Supper. The conduct and work of the altar guild also follow the same principles.

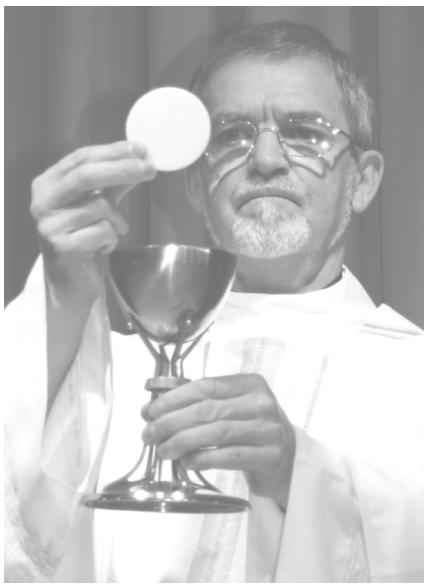
Our understanding of the Formula of Concord-Solid Declaration, Article VII.75 is:

> For the true and almighty words of Jesus Christ which He spoke at the first institution were efficacious not only at the first Supper, but they endure, are valid, operate, and are still efficacious [their force, power, and efficacy endure and avail even to the present], so that **in all places where the Supper is celebrated according to the institution of Christ, and His words are used, the body and blood of Christ are *truly present, distributed, and received,*** because of the power and efficacy of the words which Christ spoke at the first Supper. For where His institution is observed and His words are spoken over the bread and cup [wine], and the consecrated bread and cup [wine] are distributed, Christ Himself, through the spoken words, is still efficacious by virtue of the first institution, through His word, which He wishes to be there repeated. *[Emphasis added]*

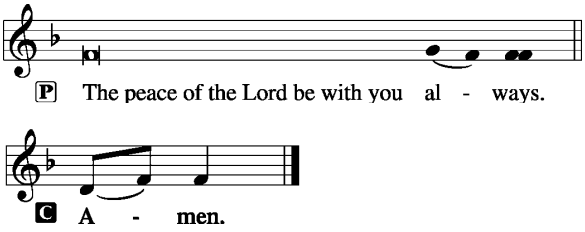
THE PAX DOMINI (The Peace of the Lord - John 20:19-20)

Pax Domini is Latin for "Peace of the Lord." The text of the blessing after the consecration of the Lord's Supper comes from the Easter evening account of the Lord appearing to His Apostles in the enclosed room. The crucified and risen Lord shows His wounds to them and says, "Peace be with you." This is a proclamation of the victory and peace that comes in Christ's death and His resurrection from the grave. He is truly alive and bodily raised from the dead. Death no longer has dominion over Him. This same Lord comes to us in His crucified, risen, ascended, and glorified body and blood in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to bestow forgiveness of sins and eternal life. The *Pax Domini* proclaims this comforting truth.

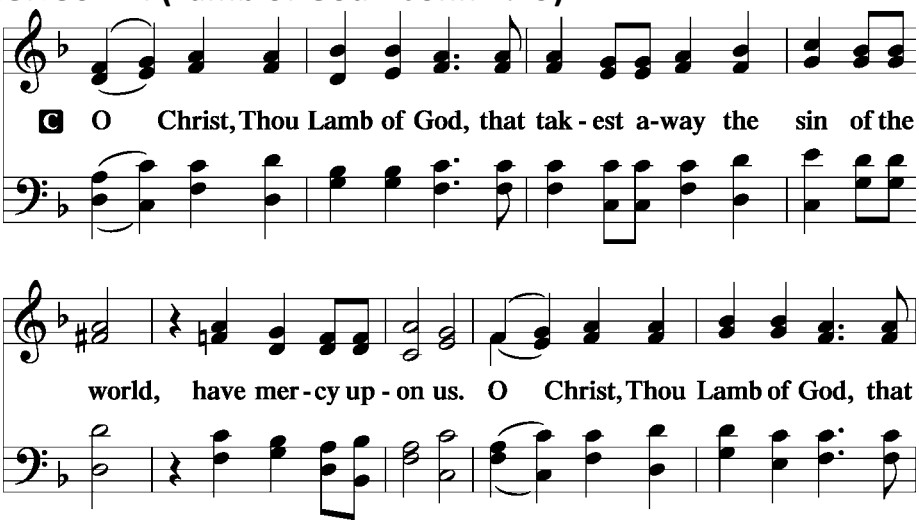
To proclaim this truth of Christ's resurrection applied to us visually, it is appropriate for the celebrant (pastor) to hold forth the chalice of Christ's blood with a consecrated host (Christ's body) before the congregation while speaking these words. This proclaims the very present giving of the Lord's peace as we eat and drink of His body and blood at the altar. Martin Luther strongly saw *the Pax Domini* as, "a public absolution of the sins of the communicants, the true voice of the Gospel announcing the forgiveness of sins, and therefore the single most worthy preparation for the Lord's Table, as faith holds itself to these words as coming from the mouth of Christ Himself" (*Luther's Works, AE* 53:28-29).

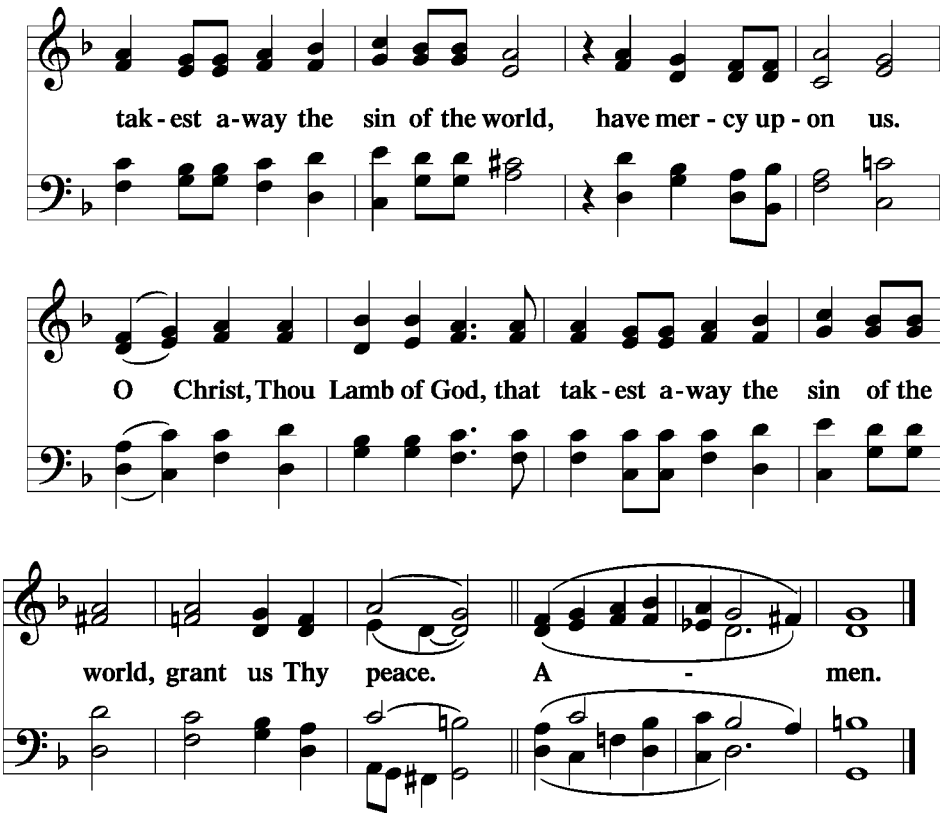


Contrary to the practice that became common in some hymnals, the appropriate customary response to the *Pax Domini* is "Amen" rather than "and also with you." This is because the *Pax Domini* is a blessing, not a personal wish from the pastor. It is a declaration of the Gospel to the church through the office.



AGNUS DEI (Lamb of God – John 1:29)





The *Agnus Dei* began as a Communion Hymn and became a regular part of the Divine Service. Its derivation from the proclamation of John the Baptist, especially as it is used in the liturgical context, makes it a clear proclamation of the real presence of Christ's body and blood on the altar: "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" Because of this its use has been rejected where the confession of Christ's body and blood in the Supper is denied. Charles Evanson notes:

> The Agnus Dei was first introduced into the service by Pope Sergius I (d. 701) to cover the action of breaking the bread into as many pieces as were needed for the Communion. Originally it was sung for as long as required. By the 12th century the use of small hosts had been introduced and the original use of the Agnus Dei no longer obtained. The hymn was not dropped, but the pattern was set as a threefold repetition, the first two verses ending with the prayer, "Have mercy," and the last with "Grant us peace." The wording of the body of the hymn is taken from the Words of John the Baptist in John 1:29, except that "sin" (Peccatum) is used in place of "sins" (peccata). The Agnus Dei serves as a hymn of adoration to the Savior Christ who is present for us in his body and blood. It is for this reason that the hymn did not survive in the liturgies of Reformed churches, which refused to affirm the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the sacramental elements. [Precht, p.430]

Luther D. Reed also observes:

> In the Lutheran conception the Agnus is closely connected with the distribution and has a strongly sacramental interpretation. It is not so much a renewed confession of sin as a means of spiritual communion with the Christ who is directly addressed, not the Father. The text contains a threefold confession of Christ's vicarious atonement in fulfillment of prophecy (Isa. 53:7, 12; 1 Pet. 1:19-20), and a prayer for the mercy and peace which his death on the cross has won for us (Eph. 2:13-17). Its address reverently recognizes Christ as the Savior of the

world. Its petitions embrace all the blessings which his sacrificial death has procured for believers. The reference to Christ as a lamb recalls to the worshiper not only the sacrificial character of his death, but also his freedom from guilt, his patience and gentleness, and his voluntary submission to sufferings and death. Thus, reception of the elements in the Holy Communion is intimately connected with our Lord's sacrifice on Calvary and its fruits, which are forgiveness and peace. [Reed, pp.368-369]

QUESTION: How does the singing of the *Agnus Dei* at this point in the Divine Service confess our belief in the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the bread and wine?

THE DISTRIBUTION OF OUR LORD'S BODY AND BLOOD

After the singing of the *Agnus Dei* is when customarily congregations will begin the distribution of the Lord's holy body and blood to the communicants of the congregation. We note that the distribution words (or distribution formula) is not the same as the Words of Institution (not simply a quotation), but a proclamation to the communicant of what is being received and its benefits. Charles Evanson makes this observation:

> The communing of the ministers and congregation begins during the Angus Dei or as the Agnus Dei concludes. For most of Christian history the presiding minister has communed himself rather than receiving it from an assisting minister or neglecting his own need to commune. This practice continued during the Reformation. The warning against self-communion in the Smalcald Articles does not refer to the presiding minister's communing himself together with the people in the public service, but is directed against the practice by which priests would commune themselves as a devotional act privately and apart from the congregation. [Precht, pp.430-431]

In *Altar Book* for *Lutheran Service Book*, the following rubric is given for all five of the Divine Service settings:

> The pastor and those who assist him receive the body and blood of Christ first, the presiding minister communing himself and his assistants. Then they distribute the body and blood to those who come to receive… [*LSB Altar Book*, pages 168, 207, 249, 270, 285].

Likewise, Martin Luther's *Formula Missae* [Luther's Latin Mass] (1523) notes: "Then, while the Agnus Dei is sung, let him [the liturgist] communicate, first himself and then the people" [*Luther's Works American Edition,* volume 53, p.29]. Luther Reed, in his book, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, states:

> Self-communion of the minister has always been an open question in Lutheran liturgics. Luther himself approved it and repeatedly defended it (*deinde communicet tum sese, tum populum* [Formula Missae (Luther's Latin Mass)]). It is quite certain that for a generation or two this liturgical action, which belongs to the integrity of the rite, was usual in Lutheran services. Later when liturgical knowledge and feeling had declined, dogmatic Biblicism and pietistic subjectivism brought about its disuse. The dogmaticians, however, generally allow it, though advising that if another minister be present he should administer it to the officiant. The Schmalkald Articles forbid self-communion only when this involves reception apart from the congregation (Part II, Art. II). Chemnitz says the minister includes himself in the confession and absolution and he may include himself in the Communion. [Reed, p.372]

As pointed out above, the "private mass" (*winkelmesse*) that Lutherans condemn is not the pastor communing himself in the midst of the regular Divine Service of the congregation. The "private mass" that is condemned is a mass or Divine Service where no one communes or where only the pastor communes *without* the

congregation. Unheard of until the latter half the twentieth century was communion of pastors by those who were not called and ordained. This is why the circuit "*Winkel*" (which means "corner" or "private") conference was instituted during the time of Pietism where pastors would commune among each other. While upholding Augsburg Confession, Article XIV, the sad fact was that during Pietism those pastors did not want to be seen communing, lest the congregation think the pastor had sins! But honoring Augsburg Confession, Article XIV and having the pastor commune with the congregation is the most evangelical and biblically faithful. Of course, if there is more than one pastor present, it is certainly fitting for them to commune each other, but it is still not necessary for it to be that way.

It is simply distinguishing between the person of the pastor as baptized and forgiven sinner vs. the office that he holds by call and ordination. It is not a matter of the pastor thinking he is "too good" to be communed by someone else. That isn't the question. The question is: "to whom is this task given by the Lord?" (If he thought he had no sin, why would he desire to commune and so receive the forgiveness of sins?) If one upholds a confessional understanding of the duties of the pastoral office in regard to administering the Lord's Supper, and if it is still asserted that the pastor could not commune himself, then one is left with the also untenable position of the pastor communing only at pastors' conferences (and only among other pastors!). We confess in our Augsburg Confession, Article XIV that, *"no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments unless he be regularly called" [Latin rite vocatus/German ordentlicher beruf].* When an elder or deacon assists the pastor in the general distribution to the congregation, he does that as an extension (auxiliary) of the pastor for the sake of the rest of the people and for good order. In conclusion, it is certainly proper and well within orthodox Lutheran practice (and historic Christianity) for the pastor, in distinguishing his person and office, to commune himself in the midst of the congregation in the Divine Service. So the pastor also benefits from the sermon and absolution he speaks within the congregation – his individual person benefits from the ministry of the pastoral office for the church.

OTHER FACETS OF THE DISTRIBUTION

Arthur Just notes regarding the distribution:

> The host is placed either in the right hand as it is supported by the left one (the more ancient custom) or in the mouth, depending on the preference of the communicant. The pastor announces the simple reality: "the body of Christ, given for you." The common cup is to be preferred. (For the sake of avoiding spillage it is probably best for the communicant to assist in the reception of the blood of Christ.) Here the words "the blood of Christ, shed for you" state with clarity and directness exactly what is received. When the distribution is over, the pastor dismisses the congregation by announcing the reality of what they have received: "The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. Depart in peace." [Just, p.232]

Oftentimes one finds the custom of making the sign of the cross with the reception of each element at the altar and again at the dismissal. After the words depart in peace it is customary for the communicant to say "Amen." It is also customary among Lutherans in times past for the communicant to say "amen" at the distribution of each element before it is put in the hand or to the mouth. This is a confession of the real presence of Christ's body and blood. The usual posture for receiving Holy Communion, historically speaking, is either standing or kneeling. Of course, one may sit if medical necessity requires it, but either standing or kneeling is the most appropriate, all things being equal. Of course, among the apostles, while they still celebrated the Supper in the context of a larger meal, they reclined at table. We, however, do not celebrate the Sacrament in that context.

Luther Reed also notes with regard to the distribution:

> In the early centuries the minister placed the bread in the communicant's hand. Tertullian in the second century and Cyril of Jerusalem in the fourth century testify to this. The latter describes the communicants as "making the left hand a throne for the right, and hollowing the palm of the right to receive the Body of Christ." Medieval practice required the priest to place the wafer directly on the communicant's tongue. This was to guard against breaking off particles of bread, and also to make impossible the practice to which the first English Prayer Book refers when it speaks of some of superstitiously "conveyed the same secretly away." […] The Lutheran church has generally retained the late Western custom of receiving the bread directly in the mouth. [Reed, p.376]

Pastor David Kind also comments on the method of receiving the Lord's body in communion:

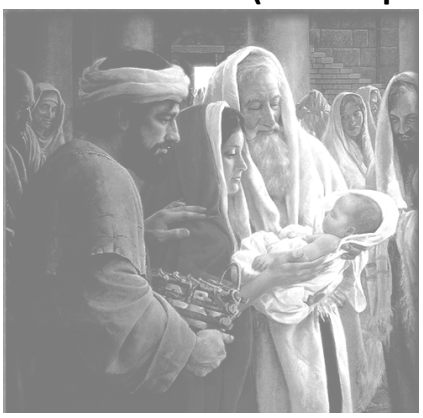
> The host is then received into the mouth, a mode of reception rooted in medieval practice that both emphasizes the total gift character of the Sacrament and allows for the least chance of mishandling our Lord's holy Body. Those not wishing to receive directly into the mouth, may receive the Host into the hands, which should be held in such a way as to form a cruciform "throne" for the Body of Christ: one hand crossed over the other, palms up. Once received into the "throne" the Host should be immediately transferred into the mouth with as little handling as possible. [Kind, p.44]

It is also customary among Lutherans to return to one's pew and pray after receiving the body and blood of Christ. In many places Lutherans will kneel or stand at the pew before sitting and returning to singing the distribution (communion) hymns. Our hymnal provides prayers for communicants after they have received the Blessed Sacrament. Charles Evanson notes:

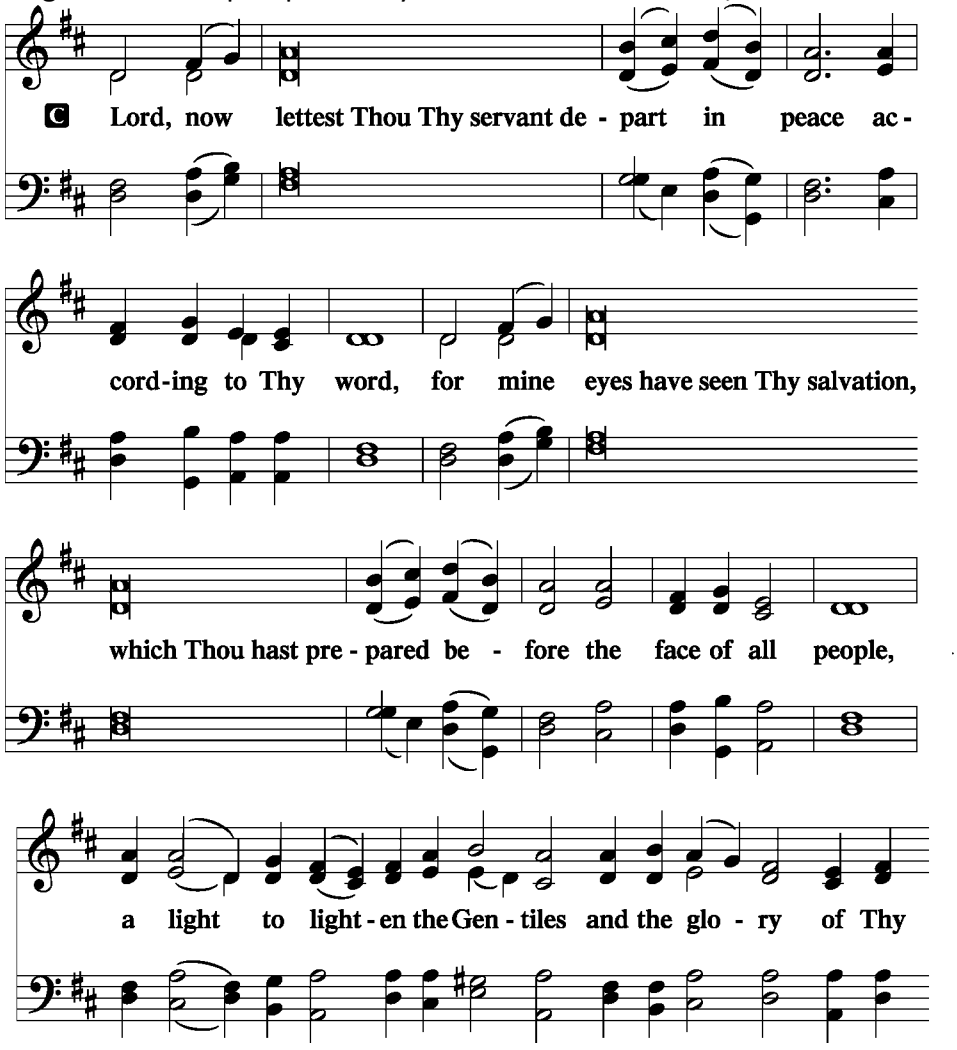
> Personal prayer at Communion is most appropriate, but the earliest sacramentaries contain no particular prayers. In fact, the sacramentaries characteristically end their treatment of the Mass at the Agnus Dei, apparently with the understanding that the service will be concluded as quickly as possible after that. [Precht, p.431]

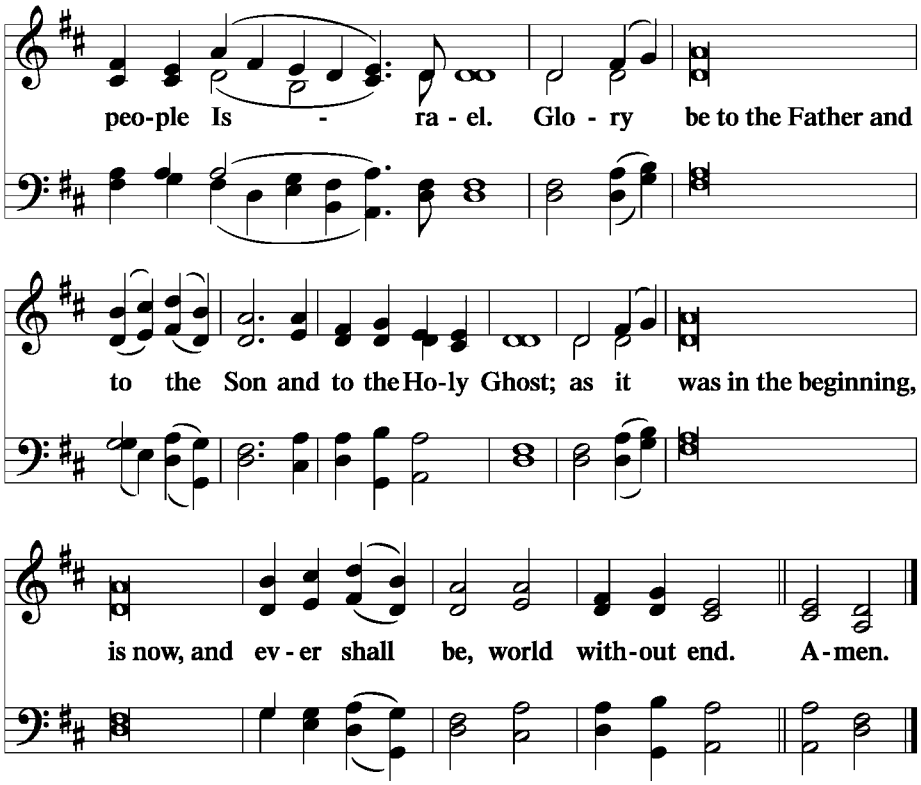
Generally speaking, personal prayers after communion should be of a character of gratitude for the gift just received and of seeking the Lord's continued blessing and help to remain steadfast in faith and a life of repentance from henceforth, in love toward and one's neighbor, as well as within the fellowship of the Church. The singing of communion distribution hymns brings further reverence and joy to the celebration as the gifts being given are extolled and Christ is praised as the merciful and generous Savior who comes to us in His body and blood with divine forgiveness in the fellowship of the saints in heaven and on earth.

NUNC DIMITTIS (Now depart… Luke 2:25-35)



The Song of Simeon, the *Nunc Dimittis*, originally comes into liturgical usage in the evening services of the Church, Vespers and Compline. It expresses the faithfulness of the Lord in keeping His promise of salvation in Christ and our confidence to depart (die) in peace in this joyful fulfillment. In the evening services it is a response to the hearing of the Word and taken into the Divine Service of the Lutheran Church, it becomes a response to both the Lord coming to us in His Word as well as the Holy Supper. In *Lutheran Service Book*, the *Nunc Dimittis* is also spoken at the end of the Funeral Service as a summary of the Christian life. It is also given in the *Pastoral Care Companion* as a song for those about to depart this life ("last rites") or in comfort for those who mourn the loss of the recently departed. Martin Luther advises that a Christian ought to mindfully "go to the Lord's Supper as though he were going to his death so that he may go to his death as though he were going to the Lord's Supper." Luther reflects this thought also in his paraphrase hymn on the *Nunc Dimittis,* "In Peace and Joy I Now Depart."



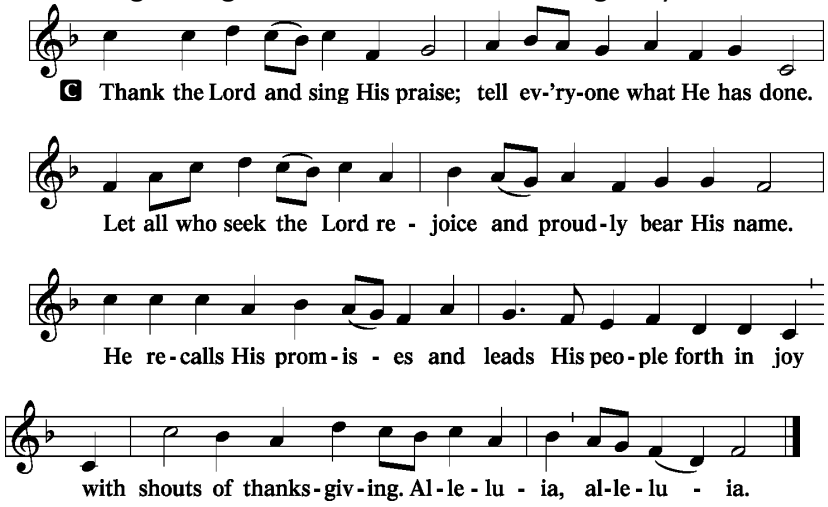


Arthur Just describes the usage of the *Nunc Dimittis:*

> In Lutheran liturgies, the Nunc Dimittis, normally associated with Compline or Vespers, became the most commonly used canticle to conclude the distribution. This is an inspired way to bring the communion to a close. We join Simeon in recognizing God's peace in the Christ Child who has opened our eyes to His salvation in the breaking of the bread. "My own eyes have seen" Christ in the flesh on the altar, as Simeon did in the baby Jesus, who is "the salvation… prepared in the sight of ev'ry people" (LSB, p. 165). [Just, p.234]

ANOTHER OPTION: "Thank the Lord and Sing His Praise…" (1 Chronicles 15-16; Psalm 105)

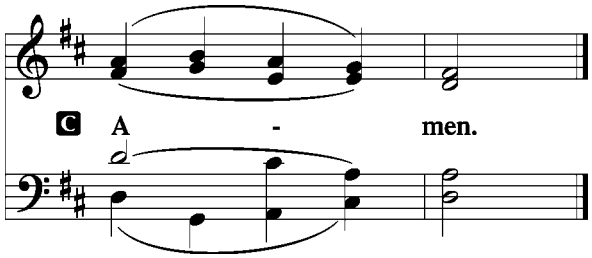
"Thank the Lord" is from a psalm of thanksgiving and praise that celebrates the placement of the Ark of the Covenant into the Tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting. This is a celebration of God's holy presence and accessibility to His people in a specific place. There is a clear parallel then in the celebration of the Lord's Supper of Christ's body and blood given to us. This particular setting of the canticle includes an Alleluia, so it is not sung during the season of Lent or during Holy Week.



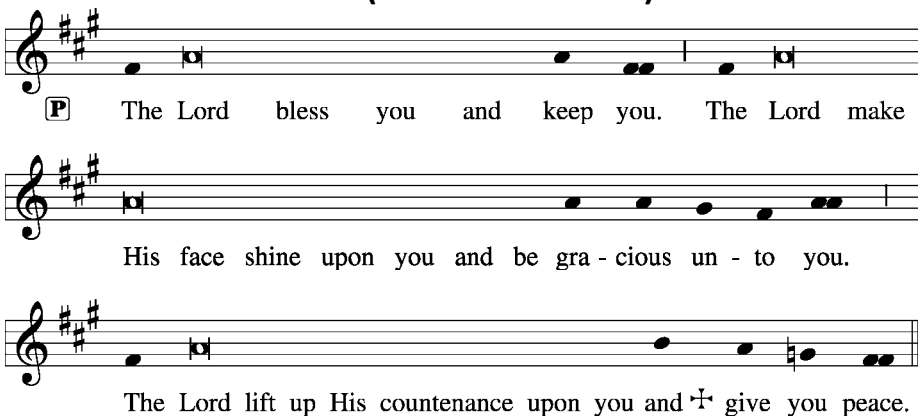
POST-COMMUNION COLLECT

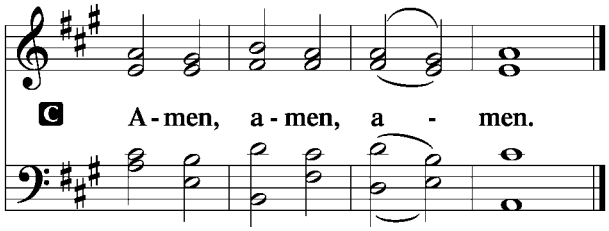
Amongst the orders of Divine Service in *Lutheran Service Book* we have three different options for a collect after the Holy Communion. The prayer that begins, "We give thanks to you, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through this salutary gift…" is a collect from Martin Luther. It is a prayer of thanks and a petition for continued help and blessing and is a good model for private prayer after communing. The second prayer deals with the continued work of the Holy Spirit to shape our faith and life in Christ and thanks God for the incarnation of His Son, Jesus and the "pardon and peace" He won. The third, most recent option, is a prayer with emphasis upon the end times and heaven. It is forward-looking prayer that acknowledges our union with all the saints in Christ in heaven and on earth and the fulfillment of all things on the Last in the new creation. There are also other post-communion collects that might be fitting at certain seasons of the Church Year.

A Let us pray.
We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



AARONIC BENEDICTION (Numbers 6:22-27)



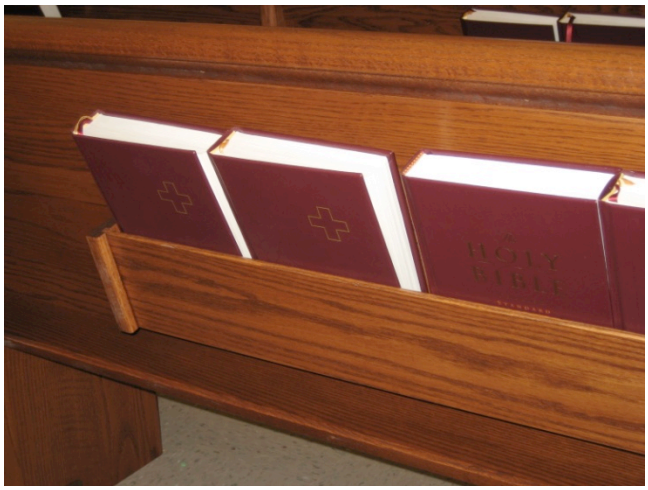


Dr. Arthur Just writes concerning the use of the Aaronic benediction at the close of the Divine Service:

> It was not until much later in the Church's life (tenth and eleventh centuries) that a more formal ending to the service was instituted with a blessing or prayer over all the people. Framing the invocation at the beginning of the service where the name of the triune God was placed upon us, so here, too, at its conclusion His name is placed upon us as blessing. He sends us with His blessing and His presence. In the Benediction the Church imitates her Lord who, as He ascended into heaven, lifted up His hands and blessed the disciples (Luke 24:50-51). The unique Lutheran contribution is the Aaronic Benediction...." [Just, p.236]

Finally the service also often concludes with a dismissal hymn or a recessional hymn when there is a procession. However some places may observe the custom of no closing hymn in order to let the Benediction (a blessing) be the last word to the congregation. While one could also refer to the Post-Communion Canticle, the use of a closing hymn reflects the lead of the institution of the Lord's Supper which notes after Jesus celebrated the Last Passover and first Lord's Supper saying, "And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives" (Matthew 26:30; see also Mark 14:26).

St.Luke 22:27 – "I Am among you as the One who serves."



Our way of worship is received. Christians live from what they receive in Christ through His designated means of the Word and the Holy Sacraments. They way of worship that we follow and adhere to is all about getting ready for these divine gifts, giving thanks for them and responding to them. The historic liturgical forms or orders of service inherited from the generations and centuries of Christians who have gone before us in the faith stand as a testimony to the continuity of the church through the ages and the faithfulness of the Lord who shepherds His Church. For this reason we seek to avoid forms of worship or songs that contradict or downplay that clear confession of the Lord's Word or that would undermine our heritage. To be truly relevant, one must proclaim things which are eternal, confessing the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). We are a biblical, creedal, liturgical, and sacramental church. We follow the Church Year, the liturgical calendar of historic Christianity. We sing time-tested as well as newer traditional hymns that are biblical and Christ-centered.

At the outset we [the Lutherans] must again make the preliminary statement that we 1] do not abolish the Mass, but religiously maintain and defend it. For among us masses are celebrated every Lord's Day and on the other festivals, in which the Sacrament is offered to those who wish to use it, after they have been examined and absolved. And the usual public ceremonies are observed, the series of lessons, of prayers, vestments, and other like things.

Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV,1