

Explanation to the Divine Service
In The Lutheran Hymnal



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SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:15 AM
DIVINE WORSHIP 10:30 AM

AN EXPLANATION OF THE PAGE 15
LITURGY OF THE LUTHERAN HYMNAL
PREPARED BY
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Introduction

Our Order of Service is not unique to us Lutherans. Martin Luther did not break away from the universal Christian Church, but rather, he recalled the Church to Her original doctrine and practice. The Church still existed, but She had become corrupt through false teachings. It was Luther's intention to keep everything (the order of service, the furnishings, the music, vestments, candles) as long as they were not contrary to the Word of God. A manufacturer may put out an automobile with a faulty radiator, but one does not throw out the entire car for that reason – one replaces the radiator.

We use an altar, crucifix, vestments, candles, rites, ceremonies. These things are not the possession of any denomination. They belong to all Christendom, for they were handed down through the ages. In the order that they appear in our Divine Service, here is when they became component parts of the liturgy. Remember in all cases, they were in use before this time. This is when they became "official." Introit – 5th century; Kyrie – 6th century; Gloria in Excelsis – 5th century; Creed – 11th century; Preface – 3rd century. Sanctus – 1st century; Pax Domini – 4th century; Agnus Dei – 7th century (Rev. David Kind presentation "The Shape of the Liturgy", July 2010, Nashville, TN).

Although the "father" of the Lutheran church, Martin Luther, argued that ceremony can be used in a godly way and that we can't in fact live without ceremonies in the church (AE, 49, 55-56), many Lutheran churches have discarded the liturgy. While Lutherans have never insisted that there is only one divine order of service, they have insisted that how you worship shows what you really believe. This outlook goes back to the first four centuries of the Christian Church's existence. "Every congregation declared what it stood for in its liturgies, its selections of lection [Bible readings], and in its prayers and hymns" (Elert, *Eucharistic and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries*, 49).

We are confessing something by using the same order of service that has been used by Lutherans since 1888. Those who attack this order as out of date, outmoded, boring, stale, etc. are also saying something. As G. K. Chesterton observed, "There is not really any courage at all in attacking hoary or antiquated things, any more than in offering to fight one's grandmother. The really courageous man is he who defies tyrannies young as the morning and superstitions fresh as the first flowers" (*What's Wrong with the World*, 33). Trinity defies both the tyranny that liturgical equals "Catholic" and the superstition that new means better.

On the first point even the first president of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, C.F.W. Walther weighed in. He said, "It is a pity and dreadful cowardice when one sacrifices the good ancient church customs to please the deluded American sects, lest they accuse us of being papistic [i.e. Catholic]" (*Essays for the Church*, I, 197). On the second point, Plato weighs in. He warns of the State praising 'new songs' not knowing that they are new *kinds* of song. He said, "For any musical innovation is full of danger to the whole State, and ought to be prohibited....When modes of music change, the fundamental laws of the State always change with them" (*Republic*, 203). G. K. Chesterton makes the

same point only specifically in reference to the church. "Those who leave the tradition of truth do not escape into something which we call Freedom. They only escape into something else which we call Fashion" (*Collected Works*, III, 388).

The monumental work, *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, has this to say about our Lutheran tradition of worship in the United States: "In the United States, Lutherans of varied ethnic origin and theological bent had since 1888 agreed on a 'Common Service'" (729). This came unraveled in the 80s, and now there are virtually as many different orders of service as there are Lutheran churches. And what we have are people who are like a character from a John Updike novel who "misses the familiar Lutheran liturgy, scratched into his heart like a weathered inscription" (*Rabbit, Run*, 197). Actually if historian Will Durant it right, we have something more. He puts this critique of Voltaire in the mouth of Pope Benedict XIV: "Tradition is to the group what memory is to the individual, and just as the sapping of memory may bring insanity, so a sudden break with tradition may plunge a whole nation into madness, like France in revolution" (*The Age of Voltaire*, 788). Attend a church that prides itself in contemporary, blended, praise, or cutting edge worship and you will see the "madness" of polka, country, or blue grass Communion services; of pastors strutting around the chancel as if they owned the place; of people being applauded for their performance. They will defend all this in the name of enculturation. As one of my members pointed out, what contemporary worship is really engaged in is de-culturation.

From the very beginning of the Lutheran Church as a distinct fellowship, we have warned of this. Our Apology of the Augsburg Confession says why we intend on keeping the "old traditions": "But we cheerfully maintain the old traditions (as, the three high festivals, the observance of Sunday, and the like) made in the Church *for the sake of usefulness and tranquility*; (XV, 38). In a later article we assert "that with the greatest zeal *we maintain the dignity* of the Mass and *show its true use*" (XXVI, 99).

A word about our Divine Service in general. We are with Plato when it comes to hymn singing. He believed it was a fact without need of substantiation that "melody and rhythm will depend upon the word" (*Republic*, 156). Two Baptists, in writing about the hymns produced by the Reformation, say, "The great Reformation chorales were meant not to create a mood, but to convey a message" (*The Gift of Music*, 35). In other words, even when the sermon is bad there is still a message in our Divine Service. In a more serious vein, we should remember what 19th century poet Matthew Arnold said, "- such a price/ The Gods exact for song:/ To become what we sing" (Lines 232-234). Perhaps you have noticed what this biographer of Douglas MacArthur did: "In times of social upheaval dazed populations turn to the irrational, the bizarre, the macabre. Laws of social gravity are suspended. People take up wild crazes, behave like freaks, laugh at horror, weep at wit. One of the surest signs of this psychedelic mood is popular music. Nonsense songs catch on, perhaps because sensible lyrics mock a demented world. They were found in Russia on the eve of the October Revolution, and in Weimar, Berlin. The British played "The World Turned Upside Down" at Yorktown, in the Depression and WWII Americans sang "The Music goes Round and Round," "Three Itty fishes," "Hut Sut Song," and Mairzy Doats." Tokyo Rose crooned to the tune of London Bridge "Hello, hello, are you there? Are you there, are you there? Hello, hello, are you there? Ah that is so (William Manchester, *American Caesar*, 488-489)!

Not only are our hymns “old school” so is our chanting. We preserve the Gregorian or plainchant. We don’t do this simply because it is old. As *The Oxford History of Christian Worship* observes. Plainchant is a more intelligible rendition of texts than polyphony and more acoustically pleasing (723). Or as a Catholic writer has observed, “Gregorian chant is music that is strictly wedded to language” (Mosebach, *The Heresy of Formlessness*, 16). Of course many churches, including the Catholic, have gone away from it for something more up to date. “What the bishops forgot was that this music had sounded strange even to the ears of Charlemagne and Thomas Aquinas, Monteverdi and Haydn; it is at least as remote from their contemporary life as it is from ours” (Ibid. 16). This Catholic writer’s view is supported by Pierre Riche who was professor of the history of the Middle Ages at the University of Paris when he wrote the 1973 work *Daily Life in the World of Charlemagne*. He observed, “We can be sure the people accustomed to the more abrupt rhythms of profane music were not easily seduced by the monodic purity of Gregorian chant” (236). Alfred Edersheim dates the use of Gregorian tones to the Temple itself saying, “There is no reason to doubt that in so-called Gregorian tones we have also preserved to us a close approximation to the ancient hymnody of the Temple, though certainly not without considerable alterations” (*The Temple*, 81).

Trinity Lutheran Church has not been “seduced” by sounds but by the words of the Gospel. Our Divine Service is in service to those words and even more so to the Word made Flesh.

Rev. Paul R. Harris
October 25, 2011

The Order of Worship: Page 15 (The Holy Communion Service)

Prelude

We believe that the Lord is present with us in every Divine Service; we don’t have to shout up to Him to be heard. We regard every Church building as more than a meeting place—to us it is the house of God. We have an altar to symbolize His presence among us and His sacrifice for us. Our service is geared to encourage reverence. To help create that atmosphere of reverence the organist plays a suitable prelude, and the worshiper is encouraged to sit quietly in meditation or prayer.

The Opening Hymn

The Lutheran Church has done so much to restore hymn singing and congregational participation in public worship that it has come to be known as “The Singing Church.” The opening hymn sets the tone of the service, reflecting the particular theme of the day, and the season of the church year (Advent, Christmas, Lent, etc.).

Invocation

V: In the name of the Father and of the Son (+) and of the Holy Ghost.

R: Amen.

By beginning the service with these words, we site our reason for worship and the central object of our worship. The words remind us of our Baptism as commanded by Christ in Matthew 28:19 and of the Great Commission the Church has on earth. They also express the fact that the Triune God is present as we worship; furthermore, these words link us with the 1st Century Church in the profession of the belief in a Triune presence of God. Many of us at Trinity, in keeping with our Lutheran tradition, make the sign of the cross over ourselves in remembrance of our Baptism.

Confession of Sins

P: Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

We make confession first, at the beginning of our service, in order to set us in our place before God. That is, we are sinners and are only coming to Him through the forgiveness He offers.

Although our Heavenly Father knows every sin we have and will commit, it is still necessary for us to confess them. In 1 John 1:8, we are told that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive them. The second chapter of the same epistle of John goes on to tell us that for Christ’s sake we will be forgiven. Note at this point how the pastor faces the Altar when he speaks to God with or for the congregation, and how he faces the congregation when he speaks to the congregation as God’s representative.

V: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

R: WHO MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH

The versicle and response is a direct quote from Psalm 124:8. In this Psalm, David explains how God is man’s only hope for help in this sinful world.

V: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord.

R: AND THOU FORGAVEST THE INIQUITY OF MY SIN.

These words can be found in Psalm 32:5. In the Psalm, David describes how empty and worthless he feels until he confesses his sins and in turn is forgiven. He goes on to say, in the latter portions of the Psalm, that once he has forgiveness, God serves as a Friend and Instructor instead of an adversary and chastiser.

Confession

P. 16 ALL: O ALMIGHTY GOD, MERCIFUL FATHER, I, A POOR, MISERABLE SINNER, CONFESS UNTO THEE ALL MY SINS AND INIQUITIES WITH WHICH I HAVE EVER OFFENDED THEE AND JUSTLY DESERVE THY TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL PUNISHMENT. BUT I AM HEARTILY SORRY FOR THEM AND SINCERELY REPENT OF THEM, AND I PRAY THEE OF THY BOUNDLESS MERCY AND FOR THE SAKE OF THE HOLY, INNOCENT, BITTER SUFFERINGS AND DEATH OF THY BELOVED SON JESUS CHRIST TO BE GRACIOUS AND MERCIFUL TO ME, A POOR, SINFUL BEING.

This confession has its roots in the prayers the minister would say on his own before the service. Later it came to be used by not only the pastor but all people.

Absolution page 16

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 Ghost.
R: AMEN.

The forgiveness you receive is based on God reconciling Himself to the world in the Person and Work of Christ (2 Corinthians 5: 17-18. In John 20:23). Christ appeared to the Apostles and bestowed upon His Church the power to remit and retain sins. The Church today, in keeping with the Apostolic word has this power. The called pastor exercises this power publicly.

Introit

The Psalm verses for the day, or Introit, marks the beginning of our actual service. Introit means “going into.” It is the first place the particular thought for today’s service is expressed. It has four parts: the antiphon, the Psalm verses, the Gloria Patri, and the antiphon repeated. The antiphon consists of a versicle and response, usually portions of a Psalm, which are picked to clearly state the theme of the day. The Psalm verses are representative of the whole Psalm that was originally used in the early Church.

The Gloria Patri (Glory be to the Father)

GLORY BE TO THE FATHER AND TO THE SON AND TO THE HOLY GHOST: AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING, IS NOW, AND EVER SHALL BE, WORLD WITHOUT END. AMEN.

The Gloria Patri is chanted by all before the antiphon is repeated to show the relationship between the Old Testament Psalm and the fuller revelation of the Trinity in the New Testament. It marks

the “Prayer book of the Old Testament Church” as belonging to the New Testament Church. It also serves as a profession of faith in the Triune God. The chanting of this was a way during the Arian heresy of the 4th century that the faithful Christians confessed their faith. Two devout laymen organized a band of monks and trained singers to chant this before the Arian bishop of Antioch who had driven out the faithful one. They came together in the cathedral and chanted “Glory be to the Father *and* to the Son *and* to the Holy Ghost using the copulative particle ‘and’ rather than the disjunctive particle ‘or’ (*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 335). The curious “world without end” has been replaced in most churches with “forever and ever.” The formula “world without end” was introduced to reaffirm the belief in the resurrection of the dead (*Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, II, 399). It would be a shame to lose this. Notice how the pastor moves to the altar during the singing of the Gloria Patri. This signifies the congregation moving into the presence of God having been forgiven all their sins. The antiphon is repeated to keep the theme for the day in the foreground and to provide for an orderly transition into the Kyrie.

The Kyrie (Lord)

**LORD, HAVE MERCY UPON US. CHRIST, HAVE MERCY UPON US.
LORD, HAVE MERCY UPON US.**

The Kyrie remains from an early Church litany (prayer). It is from the Greek words *Kyrie eleison*, Lord have mercy. This is not a plea for forgiveness but one for help in our day to day existence. People would use it to cry out to the king in earlier times, asking him to recognize them as his people, and bestow his favor upon them. Of the numerous times it is used in Scripture, only twice (in Psalms) is it used in relation to forgiveness.

The Gloria in Excelsis (Glory in the Highest)

GLORY BE TO GOD ON HIGH, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL 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 ON 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.

The Gloria in Excelsis can be traced to as early as the 4th century Church. It was used by them to conclude their litanies. The opening lines are found in Luke 2:14. There the angels are praising God after the announcement of Christ’s birth to the shepherds. We share their joy again. Because it is an expression of joy we do not use it during the penitential seasons of Advent or Lent. The latter portions of

the Gloria in Excelsis are added in order to help us take our thoughts away from ourselves and center them around the glory and gifts of the Triune God.

The Salutation

V: The Lord be with you.
R: AND WITH THY SPIRIT.

The Salutation is adapted from Boaz's greeting to the reapers in Ruth 2:4. It is a Hebrew expression that conveys the idea of God with us. It functions in our service to introduce new and different parts. Here the primarily sacramental (we receive from God) portion of the service is introduced. It is addressed to men not God; it is more than a mutual greeting between pastor and congregation. The pastor parts his hands to show his earnest desire that the blessing be bestowed on the congregation. He folds his hands with the congregation to signify that he has no confidence in his own strength but relies on God. The congregation in the response confesses the Lord is with the pastor's spirit in a special way as he prays for the church and later as he celebrates the Holy Communion and puts God's name on His people. "By this cry you are reminded that he who stands at the altar does nothing --- the grace of the Holy Spirit is present and coming down on all" (St. Chrysostom). In another homily Chrysostom says, "Again, in the most awful mysteries themselves, the priest prays for the people and the people also pray for the priest; for the words, 'with thy spirit' are nothing else than this" (Homily XVIII, II Corinthians, NPNF, 366). It has also been known as "the little ordination" (Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, 278). The pastor is strengthened before he dares pray in the name of the Church, celebrate the Lord's Supper, or put the Lord's name on His people with a reminder that he has been divinely authorized to do these tremendous things.

The Collect for the Day

This ancient form of prayer is used here to petition God for some blessing relating to the Gospel. A collect consists of five parts: the addresses to God, a description of some characteristic of God, a petition or request, the reason we desire our request to be granted, and finally, an ending that recognized the fact that we pray to the Triune God. The first three parts of the collect are illustrated in the prayer of the disciples after the Ascension in Acts 1:24.

R: AMEN.

The Old Testament Lesson

This lesson relates to the thoughts found in the Gospel and/or Epistle. It is read to show that the God of the Old Testament and the New Testament are the same, and that both Testaments are His Word.

Gradual Verse

The Gradual Verse is usually a portion of the Introit Psalm, the Epistle itself, or it can be composed of original words. The verse is chosen so as to be a bridge between the lessons.

Epistle Lesson

The Epistle lesson is taken from one of the New Testament Epistles and in the appointed readings Trinity uses does not usually relate to the Gospel Lesson. Generally, however, Epistle readings will apply some aspect of the gospel in our daily lives.

Hallelujah Verse or Triple Hallelujah

HALLELUJAH! HALLELUJAH! HALLELUJAH!

The Hallelujah Verse is to serve to prepare the congregation for the hearing of the Gospel.

Gospel Lesson

This is the high point of the service of the Word (the first half of the service). We show the great significance it has by expressing our joy at its announcement and by standing while it is read. The entire service is built around the content of the Gospel. *The Teaching of the Apostles*, dating from the middle of the first century A.D. to early second says this about the Gospel reading: "The apostles further appointed: At the conclusion of all the Scriptures let the Gospel be read, as being the seal of the all the Scriptures; and let the people listen to it standing upon their feet: because it is the Gospel of the redemption of all men" (ANF, VIII, 668).

The response to the Announcement of the Gospel:

GLORY BE TO THEE, O LORD!

This response is an outgrowth from the early Christian phrase "Thanks be to God." "Thanks be to God" was the password needed to gain entrance to Christian worship during the days of persecution. It is sung to the Christ who now speaks to His church by the Gospel reading.

The Response after the Gospel

P: Here endeth the Gospel.
R: PRAISE BE TO THEE, O CHRIST!

The response at the end of the reading shows that we recognize that Christ is actually present, and therefore, we address Him as such. The Gospel was read from the north side of the Medieval Church

to symbolize that the Gospel needed to be carried to the godless lands that were in the north.

The Nicene Creed Page 22 or *The Apostles Creed* Page 12

NICENE CREED:

ALL: I BELIEVE IN ONE GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, AND OF ALL THINGS VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE.

AND IN ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD, BEGOTTEN OF HIS FATHER BEFORE ALL WORLDS, GOD OF GOD, LIGHT OF LIGHT, VERY GOD OF VERY GOD, BEGOTTEN, NOT MADE, BEING OF ONE SUBSTANCE WITH THE FATHER, BY WHOM ALL THINGS WERE MADE: WHO FOR US MEN AND FOR OUR SALVATION CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN AND WAS INCARNATE BY THE HOLY GHOST OF THE VIRGIN MARY AND WAS MADE MAN; AND WAS CRUCIFIED ALSO FOR US UNDER PONTIUS PILATE. HE SUFFERED AND WAS BURIED; AND THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES; AND ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN, AND SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER; AND HE SHALL COME AGAIN WITH GLORY TO JUDGE BOTH THE QUICK AND THE DEAD; WHOSE KINGDOM SHALL HAVE NO END.

AND I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST, THE LORD AND GIVER OF LIFE, WHO PROCEEDETH FROM THE FATHER AND THE SON, WHO WITH THE FATHER AND THE SON TOGETHER IS WORSHIPED AND GLORIFIED, WHO SPAKE BY THE PROPHETS, AND I BELIEVE ONE HOLY CHRISTIAN AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH. I ACKNOWLEDGE ONE BAPTISM FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, AND I LOOK FOR THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD (+), AND THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME. AMEN.

THE APOSTLES CREED:

ALL: I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.

AND IN JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD, WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY, SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE, WAS CRUCIFIED, DEAD AND BURIED. HE DESCENDED INTO HELL. THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD. HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN AND SITS AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY. FROM THENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD.

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST, THE HOLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH, THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY (+), AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING. AMEN.

The Creed is placed here to show that we confess it in response to the Word. It also enables us to look at the entire span of Christian beliefs before focusing on one aspect in the sermon. We stand during the confession to show our eagerness to profess our faith and our decision to defend it. The entire congregation faces the East or front of the church to show our anticipation of Christ's return. The Creed is not confessed to God as much as it is to each other. God knows our hearts. We can only know each

other through our confession of what we believe. When saying the portions underlined, it is customary to bow one's head in recognition of how Jesus humbled Himself in order to redeem us. We make the sign of the cross at the point where we confess the resurrection of the dead as a reminder that as Baptism started us on the road to resurrection, so it will bring us all the way there. For anyone baptized as an infant, the first time anyone made a sign of the cross over them was at their baptism. The last time will be when the pastor does so at the cemetery. Today many "contemporary" services do not confess one of the 3 universal creeds (Apostles, Nicene, Athanasian). This begs the question what exactly do they confess. G. K. Chesterton said, "The Christian Creed is above all things the philosophy of shapes and the enemy of shapelessness" (*The Everlasting Man*, 215).

The Hymn of the Day

This is the main hymn of the service, and it relates to the theme of the Gospel and sermon. The hymns are not part of the liturgy. They can be inserted anywhere. They serve to highlight the aspect of the Christian faith which the service focuses on.

The Sermon

The Sermon portion of the service is the coordinating point of everything else. It usually centers on one aspect of the lessons. The sermon has the same relationship to the Creed as the Creed does to the Gospel. The sermon dwells on both the sacramental, what God does for us, and sacrificial, what we do in response to God's Word. It is not a statement of opinions but a proclamation of truth.

Votum (A Votum is a solemn wish or prayer)

P: Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus till life everlasting. Amen.

This is a form of benediction taken directly from Philippians 4:7. Its placement shows that the congregation has now heard from God, and that brings His peace. It also marks the end of the Service of the Word. In the early Church, the non-communicant members would leave and the Service of the Faithful would begin.

Offertory

CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART, O GOD, AND RENEW A RIGHT SPIRIT WITHIN ME. CAST ME NOT AWAY FROM THY PRESENCE; AND TAKE NOT THY HOLY SPIRIT FROM ME. RESTORE UNTO ME THE JOY OF THY SALVATION; AND UPHOLD ME WITH THY FREE SPIRIT. AMEN.

The Offertory begins the second half of the service in which we concentrate on the sacrificial aspects of our commitment. In our service, the Offertory is primarily a response to the sermon. However,

originally it was directed to the upcoming Sacrament. In anticipating the gift about to be received, the congregation responded by offering their own substance, themselves, their hearts.

The Prayers

The General Prayer of the Church is part of the Offertory in that the congregation looks to the needs of the world in general rather than its own needs. It has sound Scriptural foundations in 1 Timothy 2:1-3. In those verses, Paul exhorts Timothy to make intercession for the authorities of their day and for “all men.” The Special Prayers that follow the General Prayer bring the individual needs of our congregation before God. They express a unity of concern as well as a unified acceptance of what God will do for our personal needs. It also serves to notify the congregation of the various prayer needs in their midst.

The Offering

The Offering is our expression of love which is brought about by hearing the Word. The gifts we place in the collection plate are only symbolic of the gift of our entire life. The offering is brought forward by responsible men of the congregation to show that we as a congregation make a cooperative offering also. Historically, the congregation would stand to symbolize their readiness to give their lives.

Preface Page 24

P: The Lord be with you.

R: AND WITH THY SPIRIT. (Again the words of greeting between pastor and people)

P: Lift up your hearts.

R: WE LIFT THEM UP UNTO THE LORD.

The invitation to lift up our hearts can be found in many places throughout the Old Testament. Lamentations 3:41 and Psalm 86:4 are examples of the basic thought in the statement. In Lamentations, Jeremiah is asking the people to recognize their errors of the past and turn to the Lord. In Psalm 86, David is extolling the benefits of lifting up one’s soul to God. The Supper is a happy event, and we joyfully lift ourselves to God, in praise of His love. “In effect therefore the priest bids all in that hour to dismiss all cares of this life, or household anxieties, and to have their heart in heaven with the merciful God” (Cyril of Jerusalem, NPNF, VII, 153-54).

Luther, along with the rest of late medieval scholars took the word ‘preface’ in a temporal sense as that which comes before what really counted. The *prae* in the Latin *praefatio* is to be understood in not a time sense but a space sense. We are speaking praise before God, in His presence (*Oxford History of Christian Worship*, 401).

P: Let us give thanks unto the Lord, our God.

R: IT IS MEET AND RIGHT SO TO DO.

P: It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto thee, O Lord, Holy Father, almighty, everlasting God:

The words meet, right, and salutary mean it is proper, correct and beneficial.

Proper Preface

Again, we emphasize that the Communion coming up is a great and joyful blessing, for which we are thankful to God. In these sentences we find the oldest and least changed part of our liturgy. We identify with the early church believers who, although plagued with persecution, had every reason to be thankful that we have today. From Genesis to Revelation, commands to thank God can be found. This illustrates that there is never any reason for us not to thank our Heavenly Father. The closing statement unites us with all the company of heaven; it is a beautiful expression of faith that even now in this life we are members of the glorious heavenly host. The Proper Preface is spoken quickly as an ecstatic expression of praise. This the oldest and least changed part of the Liturgy. Some of the phases in them date to Hippolytus (220 A.D.) and Cyprian in the 3rd century. The Proper Preface is found in practically every ancient Communion liturgy. For example, Augustine said that daily throughout the world “the human race, with almost one voice, responds that it lifts up its heart unto the Lord” (Reed, 324-5).

The Sanctus (“Holy”)

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, LORD GOD OF SABAOOTH; HEAVEN AND EARTH ARE FULL OF THY GLORY; HOSANNA, HOSANNA, HOSANNA IN THE HIGHEST. BLESSED IS HE, BLESSED IS HE, BLESSED IS HE THAT COMETH IN THE NAME OF THE LORD. HOSANNA, HOSANNA, HOSANNA IN THE HIGHEST.

The Sanctus marks the conclusion of the Preface. It also is the end of that part of the Communion Service which represents the Old Testament. In singing this, we join with the heavenly angels in Isaiah’s vision who praised the Lord. The word Sabaoth is a transliteration of the Hebrew word meaning armies or hosts. In singing the last part of the Sanctus (Hosanna, Hosanna...) we remember Christ’s ride into Jerusalem. “Hosanna in the highest” goes deeper than simple praise. More accurately translated it means “save now, I beseech Thee in high heaven”. In the early Church the bread and wine that would be used for Holy Communion were brought forward during the singing of this. In the Byzantine Church: “The unveiling of the gifts is venerated as the terrible moment when Christ was stripped of his clothes” (*The Heresy of Formlessness*, 136). “The Sanctus, which is used in Jewish, Greek and Latin liturgies is always introduced as something sung by “both” angels and people” (P. Culbertson and A Shippee eds. *The Pastor*, fn. 26, p. 183). The *Oxford History of Christian Worship* agrees saying that in commentaries on the Sanctus “the congregation is considered to be singing the words along with the ‘superterrestrial hosts’ (773). It’s a component of the liturgy at the end of the first century as I Clement 34: 5-8 shows (Sasse, *The Lonely Way*, II, 167).

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father Who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil; for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen

We chant this prayer because it is meant to be prayed in unison by the whole congregation, and it is all but impossible for a group of people to all say anything at the same time. This is the prayer our Lord told us to pray in Luke 11:2. In doing so, we recall His holiness, our sinfulness, our needs, and His ability to meet them. In this prayer, we are not consecrating the elements.

The Verba (The Words of Institution)

P: Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

After the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it; this cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you and the remission of sins. This do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Perhaps this is the most misunderstood part of the service. "Therefore the words of institution are spoken in our Lord's Supper, not merely for the sake of history but to show to the church that Christ Himself, through His Word, according to His command and promise, is present in the action of the Supper and by the power of this Word offers His body and blood to those who eat. For it is He who distributes, though it be through the minister; it is He who says, "This is my body." It is He who is efficacious through His Word, so that the bread is His body and the wine His blood. In this way, and because of this, we are sure and believe that in the Lord's Supper we eat, not ordinary bread and wine, but the body and blood of Christ" (Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, II, 229). The Pastor has his hand over the bread and wine to show that only these elements are being so consecrated.

The Pax Domini ("Peace of God")

P: The peace of the Lord be with you alway!

R: AMEN.

The imparting of the Lord's peace prior to Communion has two functions historically. It serves as a blessing of the people in much the same way Christ blessed the disciples in Scripture (John 14: 23-31), and do note it is proclamation of the Lord's peace to *everyone* present not just to those who are about to commune. The *Pax Domini* is also the surviving remnant of the kiss of peace which was a mark of love and unity dating back at least to the time of Paul writing his epistles where he sometimes urged

people to greet each other with a holy kiss (I Thessalonians 5: 27). The words of our Lord in Matthew 5:23ff concerning being reconciled before going to the altar were the reason for the kiss of peace in the service. This was the sign that declared that souls were united and all grudge-bearing was set aside (Elert, *Eucharist and Church Fellowship*, 81). "Another liturgical object used during the medieval mass in the West was the 'pax-board.' From antiquity members of the Christian community assembled for the Eucharist would exchange a kiss of peace during the service, either before the gifts were brought up at the offertory or immediately before communion was distributed. With time it became the custom for the officiating clerics only to exchange a greeting of peace in descending order of rank. They did so not always by kissing or embracing each other but by ritually circulating and kissing a flat wooden board decorated with religious imagery. This came to be called the 'pax board'" (*Oxford History of Christian Worship*, 850-1). The Pastor keeps one hand on the altar to symbolize that the peace he is conveying is brought about by the forgiveness of sins we are about to receive in the Body and Blood of Christ now on the altar.

The Angus Dei ("Lamb of God")

O CHRIST, THOU LAMB OF GOD, THAT TAKEST AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD, HAVE MERCY UPON US. O CHRIST, THOU LAMB OF GOD, THAT TAKEST AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD, HAVE MERCY UPON US. O CHRIST, THOU LAMB OF GOD, THAT TAKEST AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD, GRANT US THY PEACE. AMEN.

The Angus Dei has been present in liturgies since 700 A.D. it is both a petition for peace/mercy and an act of confessional adoration. John the Baptist spoke similar words upon seeing the Messiah. In singing this, we recognize that our salvation is only brought about through God's mercy made possible by the Lamb's atonement. We sing this just prior to Communion to once again place the purpose and reason for the act in the foreground of our thoughts. "There is no question that the Agnus Dei is specifically a prayer of adoration to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Here it is not incorrect to defy even the externalists, and kneel. The Agnus Dei is certainly not a joyous hymn of praise. It was rejected only by those who feared that it might lead to an adoration of the Host, rather than of the Saviour Himself" (F. R. Webber, *Studies in the Liturgy*, 153).

Distribution

The words spoken during the Distribution do not empower the bread and the wine with "life." The words express what Scripture says the Sacrament is: The true body and blood of Christ. The words of dismissal also serve to remind us of the benefits of receiving the Lord's Supper: forgiveness and strength. Therefore, because of the benefits imparted to us we can truly return to our daily lives ready to do His will. It is customary to reverence the real presence of Christ with a slight bow before and after communing. It is also customary among Lutherans to make the sign of the cross during the words of dismissal. Also upon arriving back at the pew, some spend a few moments in silent prayer, thanking the Lord for His gift and asking for renewed strength. A suggested prayer is found on page 4 in the front of the hymnal.

The Nunc Dimittis (“now You dismiss us”)

LORD, NOW LETTEST THOU THY SERVANT DEPART IN PEACE ACCORDING TO THY WORD, FOR MINE EYES HAVE SEEN THY SALVATION; WHICH THOU HAST PREPARED BEFORE THE FACE OF ALL PEOPLE, A LIGHT TO LIGHTEN THE GENTILES AND THE GLORY OF THY PEOPLE ISRAEL. GLORY BE TO THE FATHER AND TO THE SON, AND TO THE HOLY GHOST; AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING, IS NOW, AND EVER SHALL BE, WORLD WITHOUT END. AMEN.

By ending Holy Communion with the singing of the *Nunc Dimittis* we are linking the two most important events in history together - - the Incarnation (Christmas) and the Resurrection (Easter). We can say as Simeon did when he first saw the Infant Jesus at Christmas time that we are ready to depart in peace for not only have we seen our Salvation as he did but we have also partaken of the fruits of His redeeming work accomplished on Good Friday and announced on Easter. We praise the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost at the close of the *Nunc Dimittis*, bowing our heads as we do, to acknowledge the fact that all three Persons of the Godhead were involved in both the Incarnation and the events of the Resurrection.

The *Nunc Dimittis* is named for the first two words in the Latin Bible of what is generally called the “Song of Simeon.” It has been in the liturgy of the Church since the fourth century, and probably found its way into our *Liturgy and Agenda* of 1917 via Wilhelm Löhe’s *Agenda* of 1844. So, what has kept these words of thanksgiving in the communion liturgy for 1,700 years? Go back to Luke’s account.

These words of thanksgiving amaze even Joseph and Mary! A stranger was proclaiming their crying, squirming little Son to be “glory,” “a light of revelation,” and even “salvation” itself! What could be more amazing or astonishing than this? For us, it is that we get to say the very same words to the very same Christ. Because He is bodily present in the Lord’s Supper, our eyes of faith see the very same flesh and blood that Simeon, through the Holy Spirit, saw. Where Simeon looked and beheld the Messiah in the Child, we look and behold the Messiah in Bread and Wine. As Jesus tangibly and physically lived in historical Palestine, today Jesus lives among us tangibly and physically in Bread and Wine. It was amazing and unbelievable to Joseph and Mary that Simeon said these things about their Child, it is equally amazing and unbelievable to most people, even other Christians, that we confess Christ is present in such lowly, earthly things as Bread and Wine. But Christ has said it, and so we say it back to Him in the liturgy.

The Thanksgiving

**P: Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good.
R: AND HIS MERCY ENDURETH FOREVER.**

We began the Communion liturgy with thanksgiving; it is only fitting we end it in the same manner. The versicle and response are taken from Psalm 107:1. The thanksgiving found in this portion of

the services is of a different nature than that found in the Preface. Here, with the Psalmist, we join in giving thanks for the provisions God has made for His redeemed. We have many blessings to look forward to in addition to the ultimate gift of eternal life. By recognizing His never ending mercy, we are also admitting the fact that we are still sinners and will always need His mercy.

Thanksgiving Collect

The Pastor speaks a prayer.

R: AMEN.

This collect has three main purposes. One is, of course, thanks. The next is to show that we realize the Sacrament is a gift of God. Nothing we have done or will do warrants it; we can only hope that the strengthened faith we have obtained will glorify His name. The third is to confess that Christ has really done something in the Holy Communion.

The Salutation

P: The Lord be with You.
R: AND WITH THY SPIRIT.

The Salutation serves to introduce the final part of the service: The Benediction.

The Benedicamus (“Let Us Bless”)

E: Bless we the Lord.
R: THANKS BE TO GOD.

“Bless we the Lord” is the doxology which concludes the five sub-books of Psalms. It is only fitting that we conclude our liturgy in a like manner. The response of the congregation is a simple thank you. Down through history man has not found any more meaningful way to express his gratitude for undeserved love. Originally, this was the layman’s benediction spoken by an officer of the congregation. This is why the elder on duty speaks it in ours.

The Benediction

P: The Lord bless thee and keep thee.
The Lord make His face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace.
R: AMEN, AMEN, AMEN.

The Aaronic benediction found in Numbers 6:24 is the only one ever commanded by God. We should remember it is over 3,600 years old. Literally the Lord commanded Aaron to put His name on the people. Do note the thrice repeated Lord is a reference to the Triune God. This benediction gives assurance of peace and protection to all who receive it by faith. It is not only the wish of the minister to bestow this blessing, but it is also the wish of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Lord’s peace is our greatest blessing that enables us to go out from here and live!

The Closing Hymn

Historically services ended with the Benediction, but it seems the people of God cannot refrain from getting one last hymn in before they go.

Final Notes

Why does the minister turn sometimes to the altar and at other times to the congregation when he conducts the service? For the same reason that we turn to the person to whom we speak in ordinary conversation. Some parts of the service are addressed to God, others are to the congregation. Sacrificial parts of the liturgy are those addressed to God, during which the celebrant faces the altar. Sacramental sections are those addressed to the congregation, therefore, the celebrant faces the congregation.

What is the reason for standing at some times and sitting at other times? The main reason is that we express certain inward feelings and attitudes by standing, sitting, and kneeling. To show respect we stand; to show penitence and humility we stand with bowed head; when we are in the classroom, listening to the teacher, we sit. The general rule is: stand with head bowed for confession; stand for praise and the Gospel; sit for instruction; kneel before the presence of God.

Why does the pastor turn to the altar always to his left except after the Benediction when he turns to his right? By doing this the pastor makes a circle indicating the completion of the Divine Service.