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## CELEBRATING THE HOLY COMMUNION

The Holy Communion has been the principal act of Christian worship since New Testament times.<sup>1</sup> The Lutheran Reformation did not break with this ancient tradition of a millenium and a half, and the Augsburg Confession declares the Holy Communion to be the chief act of worship for Lutherans on Sundays and festivals:

Our churches are falsely accused of abolishing the Mass. Actually, the Mass is retained among us and is celebrated with the greatest reverence. Almost all the customary ceremonies are also retained, except that German hymns are interspersed here and there among the parts sung in Latin.<sup>2</sup>

The Apology to the Augsburg Confession adds:

... we do not abolish the Mass but religiously keep and defend it. In our churches Mass is celebrated every Sunday and on other festivals, when the sacrament is offered to those who wish for it after they have been examined and absolved. We keep traditional liturgical forms, such as the order of the lessons, prayers, vestments, etc.<sup>3</sup>

The centrality of the Eucharist as the Christians' principal act of worship is underscored by the inclusion of Holy Baptism, Affirmation of Baptism, Ordination, Commissioning, Installation of Pastors, Induction of Presidents, Marriage, and Burial within the liturgy of Holy Communion.

The Holy Communion is one service with two principal parts. One centers in the proclamation of the Word through the reading of Scripture

and preaching; the other centers in the sharing of the sacramental meal. Surrounded by prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, these two parts are so intimately connected as to form one unified act of worship. The double nature of the service suggests the use of two focal points—a reading desk (lectern or pulpit) and the altar.

### PREPARING FOR THE SERVICE

The execution of the service is the privilege, obligation, and function of all of the leaders of worship jointly. It is the pastor's duty, privilege, and joy to instill this spirit in the leaders and gently guide their actions so that everything will be done to assist God's people to worship him with confidence and eagerness. The pastor should arrive at the church an hour before the time of service to make physical and spiritual preparation for worship. One more time, the actions and words of the service should be reviewed so that the liturgy will flow smoothly. All the participants in the service must be ready well in advance of the appointed time of beginning so that they might lead the service with quiet and undistracted minds.

The lighting of candles (except in the evening) is an action without liturgical importance. It must not be given undue attention or carried out with unnatural precision (such as requiring the acolyte to enter the church at the first note of the prelude.) The candles should be lit well before the beginning of the service so that the action does not seem to be a part of the service and so as not to detract from the devotional preparations of the people.

Preludial music by instrumentalists or vocalists can help to prepare the worshipers for the service. The music selected should be of a high quality and should be performed as perfectly as possible in spite of its location outside the service itself. It must be assumed that the congregation will actually listen to the music played before the service, for to perform music in church to which no one listens or which is simply to cover up the noise of the entering and gathering congregation is liturgically and artistically misguided.

It should be noted, however, that the custom of performing a large or important piece of music before the beginning of the service, although widespread today, does not have as long a tradition behind it as some would suppose. Until the last three centuries most major efforts of musicians serving in church were expended on music directly related to the liturgical service. For the majority of the history of the church, composers,

instrumentalists, choirs, and soloists collaborated for the purpose of enriching and embellishing the liturgical texts in the course of the service. Over the centuries this concentration of talent produced some of the finest music not only of the church, but of the entire Western civilization. Contemporary church musicians should bear this precedent in mind and concentrate the greater part of their energies on the performance of music directly related to the liturgical service.

The length and nature of preludial music should be determined by the nature of the service which follows and the theme of the Sunday or festival. An elaborate service with a lengthy procession on a high festival such as Pentecost would require rather lengthy and impressive music, in contrast to the simplicity of procession and music suggested by a Sunday in a penitential season. It is helpful if the music is closely related to the subsequent Entrance Hymn; the prelude could be based on the hymn or chant tune or on the mode of the entrance psalm.

When the Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness precedes the Holy Communion, the prelude might be quite brief so that the preliminaries of the day are not unduly extended. (This may be a reason for not using the Brief Order on a regular basis.) When the Brief Order is used, there need not be a prelude before it, and a short prelude, especially one based on the Entrance Hymn, may be played before that hymn is sung.

## BEGINNING THE SERVICE: THE ENTRANCE RITE

**B**efore the appointed time of beginning, all participants in the entrance procession should be arranged in the order in which they will enter the church. The entrance at the beginning of the service, it should be understood, is primarily the entrance of the ministers (presiding minister, assisting ministers, servers). Occasionally, the choir may join in the entrance procession as a sign of special festivity, as on the Sundays of Easter. Using a choir procession every week, however, dulls the festive impact of the procession at special times and does not make sufficient use of the varied richness of the church's tradition.

Normally, the choir could enter silently before the beginning of the prelude or after the prelude when their entrance would be a signal to the congregation to stand. They would not be preceded by a processional cross and would go directly to their places.

If the choir is seated in the rear gallery, they would not usually participate in processions, for to walk up to the chancel only to return to sing from the rear of the nave is liturgically pointless and borders on display

for its own sake. The participation by the choir should be functional, reverent, unostentatious.

Before the Entrance Hymn, the presiding minister or an assisting minister may announce the day and its significance. This announcement should be primarily liturgical in nature, making reference to the liturgical calendar, introducing the service and explaining any variations in it. For example:

This is the Second Sunday of Easter. It has sometimes been called "the Sunday of St. Thomas," for the Gospel for this Sunday always tells of Thomas' struggle to accept the fact of the resurrection. Thomas, who stands for each of us, at last came to faith. Jesus blessed Thomas, and he blesses us who have not seen and yet believe him.

Or:

This is the Third Sunday after Pentecost. The Second Lesson continues our reading these weeks of 2 Corinthians, and the Gospel is a continuation of this year's reading of Mark. A basic theme linking all three readings is our transformation from disobedience to obedience as Christ acts to overcome the divisions caused by sin.

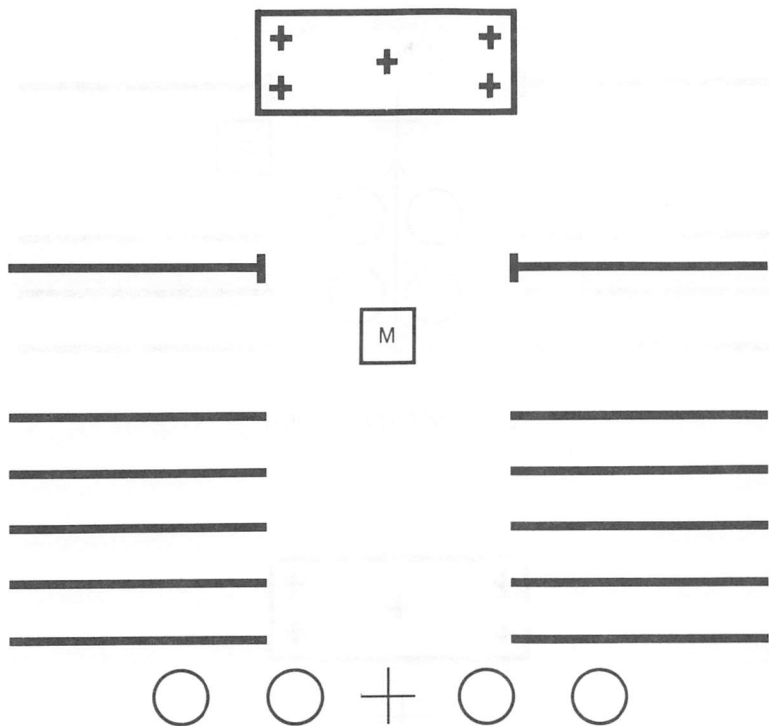
Often this information can be printed in the worship folder, and the service can proceed without announcement. Nonetheless, drawing up such a concise statement of the theme of the Sunday or of the lessons is a valuable exercise for the leaders of worship, and it is a help to all who worship, giving focus to the actions and words of that particular day.

The announcement should not merely duplicate information printed in the worship folder, and the minister should never simply read that information to the congregation. Rather, the congregation should be drawn to anticipate the particular character of the day in the church year and be alerted to any special requirements on its part.

If the Brief Order is used, it may follow the announcements of the day as another part of the preparatory words before the service begins. To show further the preparatory character of the Brief Order, the minister who leads it may vest in alb or surplice without stole or in a cassock without surplice and stole, and then when the Brief Order is over, put on the stole (or surplice and stole) for the Entrance Hymn.

If the Brief Order is led from the lowest level of the chancel (the lowest step) or from the head of the center aisle, the minister may leave the nave and go around to the rear of the church for the entrance procession, especially if additional vestments are to be put on (such as stole or

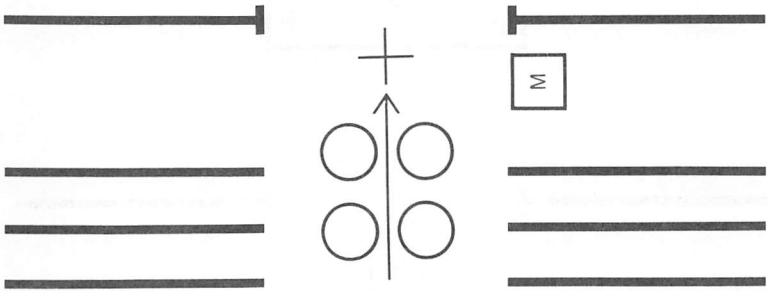
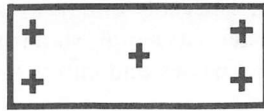
chasuble). A short prelude, especially one based on the Entrance Hymn, may be played. Or the minister may simply stand aside after the Brief Order and join the procession as it passes and enters the chancel.



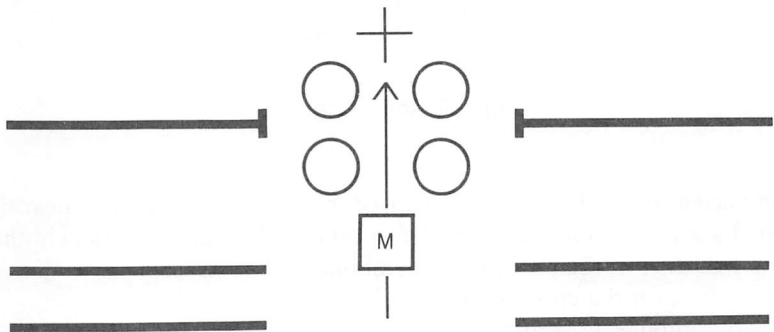
AT THE BRIEF ORDER

In ancient times, the cross was carried in procession and set up near the altar. Later, as the cross grew in size, it remained on the altar and another cross was used in the procession. Symbolically the procession, with the cross of Jesus going on before, is a powerful suggestion of the Christian life, following Christ wherever he leads. (See also hymn 377, "Lift high the cross.")

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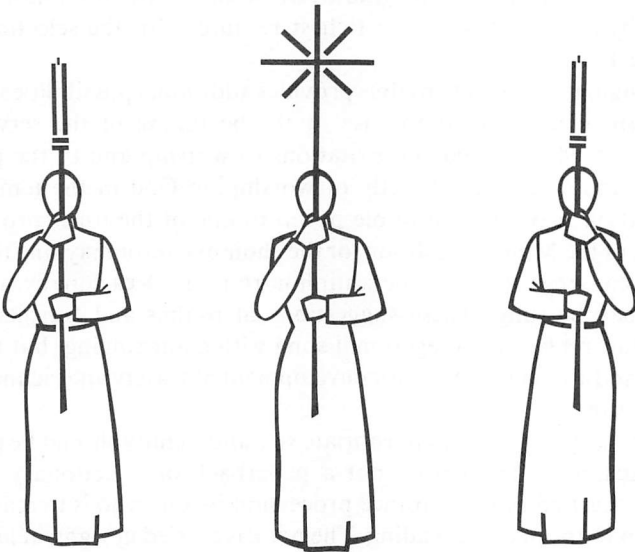


ENTRANCE PROCESSION



ENTERING CHANCEL

The one who carries the cross must be carefully instructed to walk at a deliberate speed, neither too slow nor too fast. Crucifers should also be instructed to grasp the staff of the cross with one hand in front of the face and the other approximately waist high. The cross should be carried carefully in a strictly vertical position (not jutting forward like a flag pole), with the arms of the cross at right angles to the direction of the procession. Extreme positions, such as inverting the hands and extending the elbows like wings, are simply odd, awkward, and not desirable. The cross and candles should be held high enough to be seen by the standing congregation. The crucifer also needs to be reminded to be careful of the cross when passing under arches or Advent wreaths or through doorways and other places where there is little clearance. The crucifer may be flanked by torchbearers, especially on festivals. If the aisle is not sufficiently wide for three abreast, the torchbearers can walk a little behind the cross and to either side. The crucifers and servers vest in albs. A cincture may also be worn, but it is not necessary.



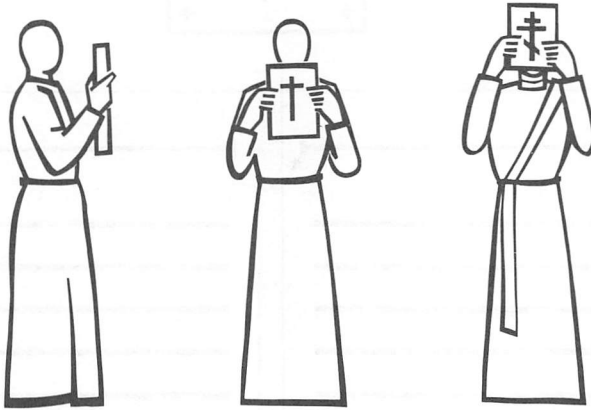
The Entrance Hymn, the first action of the Holy Communion, marks the beginning of the service and sounds the keynote for the day. When the procession enters the church, the congregation stands to sing the hymn and also acknowledge the symbol of their redemption which is carried at the head of the procession. The people also bow their heads as the cross passes them in the procession.

The rubrics direct that a hymn or psalm be sung at the beginning of the service in order to provide a vigorous, unified congregational action to open the service. The selection of the Entrance Hymn must be made carefully. Some of the most appropriate entrance hymns are those which invoke the Holy Spirit or hymns of joyful praise to God. As often as possible the Entrance Hymn should reflect the day or season of the church year. It is most convenient if the hymn has enough stanzas to cover the length of the procession, although instrumental interludes can bridge gaps and fill in space as needed. On festivals the singing of hymn stanzas in alternation between the congregation and choir (in *concertato* fashion with suitable instrumental accompaniment) can be effective. The cause of a powerful opening is enhanced through careful selection of hymns with strong musical content. The traditions of the German chorale and the English hymn offer two of the richest resources for the selection of the Entrance Hymn.

The singing of complete psalms provides additional possibilities. Certain psalms are ideally suited for use at the beginning of the service. For example, 95, 98, and 100 are invitations to worship and to the praise of God; 84 and 122 speak directly of worshiping God in the temple. The congregation may sing the whole psalm to one of the tones provided on page 442 of the Ministers Edition, or the choir or cantor may sing the verses and the congregation sing the antiphon-refrain. Occasionally a historic Introit may be sung. These suggestions of psalms and Introits are not intended to replace congregational song with choir singing, but rather to indicate additional resources for development of variety and richness in the entrance rite.

A lectionary or Bible of appropriate size and dignity should be provided for the readings. The book—not a paperback or a lectionary leaflet—should be carried in the entrance procession by one who is to read from it and taken to the place of reading. The book is carried upright, at least chest high. (The Eastern churches at the “little entrance” carry the Book of the Gospels at the level of the forehead.) Torches may be carried on either side of the book. The book is honored because it contains the Word of God.<sup>4</sup>





THE ORTHODOX MANNER

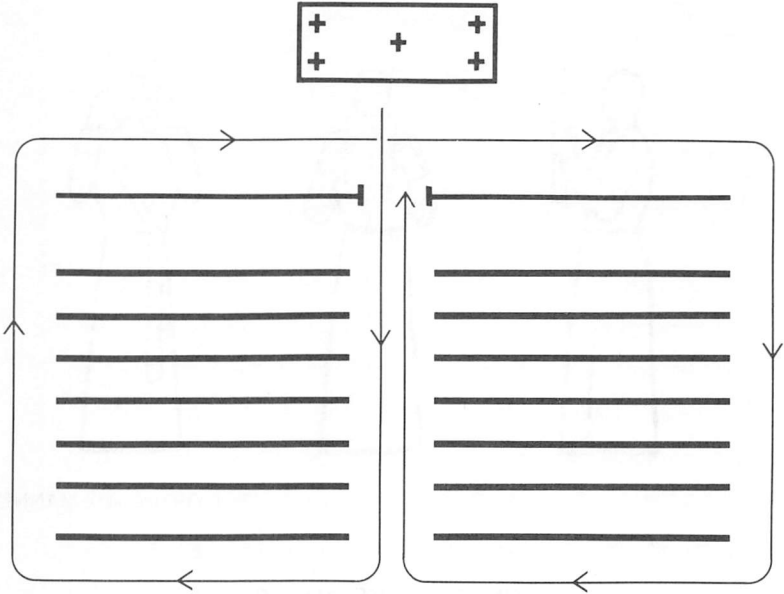
CARRYING THE BIBLE OR LECTIONARY

The route of the procession should vary depending on the nature of the Sunday or day. At non-festival times the entrance procession goes from the sacristy or rear of the nave to the ministers' chairs. On festivals, such as the Sundays of Easter, a long procession is appropriate. It could proceed, for example, from the chancel (the choir members having taken their places before the beginning of the hymn), down the center aisle, around the church, and back up the center aisle. (Diagrams, page 208.)

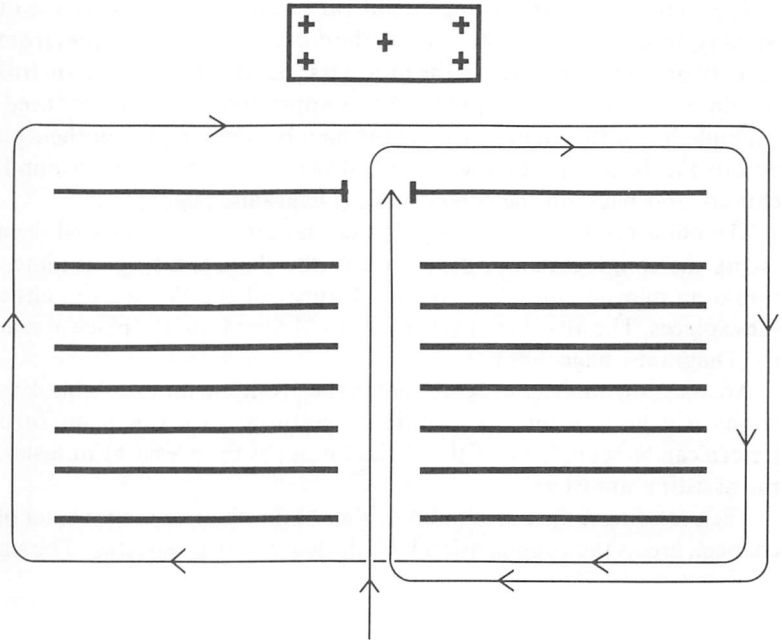
The ministers go to their places in the chancel, to chairs behind the altar facing the congregation or to the side of the chancel facing the altar. The presiding minister presides over the Liturgy of the Word from either of these places. The altar is not yet the focus of attention; the place of reading is. (Diagrams, page 209.)

An assisting minister or server holds the presiding minister's book so the hands will be free for the traditional gestures, or a small, unobtrusive lectern can be set in front of the chairs for use by the presiding minister and the assisting ministers.

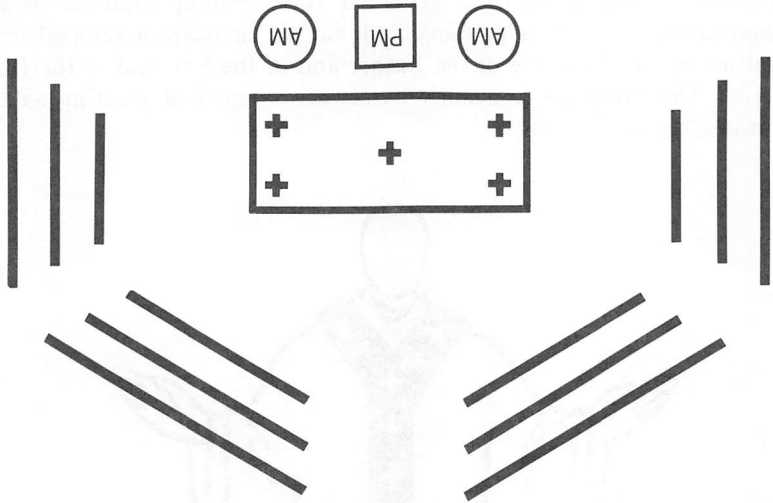
The presiding minister, standing either at the chair or in the center of the chancel, greets the congregation with the words of the Apostle.<sup>5</sup> The sign of



OR



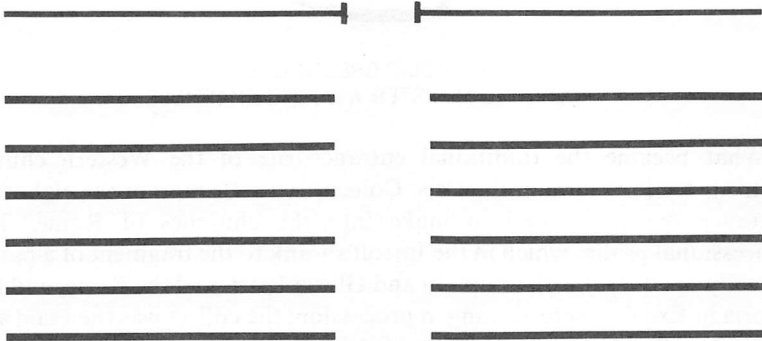
FESTIVAL PROCESSIONS



OR



 READING DESK



the cross is not made here by either the presiding minister or the congregation. This is a greeting and not an invocation remembering Baptism as “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” The presiding minister’s hands are opened in greeting as the Apostle’s words are said.



APOSTOLIC GREETING BY  
PRESIDING MINISTER WEARING CHASUBLE

What became the traditional entrance rite of the Western church (Introit, Kyrie, Gloria in Excelsis, Collect) is a reflection of the elaborate entrance the pope used to make into the churches of Rome. The processional psalm, which in the Introit shrank to the fragment of a psalm (usually one verse) with antiphon and Gloria Patri, and the Kyrie, and the Gloria in Excelsis were all sung in procession; the collect was then said as a “station collect” at the conclusion of the entrance when at last all were in

their places. This elaborate rite, designed originally to cover the ceremonies of a papal visit, is far more than is necessary or perhaps even desirable as a constant practice.<sup>6</sup>

A pattern such as this may be followed:

Advent	Kyrie	---
Christmas through Baptism of Our Lord	Kyrie	Glory to God in the highest
Sundays after the Epiphany	---	Glory to God in the highest
Transfiguration	Kyrie	Glory to God in the highest
Lent	Kyrie	---
Sunday of the Passion	---	---
Easter (50 Days) including Pentecost	Kyrie	Worthy is Christ
Trinity Sunday	Kyrie	Worthy is Christ
Sundays after Pentecost	---	Glory to God in the highest
All Saints and Lesser Festivals	---	Worthy is Christ
Christ the King	Kyrie	Worthy is Christ
Non-festival weekdays	---	---

On festival Sundays both the Kyrie and the Hymn of Praise are sung. On Sundays for which the color is green, either the Kyrie or the Hymn of Praise should be omitted. During Advent, the Kyrie is used and the Hymn of Praise is omitted. During the twelve days of Christmas and through the Baptism of Our Lord and on the festival of the Transfiguration, both Kyrie and “Glory to God in the highest”—the Christmas song of the angels—are sung. For the Sundays after the Epiphany, the Kyrie should be omitted and “Glory to God in the highest” sung to echo the celebration of Christmas. In Lent, as in Advent, the Kyrie is used and the Hymn of Praise is omitted. On the Sunday of the Passion, both the Kyrie and the Hymn of Praise are omitted, and after the Palm ceremonies the Eucharist begins directly with the Prayer of the Day. Throughout Easter (and on Trinity Sunday and Christ the King), Kyrie and “Worthy is Christ”—the Easter song of triumph—are sung. On the Sundays after Pentecost the Kyrie is

omitted and the traditional Hymn of Praise, "Glory to God in the highest" is sung. On occasion, hymn 166, "All glory be to God on high," may be sung. "Worthy is Christ" is sung on All Saints' Sunday and on Lesser Festivals that fall during the season after Pentecost. Thus the pattern is: at penitential times (Advent and Lent) the Kyrie alone; on green Sundays, the Hymn of Praise alone; on festival Sundays both the Kyrie and the Hymn of Praise. On weekdays that are not festivals, both are omitted and the presiding minister proceeds directly from the Greeting to the Prayer of the Day.

In penitential seasons, especially when a psalm is used as the Entrance Hymn, "Kyrie! God Father in heaven above" (hymn 168) or "Your heart, O God, is grieved, we know" (hymn 96) may replace the Kyrie. Also, especially when a psalm is used as the Entrance Hymn, "All glory be to God on high" (hymn 166) may replace "Glory to God in the highest" on occasion during the Sundays after Epiphany and Pentecost for which the color is green. This famous Decius hymn may receive special treatment in the form of instrumental accompaniment, descants, *concertato* arrangements, and alternate singing of stanzas by choir and congregation.

Occasionally it is appropriate to use choral settings of these hymns of praise, including settings which employ different translations of the text. The vast treasury of choral settings of the "greater Gloria" is available for festive use by the choir. The timely scheduling of some of the great settings of this text may prove to be of value to the congregation in meditating actively on the text. If the text is sung in a foreign language, the congregation should be provided with a word-for-word translation of the canticle.

The Gloria in Excelsis is an elaboration of the song of the angels over the fields of Bethlehem, which appears in Luke 2:14. In form it is a series of acclamations, a style which was characteristic of ancient Greek liturgy.<sup>7</sup>

The canticle opens with an antiphon,  
 Glory to God in the highest,  
 and peace to his people on earth.

It is followed by three stanzas of acclamation. The first is addressed to God the Father:

Lord God, heavenly King,  
 Almighty God and Father,  
 we worship you, we give you thanks,  
 we praise you for your glory.

The second stanza is addressed to God the Son in his relationship to the Father:

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
You take away the sin of the world:  
    have mercy on us;  
You are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
    receive our prayer.

The third stanza, also addressed to Christ, includes a reference to the Holy Spirit and returns at the end to the theme of the glory of the Father, echoing the opening antiphon:

For you alone are the Holy One,  
You alone are the Lord,  
You alone are the Most High,  
    Jesus Christ,  
    with the Holy Spirit,  
    in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The present translation by the International Consultation on English Texts has altered the traditional text by transposing some phrases and lines and by omitting others which were thought to have been redundant.

The Gloria in Excelsis was originally a part of the Daily Prayer of the Church and was imported from there into the Eucharist. It was never intended to be the invariable feature of the Holy Communion that our practice has assumed it to be.

“Worthy is Christ” is a modern composition introduced by the *Lutheran Book of Worship*. It is drawn from the hymns in the book of Revelation<sup>8</sup> and joins Passover and Easter with a glimpse of the eschatological kingdom. The *Common Service Book* and, following it, *The Lutheran Hymnal*, provided a New Testament canticle, *Dignus est Agnus* (“Worthy is the Lamb”), drawn from Revelation 5, 15, and 19, but the song was not preserved in the *Service Book and Hymnal*. “Worthy is Christ” begins and ends with an antiphon, “This is the feast of victory for our God, alleluia.”

A cantor or an assisting minister, remaining at the chair, intones the Kyrie when it is used.

The initial phrase of the Hymn of Praise (“Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth” or “This is the feast of victory for our God, alleluia”) is sung by a cantor, the choir, or the assisting minister, providing the congregation with a clear invitation to sing its part. Only as a last resort should the initial phrase be sung by the congregation. It is inappropriate for the minister to read the initial line and then for the congregation to sing the rest of the hymn. The basic principle of the minister and congregation answering each other in the same style—both singing or both speaking—should be maintained.

Pastors need to be encouraged to learn to chant. It is not a difficult practice to learn and adds immensely to the spirit of the service. Nearly all trained ministers who have developed the capacity to speak in public could easily learn to sing the simple songs which comprise their part of the liturgical dialog. Since good public speaking and liturgical singing are related abilities, using the same physical resources and instincts of communication, all pastors who seek to lead public worship effectively should possess the confidence and develop the ability to chant. There are occasions—high festivals, notable anniversaries—when chanting is almost indispensable. For the leader not to chant is to deprive the congregation of a liturgical experience that it is rightfully due. The presiding minister needs to chant only the Great Thanksgiving. All the other roles may be assigned to an assisting minister (who need not be ordained).

The Prayer of the Day is a bridge serving both as the conclusion to the entrance rite and as a preparation for the lessons. When the Kyrie and/or the Hymn of Praise have been omitted (that is, on weekdays and non-festival Sundays—Advent, Lent, and the green Sundays), the salutation and response (“The Lord be with you. And also with you.”) are omitted before the Prayer of the Day to avoid duplication of the initial and more important greeting which followed the Entrance Hymn (The Grace).

If the salutation is used, the presiding minister says it with a gesture similar to that at the Apostolic Greeting, and bows the head to acknowledge the response by the congregation. When the Prayer is intoned, the salutation and response should be sung.

Whether the salutation is used or not, the presiding minister, with hands joined at the breast, says “Let us pray.” (This gesture is traditionally made by placing the hands flat against each other, with the right thumb overlapping the left, as shown in Durer’s famous sketch of “Praying Hands.” This is the normal position for the hands during the service when not otherwise in use. If it is more comfortable, the ministers may fold their hands by interlocking the fingers. In any case, the hands should not dangle awkwardly at the sides.) In accordance with what appears to have been the ancient practice, silence (of at least 5-10 seconds) may be kept between the invitation to pray and the prayer itself to give the people time to collect their thoughts (the older name of this prayer was the “Collect”). The presiding minister then opens the hands in the classic attitude of prayer. The prayer should be read or sung deliberately, since each phrase carries a wealth of meaning and application. The Prayer of the Day is a presidential



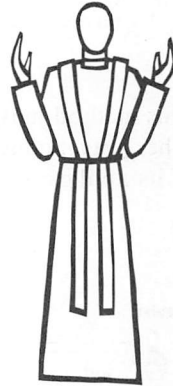
prayer given to the presiding minister. There is no provision for the congregation to pray the prayer in unison.



The Lord be with you



And also with you  
Let us pray



The Prayer

Intoning collects has been customary in parts of Lutheranism (especially in Scandinavia) although it has not been familiar to many in North America in recent years. A simple method for intoning the prayers is to apply the inflections according to this pattern:

1. The address:

(P) O God, you...  
Almighty and everlasting...  
Almighty God...  
...mercy and pit - y;  
...hope and char-i - ty;  
...to us anew ev' - ry day. (when  
final syllable is accented)

2. The petition:

By the work...  
and, that we...  
...in will-ing o - be-dience;  
...what you com - mand;

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3. The conclusion:

*metrum*

through your Son... through your Son, ...now and for - ever. (C) A-men.  
 through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (C) A-men.

This method may be used to intone the post-communion prayers and any other prayer constructed on the model of the classic collect. Two examples of its application follow:

Regular

(P) (1) Lord God of all nations, you have revealed your will to your people and  
 promised your help to us all. (2) Help us to hear and do what you command,  
 that the darkness may be overcome by the power of your light;  
 (3) through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (C) A-men. (Pentecost 2)

Irregular

(P) (2) Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Protect us by your  
 strength and save us from the threatening dangers of our sins,

(3) for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for - ever. (C) A - men. (Advent 1)

Another method is to intone the entire prayer on a single note. The above method is preferable, however, because the inflections illuminate the structure of the prayer and prevent monotony.

Chanting the prayers to these tones is not difficult and should be attempted at least on festivals. The prayers should be sung in an easy, relaxed manner which does not rush the text, not crowding the words together, and not lingering unduly on favorite syllables or tones. Vocal style and quality, while important, are not as significant as the clear projection of the text and the sensible grouping of the words in meaningful phrases.

The Prayers of the Day for the Christmas and Easter cycles and for all other festivals are printed with full trinitarian terminations (“through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever”). Prayers for days for which the color is green are printed with simple terminations (“through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord”). Some settings (such as a small congregation or a house communion) may make the use of the simple termination preferable even on festivals, and some pastors may desire to use the full trinitarian termination every Sunday and festival since it is the traditional practice. Either is permitted by the rubrics.

## THE LITURGY OF THE WORD OF GOD

The focus of attention now shifts to the lectern or pulpit from which the lessons are read.

On Sundays and festivals all three lessons are read. On weekdays when a shorter service is desired, the Second Lesson may be omitted while still allowing both the Old Testament and the New Testament to be heard. (And usually the First Lesson and the Gospel have an obvious relationship.) If

the Second Lesson is omitted, the Psalm is omitted also and the Verse is sung as an introduction to the Gospel. Or the Psalm may be sung and the Verse sung immediately after it.

When a still shorter service is desired, the First Lesson may also be omitted and the reading limited to the Gospel. The reading of the Gospel is never omitted under any circumstances. Thus a shorter service is possible but the primacy of the Gospel is maintained.

To avoid repetition of the Sunday reading throughout the week and to provide further homiletical possibilities, celebrations of the Holy Communion on weekdays may use the daily lectionary (Ministers Edition, pp. 97-104) which provides three readings (Old Testament, Epistle, Gospel) for each day of the week.

After the Prayer of the Day, a reader goes to the place of reading and announces and reads the First Lesson. The First Lesson, except on the Sundays of Easter, is normally from the Old Testament. Christianity is directly descended from Israel, God's ancient people, and because of that relationship, continues to benefit from the Hebrew Scriptures. The reader may be an assisting minister or may be a member of the congregation who, dressed in ordinary clothing, comes up from the congregation to read and returns to the congregation when the reading is over. The announcement of the lesson is prescribed: "The First Lesson is from the \_\_\_\_\_ chapter of \_\_\_\_\_." There is no need to specify the verses which are to be read since that information is of little importance to the hearers of the reading and the announcement can get cumbersome when the reading is drawn from two chapters and when verses are skipped. Nor is there need to be fulsome in giving the title of the book: "Genesis" is sufficient, not "The First Book of Moses, called Genesis;" "Isaiah" is sufficient, not "The Book of the Prophet Isaiah." The *Lutheran Book of Worship* prescribes no official translation of the Bible. For convenience, all references and verse divisions reflect the versification of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. If another version is used, it is important to check its versification against the RSV.

Verses placed in parenthesis may be omitted in public reading if a briefer reading is desired. These verses are a part of the lesson however, and should be included in the preacher's consideration. Normally the whole lesson, including the verses in parenthesis, should be read.

If the speaker is not identified in the beginning of a reading or if the referent of a pronoun early in the section is not clear, lectors should replace the pronoun with the name (*He said to him* becomes *Moses said to Pharaoh*) or add a phrase identifying the speaker (*Joshua said* or *Jeremiah writes*).

No concluding formula is necessary when the reading is over. When the lesson is finished, the reader should simply sit down. If some further cue to the choir seems necessary, the reader may say "Here ends the reading."

A choral setting of a biblical text appointed in the lectionary may be used occasionally to replace the reading of all or part of an appointed lesson. If the choral text does not present all of the assigned reading, the reader should supply the words not set to music, so that the people will be able to hear the full text.

The appointed psalm is sung as a meditation on the First Lesson, a response to it, and a bridge to the Second Lesson. This psalm is an important liturgical element and should not simply be passed over. Hearers of the lessons need a chance to assimilate the First Lesson before the Second Lesson begins. The required use of a psalm between the lessons provides for the restoration of psalm singing to its traditional place in the life of the church and gives the worshiper the opportunity to participate in the singing (or reading) of a portion of Scripture which in most instances comments on the lesson and which can of itself provide significant spiritual refreshment.

Psalm appointments for Sundays and festivals are included in the propers for each day. Instead of the three-year psalm system, a more modest collection of psalms may be used and repeated annually. Such a collection is Massey Shepherd's *A Liturgical Psalter for the Christian Year*,<sup>9</sup> which was developed for this very purpose.

Psalm references and verse division reflect the versification of the psalms in the translation used in the *Lutheran Book of Worship*. If a psalm is read from another source, it is important to check the versification against the psalter in the *Lutheran Book of Worship*. When using versions of the Bible that follow the Vulgate numbering system (e.g. the *Jerusalem Bible*) the number of the psalm must be checked also.

The psalm prayer printed with each psalm is intended for use only in Daily Prayer (Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, Prayer at the Close of Day) and not in the Eucharist or the Service of the Word. In the Eucharist the psalm selection, because it is a response between the lessons (parallel to the Gradual of earlier liturgies) is not concluded with the Gloria Patri.

Although the appointed psalms are designed for singing or corporate reading, that should not prevent the preacher from using them occasionally as sermon texts.

After the Psalm, the Second Lesson is announced and read. It is usually a portion of one of the letters of one of the Apostles, and is read in the Christian assembly today just as once it was read in the midst of its first

recipients. The announcement is prescribed: "The Second Lesson is from the \_\_\_\_\_ chapter of \_\_\_\_\_." The title of the book should be given simply, e.g. "First Corinthians," not "The First Letter of St. Paul the Apostle to the Christians gathered at Corinth." The same person who read the First Lesson may read the Second Lesson also, or a progression may be shown by having someone from the congregation read the First Lesson, an assisting minister read the Second Lesson, and the presiding minister read the Gospel.

The First Lesson, Psalm, and Second Lesson form a unit. The Verse is to be understood not as a response to the Second Lesson but as a preparation for the Gospel and a welcome of it, and (except in Lent) includes the Easter song, Alleluia, as a principal element. The verses appointed for Sundays and festivals are included in the Propers. These proper verses are a revision of the Roman Catholic selection, which was made for the three-year lectionary to reflect the thought of the day or season and to prepare for the specific Gospel. The appointed Alleluia Verse or the Lenten Verse (called the Tract, which does not use Alleluia because that word of Easter joy is put away and not sung during Lent) should be sung by the choir or cantor. Singing these proper texts, which are carefully selected to match the theme of the First Lesson and the Gospel, is an important responsibility of the church choir. The Verse may be sung to one of the psalm tones (Ministers Edition, p. 442) or to another setting. Generally, only in the absence of the choir will the congregation sing one of the two printed verses. "Return to the Lord" is sung during Lent and Holy Week; "Lord, to whom shall we go" is sung at other times. Choral or solo elements should be given their legitimate place in corporate worship, and therefore the congregational alternate is not desirable as a regular practice.

The Holy Gospel is normally read by one who has been ordained. Historically, reading the Gospel was the privilege of the deacon. In the words of the Gospel, Christ comes to his people and speaks to them anew. This is the climax of the reading of the Scriptures to which the first two lessons point, and it is a principal way in which Christ is present in the eucharistic assembly. The Gospel, therefore, has a different character than the other readings; and an ordained minister—one of whose functions is to represent Christ to the people—is the reader. The announcement is prescribed: "The Gospel according to St. \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ chapter." The people stand when the Gospel is announced and greet Christ, who comes in the Gospel, with the acclamation, "Glory to you, O Lord." When the reading is over the congregation cries out again in joy, "Praise to you, O Christ." (Historic Lutheran practice also admits the possibility of occasional choral performance of all or part of the Gospel.)



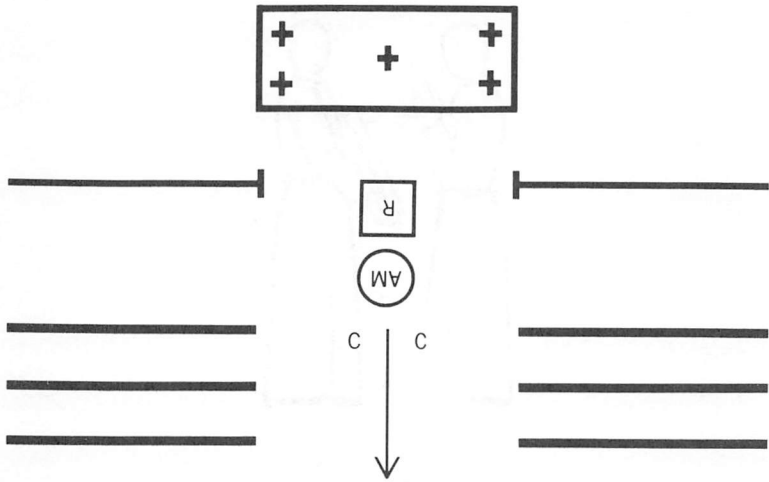
ASSISTING MINISTER HOLDING THE BOOK  
FOR THE READER OF THE GOSPEL

Normally the Gospel is read by the preacher from the place of preaching, especially if the sermon is to be based on the Gospel. 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. Instrumental music may also be played as the procession returns and the preacher goes to the pulpit for the sermon. (Diagram, page 222.)

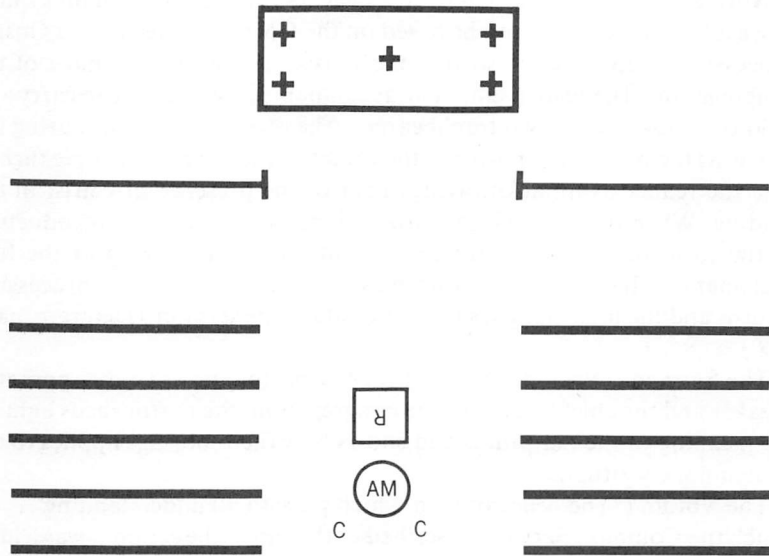
The Sermon is the living voice of the Gospel today. As God's appointed speaker and the chief teacher of the congregation, the pastor sheds light on the meaning of the Scriptures and shows how their message applies to the contemporary situation.

The Votum ("The peace of God which passeth all understanding . . ."), which the Common Service prescribed at the end of the sermon, was a little benediction which in a sense brought the Liturgy of the Word to a close. In the *Lutheran Book of Worship* order, the Liturgy of the Word continues through the Prayers and so no benediction is appropriate following the

222 CELEBRATING THE HOLY COMMUNION

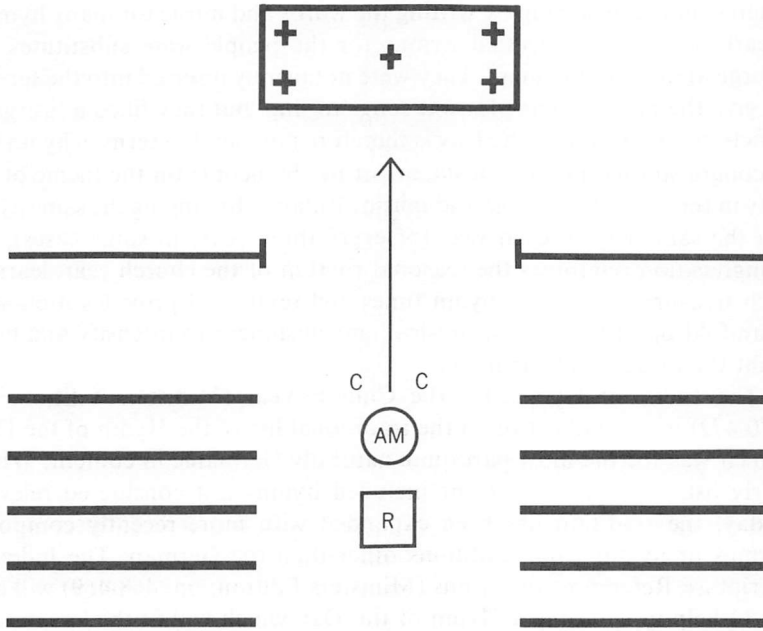


THE GOSPEL PROCESSION



READING THE GOSPEL





RETURN TO THE ALTAR

sermon. Retaining the Votum would seem to isolate the sermon as a special action separate from the rest of the service. That is a common notion, but one to be guarded against.

The Hymn of the Day is the chief hymn of the service. It is a comment on the readings and sermon as these relate to the church year. The earlier Lutheran and Episcopal practice was to sing a hymn as a preparation for the sermon. This is still an option in the *Lutheran Book of Worship*. But it is difficult for a congregation to see how a hymn fits with the sermon until they have heard the sermon. The preferred practice, therefore, is to follow the readings with the sermon to show clearly that the sermon is an exposition of the Scripture just read, and then to sing the hymn as a response to the whole proclamation in reading and sermon.

The singing of hymns has traditionally been a strong feature of Lutheran worship. Since the Reformation era, Lutherans have been noted for their interest in the singing of hymns of high quality embracing a large number of traditions, particularly that of the chorale. Luther himself stimulated

interest in hymn singing by writing the words and music for many hymns. Nearly all of his suggested hymns for the people were substitutes for liturgical items in the mass. They were not merely inserted into the service to give the people some pleasant songs to sing, but they filled a liturgical function. The Hymn of the Day is therefore not merely a sermon hymn but a congregational proper—a statement by the people on the theme of the day in the noblest language and music available. By singing the same hymn on the same day of each year (or every three years in some cases), the congregation reinforces the seasonal rhythm of the church year, learns a rich treasury of the best hymn tunes and texts, and provides itself with manifold opportunities for musical embellishment to intensify and highlight the meaning of the hymn.

The Index of Hymns for the Church Year (Ministers Edition, pp. 470-472) is a modification of the traditional list of the Hymn of the Day, which was for the most part quite naturally Germanic in content. Where early lists were incomplete or included hymns not considered relevant today, the tradition has been expanded with more recently composed hymns or hymns from traditions other than the German. The Index of Scripture References in Hymns (Ministers Edition, pp. 468-469) will also be of help in choosing a Hymn of the Day which will fit the lessons and sermon.

As the congregation develops familiarity with the Hymns of the Day and can sing them with confidence, opportunities for a variety of performance become available. The musical excellence of the traditional hymns of the day suggests a variety of embellishment. A large body of supporting instrumental and vocal literature related to the melodies of the Hymn of the Day is available or can be developed by the gifted musician. Hymn stanzas may be sung in alternation between choir and congregation. The designated choral stanzas may be performed in a host of various settings. Organs or instrumental accompaniment of congregational stanzas may be varied to suit the meaning of the text and the nature of the day in the church year. The organ or instrumentalists may even be given the opportunity to perform alternate stanzas in the absence of a sung text. (The congregation should be encouraged to follow the words of the instrumental stanzas in the hymnal.) None of this emphasis is intended to exaggerate the importance of the performance by choir or instrumentalists. Rather, the musicians help the congregation to see the Hymn of the Day as a focal point of the service, which through repetition year after year will elevate the level of the consciousness of the worshipers to the meaning of the sung texts and their relationship to the theme of the day in the church year.

The ministers stand at their chairs for the Hymn of the Day. The presiding minister leads the Creed from the same place. The Creed is to be understood as a response to the whole proclamation of the Word of God including the sermon. The Nicene Creed has traditionally been associated with the celebration of the Holy Communion. The increasing frequency of the celebration of the sacrament, which is a commendable movement, should not, however, result in a growing unfamiliarity with the Apostles' Creed. The *Lutheran Book of Worship* therefore establishes the Nicene Creed as the more solemn or festive creed and permits the Apostles' Creed on Sundays for which the color is green.

Following the original Greek text, the Nicene Creed has been translated with plural pronouns: "We believe." The plural is appropriate in a creed spoken by the whole congregation. It is a confession of the faith of the church, to which the individual adheres. The Apostles' Creed, which originated in a personal confession of faith at Baptism, emphasizes the importance of the personal commitment. Thus, with the use of both creeds, both the faith of the church and the individual's confession are emphasized.<sup>10</sup> The alternate reading in the Apostles' Creed "He descended to the dead" is the preferred reading and should be substituted in the text of the Creed when it is used.<sup>11</sup>

The rubric directs that the "Creed may be said." That is, the Creed may be omitted, especially on weekdays. It need not always be said on Sundays. It is a comparatively late addition to the service (the Creed was originally added to make the service ritually more complex) and has traditionally been regarded as a festive element that may be eliminated without damaging the integrity of the Eucharist. The Eucharistic Prayer, in any case, abounds in confessional and credal affirmations. If Holy Baptism or another rite with a creed is celebrated within the service, the creed is omitted at this point to avoid needless duplication.

The congregation may on occasion sing the hymnic version of the Nicene Creed, "We all believe in one true God" (hymn 374). The Hymn of the Day on those occasions could be sung before the sermon as the rubrics allow.

On festivals the Nicene Creed may be chanted to traditional tunes.<sup>12</sup> Choral settings of the creed may be used also, but consideration must be given to the length of time required for the choral singing of the Creed. If a language other than English is used, the congregation should be provided with a word-for-word translation of the text.

The prayers that conclude the first part of the Holy Communion should be understood as a response to the proclamation of the Word of God. They are the beginning of a mission to make God's love real in the world. The

same concerns which prompt the prayers, commit those who pray them to further action. The prayers are to be inclusive in scope and include not just the immediate concerns of the congregation nor of the church but the needs of the whole world.

Since the formulation of the prayers is not specified, they must be prepared for each service. Persons involved in the local situation are best able to balance properly the universal scope proper to Christian concern with the specific petitions of a given congregation. The preparation of the prayers is no less important than the preparation of the sermon.

The language proper to petition, intercession, and thanksgiving should prevail. Tendencies toward homiletical style in the prayer should be avoided; the petition should be concise and not extend into long paragraphs. Care must be taken to keep the prayers corporate in character and spirit so that all may include their personal petitions in words spoken by the minister and that all may join the prayers without reservation. People must not be forced to pray things they do not feel or believe.

An assisting minister leads the prayers. The congregation may kneel for the prayers, but the ancient practice was for the priestly people of God to stand for prayer on all Sundays, the day of resurrection. If the congregation stands for prayer, the ministers remain standing at their chairs. Or an assisting minister may stand on a chancel step or at the head of the center aisle facing the altar (but not yet *at* the altar). If the congregation kneels (as on a weekday, such as Ash Wednesday) the ministers kneel at the altar rail or on cushions or at prayer desks at their chairs.

The whole congregation responds after each portion of the prayers, and thus lengthy recitations by a single voice are avoided. When feasible, members of the congregation may be invited to offer petitions and thanksgivings individually.

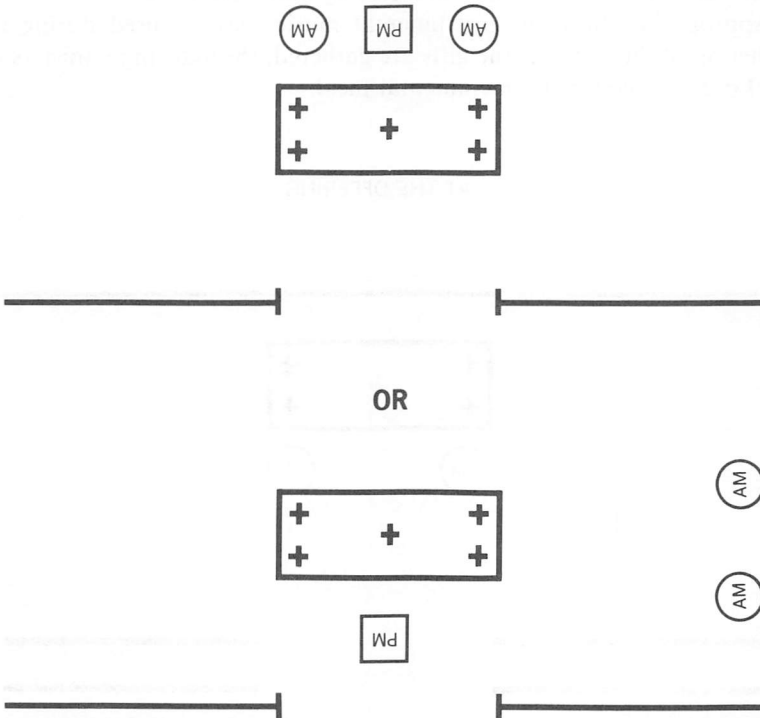
The presiding minister concludes the prayers by saying the final commendation.

### THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARISTIC MEAL

**T**he Liturgy of the Word is primarily verbal as the assembly listens to the proclamation of the word of God in Scripture and sermon. The Liturgy of the Eucharist, in obedience to the Lord's command, "Do this for the remembrance of me," makes that required memorial in words (the Great Thanksgiving) and in action (taking, eating, drinking). Both sorts of obedience together constitute the celebration of the Eucharist.

The Liturgy of the Word begins with the Apostolic Greeting, "The grace. . . ." The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins with the sharing of the peace (unless the option is chosen that places the sharing of the peace immediately before the distribution of the Holy Communion). The peace which enables people to live in unity and in the spirit of mutual forgiveness comes only from Christ whose word has been proclaimed. Without the intention to live in such unity, participation in the sacramental celebration is a mockery and, as St. Paul warns, is dangerous.<sup>13</sup> The peace is a sign that those who participate in it open themselves to the healing and reconciling power of God's love and offer themselves to be agents of that love in the world.

The first exchange is between the presiding minister, who speaks in Christ's name, and the entire congregation. It is not optional.



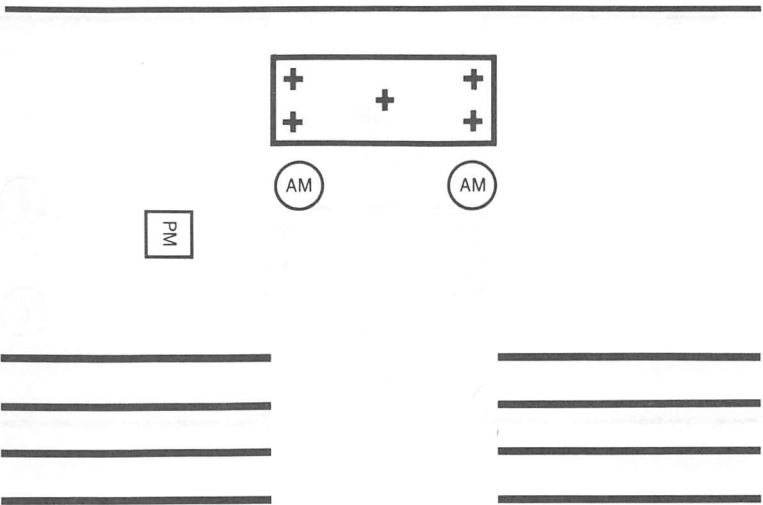
POSITIONS FOR PEACE

Following that exchange, the people may exchange the peace with each other. The personal exchange of the peace should be as unpatterned as possible, but its meaning and significance should be kept clear. It is not the occasion merely for conviviality. The choice of gesture, whether a handshake, holding hands, or an embrace, should be left to the persons themselves.

As a response to God's goodness, Christians offer their gifts and their very lives to him.<sup>14</sup> The gifts of money or gifts in kind should be gathered with as little ostentation as possible. It is the presentation of the gifts which has liturgical significance. There is no significance to the distribution of empty offering plates to the ushers except to show the congregation that it is time for the offering. The offering plates or baskets might better be kept in the back of the church and taken from there by the ushers. Precision movements by the ushers are unnecessary and distracting.

Appropriate choral or instrumental music may be used during the gathering of the gifts. As the gifts are gathered, the assisting ministers set the Lord's Table for the sacramental meal.

AT THE OFFERING

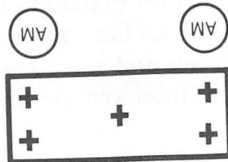


OR

*The Liturgy of the Eucharistic Meal 229*

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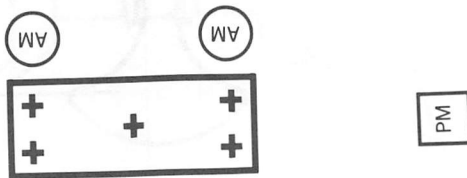
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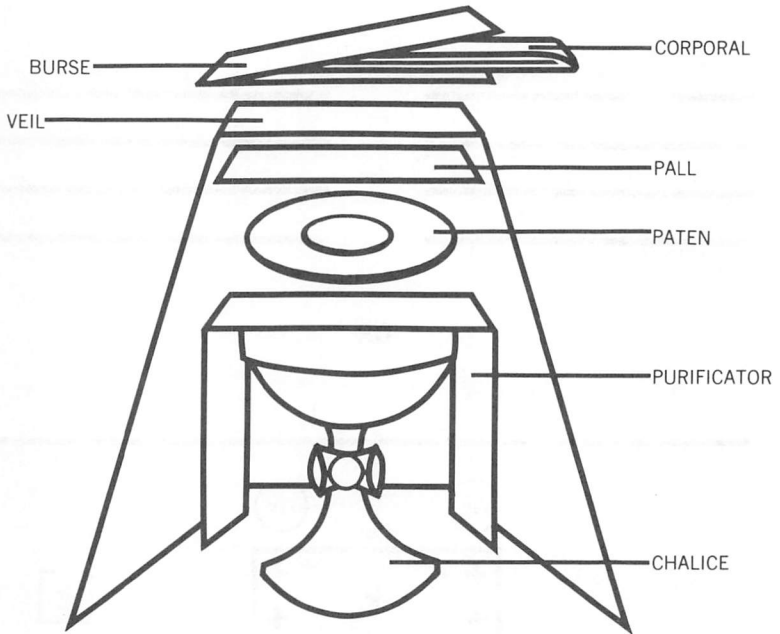
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The mechanics of preparing the elements and vessels, of handling them during the Great Thanksgiving, and of presiding over the distribution need to be mastered so that it all seems to happen effortlessly. At the same time, pastors must do these things with reverence as befits the mysteries of God. Time and thought are required for preparation as well as a lively sense of the nature and function of the sacramental liturgy.

Before the service, the chalice and paten are placed on a credence (table or shelf) at the side of the chancel and are usually vested.

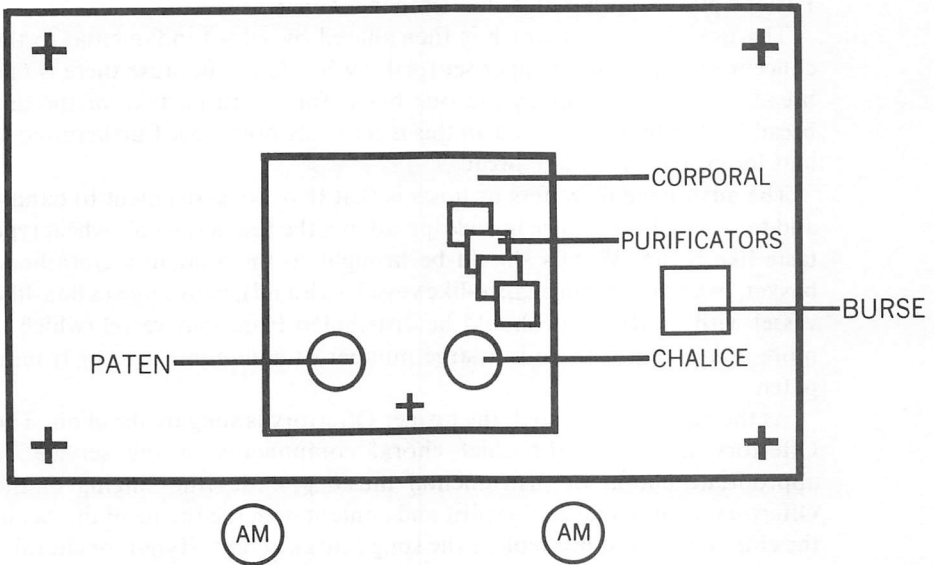


In many places it is customary to place the vested chalice on the altar before the service, but it is better to keep it on the side table until the table is set at the offering and the focus of the service shifts from the reading desk to the altar.

An assisting minister brings the vested chalice to the altar. A minister takes the corporal (of fine white linen, 21 inches square, although it may be larger<sup>15</sup>) from the burse (an envelope of stiffened fabric consisting of two 9-inch squares<sup>16</sup> hinged together, in which the corporal and sometimes the



pall are carried to and from the altar.) The burse is set aside and laid flat on the right side of the altar. The corporal is then spread on the center of the altar. The purificators (of fine linen, 13 inches square, folded into three equal rectangles and from side to side, making nine squares) are placed on the right side of the corporal next to the chalice. The paten is to the left of the chalice. During the Great Thanksgiving only one chalice and paten are on the altar. Other vessels needed in the distribution are brought later, after the communion of the ministers.



The chalice is to the right so that the assisting minister on the right (the deacon) may conveniently reach it for the administration. The chalice may be covered with the pall (which may be a corporal or a large purificator folded into nine squares or a stiffened piece of linen seven inches square) to keep foreign objects from falling into the chalice, but in many places the chalice pall is no longer in use.

If the bread and wine are on the credence, they are brought to the altar after the table is spread. A more desirable practice, however, is for representatives of the congregation to bring the gifts of bread and wine

along with the money at the presentation of the gifts. The offering of the bread and wine is a sign of what human labor has done to the gifts of God—making wheat into bread and grapes into wine. Thus we offer our whole selves and our whole lives to him.

The kind of bread used will determine the design of the vessel in which it is carried and placed and what the ministers do with it. While unleavened bread has been most widely used by Lutherans, the alternative use of leavened bread is not disallowed. If leavened bread is used, it should be brought to the altar on a plate (the traditional paten is too small) or in a basket as a loaf. (It is broken prior to or during the distribution.) Unleavened bread can also be obtained in a loaf form—as the Middle Eastern pita—and handled in a similar manner.

The use of one loaf which is then shared by all is fundamental to the concept of the Lord's Supper set forth by St. Paul: "Because there is one bread,<sup>17</sup> we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."<sup>18</sup> If a loaf is not used all this is seriously obscured. Furthermore, a loaf looks and tastes like bread.

The advantage of wafers or hosts is that they are convenient to handle and to store. Unlike those in widespread use, the heavier, whole wheat type taste like bread. Wafers should be brought to the altar in a cloth-lined basket, in a ciborium (a chalice-like vessel with a lid), or in a pyx (a box-like vessel with a lid). They should be distributed from that vessel (which is more convenient if there is a large number of communicants) or from a paten.

As the gifts are presented, the proper Offertory is sung by the choir. The Offertory is one of the chief choral components of the service. If appropriate choral or instrumental music precedes the singing of the Offertory, it should agree in spirit and content with the theme of the day in the church year and not replace the sung liturgical text. Hymn- or chorale-based compositions are particularly useful at this point in the service.

In the absence of appropriate musical resources one of the two offertories printed in place may be sung by the congregation. Each is suitable to any season of the church year, but congregations should be encouraged to learn both to prevent monotony and to increase their understanding of what is being done in the offering.

Settings of classic Offertory texts have been made by many composers, and these may be sung, providing that care is taken to insure compatibility with the theme of the day as suggested by the readings.

The gifts of money are received by an assisting minister who places them on the credence so that there will be room on the altar for the celebration of

the Eucharist and so all the actions of the celebration may be clearly visible to the people. Where the altar is against the “east” wall, the offering plates may remain on the altar, to one side.

All the bread and wine intended for use should be placed on the altar, beside (but not yet on) the corporal.

The Offertory Prayer is said by an assisting minister. After the gifts have been received and the prayer has been said, the bread and wine are made ready for the Great Thanksgiving. The loaf is placed on the paten or plate and placed on the corporal. If wafers are used, one (especially a large one, the “priest’s host” which is made large so it can be seen by the congregation) is placed on the paten and the ciborium is set on the corporal behind the paten. Wine is poured from the flagon or cruet into the chalice, and the flagon or cruet is set on the corporal behind the chalice. These actions provide a desirable break between the offertory prayer and the Great Thanksgiving.

After the preparations are complete, the presiding minister comes to the altar to begin the Great Thanksgiving, flanked by the assisting ministers. If there is only one assisting minister, that minister stands to the right of the presiding minister.

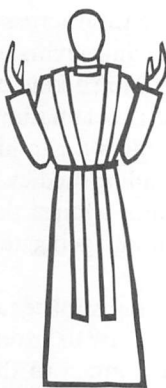
The preferred position of the minister is to face the congregation across a free-standing altar. It indicates the nature of the Great Thanksgiving as both praise and proclamation at once or, more precisely, a third kind of address—thanksgiving—which embraces both praise and proclamation. Luther himself noted the appropriateness of a free-standing altar in his *Deutsche Messe*,<sup>19</sup> although Lutherans, following the prevailing medieval Christian practice, have tended toward positioning the altar against the “east wall.” Either position is permissible, but the position facing the people is the more desirable.

The Preface dialog and the Preface are sung by the presiding minister as the Great Thanksgiving begins. It is inappropriate for anyone else to intone the text. The singing of the Preface by the minister adds much to the solemnity and significance of the Thanksgiving. The melodies are not difficult to master and can be performed by any preacher who possesses sufficient ability to deliver a sermon effectively. The words are sung in the rhythm of clear, dignified speech, without undue haste on the one hand or delay on the other and with a feel for the flow of the melodic line.

The Great Thanksgiving is to be understood primarily as an act of praise and thanksgiving to the Father. Following Jewish customs, the emerging Christian liturgies blessed God (that is, thanked him) for his works of kindness and love.

There are, however, some problems in translating the preface versicles. Some think that “The Lord be with you” (Latin, *Dominus vobiscum*) refers to the Spirit; others think that this refers to Christ. Some see the Spirit implied in the people’s response *et cum spiritu tuo*, traditionally translated “and with thy spirit,” understanding it to say something more than merely “and also with you.” The Latin, moreover, has no verb, but an English translation requires one. Some argue that the translation should be indicative, “The Lord is with you.” The usual understanding, based on 1 Corinthians 16:23 and 2 Corinthians 13:13 and the formula *Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum* (“The peace of the Lord be with you always”), which includes the verb, is that the verb should be subjunctive, expressing a prayer, “The Lord be with you.”

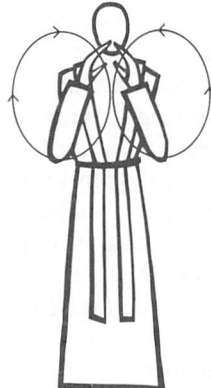
The last words of the Preface dialog set the tone for the whole thanksgiving: “thanks and praise.” This expands upon the minister’s line “Let us give thanks to the Lord our God,” and concludes emphatically with “praise,” appropriate for the thanksgiving.



The Lord be with you



*And also with you*



Lift up your hearts



We lift them to the Lord

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

*It is right to give him thanks and praise.*

Beginning with the preface and throughout the Great Thanksgiving, the biblical gesture of praying with hands uplifted and outstretched—which Christianity continued from Judaism—is appropriate because it gives visual expression to the import of the words. Even if the pastor’s back is to the people during the prayer, the gesture is observable. When the minister sings “Lift up your hearts,” the hands each describe a graceful circle.

The earliest Christian practice was to move from the dialog to an extended praise of the Father. By the fourth century, it had become customary to break or conclude this long section with a hymn, “Holy, holy, holy Lord,” and in the West, the part of the praise before the Sanctus acquired a character of its own as a seasonal variable. It was called the Preface and was phrased at the end to introduce the Sanctus. Thus the Preface joins our worship with that of the company of heaven.

The text of the Sanctus is a series of acclamations based on the angels’ cry which accompanied Isaiah’s vision of God (Isaiah 6:3; also Psalm 118:26) and with which the people greeted Jesus as he entered Jerusalem on the way to his death, Mark 11:9-10. Early in Christian history “heaven” was added to the text from Isaiah. The Sanctus is a recognition of the presence of the thrice-holy, described by the Eastern churches as “Holy God, Holy and mighty, Holy and immortal.” The ministers may bow low over the altar for the opening lines of the Sanctus which recall Isaiah’s vision of the majesty of God.

Luther’s “Isaiah in a vision did of old” (hymn 528) may replace the Sanctus on occasion. When it is used, the final phrase of the appointed Preface should be modified to introduce the hymn which is not simply the cry of the seraphim but a paraphrase of the account in Isaiah. The Preface should conclude: “And so with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join in adoring song.”



The organist may want to underscore with significant registration the words of the seraphim quoted in the hymn.

To meet the requirements of the various points of view within Lutheranism, there are three options provided following the Sanctus. At the earliest time to which we can trace the church’s practice, a common

outline of the General Thanksgiving had already developed to which the chief liturgies of Christianity have adhered. The nearly universal practice of Christianity has been that following the Sanctus, the praise of the Father continued, spanning the history of salvation from Creation to Consummation. The narrative of praise and thanksgiving is usually Christological throughout and includes a specific remembrance of the sending of Christ as well as the narrative of Institution, a recital of the particular event which justifies the present act of praise.

Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father:  
 Endless is your mercy and eternal your reign.  
 You have filled all creation with light and life;  
 heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
 Through Abraham you promised to bless all nations.  
 You rescued Israel, your chosen people.  
 Through the prophets you renewed your promise;  
 and, at this end of all the ages, you sent your Son,  
 who in words and deeds proclaimed your kingdom  
 and was obedient to your will, even to giving his life.  
 In the night in which he was betrayed,  
 our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
 broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
 Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
 Do this for the remembrance of me.  
 Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
 and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
 This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
 shed for you and for all people,  
 for the forgiveness of sin.  
 Do this for the remembrance of me.  
 For as often as we eat this bread and drink from this cup,  
 we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

The narrative of the Institution is not a reading of a portion of the Bible nor a conflation of scriptural excerpts. It is our telling of the story now. Ritual in any religion bridges time and space, erases distance and makes the past a contemporary experience. In the celebration of the Eucharist we "remember" Christ in this profound and biblical way. The remembrance is the goal of the act of thanksgiving: we are to remind those assembled (and in a sense even the Father<sup>20</sup>) of the promise contained in Jesus' life and death. The older English translation "in remembrance of me" (often carved on the

communion tables of Reformed churches) is a weak translation of the vigorous sense of remembering inherent in St. Paul's Greek text, and does not bear the sense of purpose which the *Lutheran Book of Worship* translation is designed to suggest.

The words concerning the cup, "This cup is the New Covenant in my blood," are to be understood in the sense of the new covenant being sealed by the blood (that is, by the death) of Christ, which recalls the Passover and the seal of blood on the doorposts of the Israelites in Egypt and the blood of the covenant (Exodus 24). The translation "shed for you and for all people" is the clear meaning of the New Testament Greek "for you and for many" (literally, "for the many"); see Isaiah 53. "Many" is a common New Testament form of understatement meaning "everyone."

The congregation in three short sentences proclaims the mystery of faith: "Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again." The three affirmations move from the past to the present to the future and embrace the essence of the Christian faith.

The narrative remembrance leads into specific prayer, *the remembrance (anamnesis*<sup>21</sup>*)*.

Therefore, gracious Father,  
with this bread and cup  
we remember the life our Lord offered for us.  
And, believing the witness of his resurrection,  
we await his coming in power  
to share with us the great and promised feast.

Here we directly call our Lord's life, death, and resurrection to memory, before God and the assembly. The narrative of Institution has brought the bread and the cup to the center of attention, and the anamnesis is made both with words and with the presence of the bread and cup. The prayer offered with words and with objects combines the motifs of remembrance of the life our Lord offered for us, his resurrection, and his promised return.

The people punctuate the anamnesis with their cry, echoing the Maranatha of the primitive church,<sup>22</sup> "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." The remembrance is not only of past events which now live again but is an anticipation of the fulfillment of Christ's work.

Thus the anamnesis leads into the final prayer, the invocation of the Holy Spirit (*epiclesis*<sup>23</sup>).

Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit,  
the Spirit of our Lord and of his resurrection,

that we who receive the Lord's body and blood  
 may live to the praise of your glory  
 and receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.

This is the prayer for the sending of the Spirit to the meal so that it and all of God's acts and promises may come to fulfillment for us and the world. The prayer is that the life-giving Spirit will make the meal effective in us. "The Spirit of our Lord and of his resurrection" is deliberately ambiguous: it is the Holy Spirit (who is the Spirit of Christ) and it is the spirit in the sense of the essential meaning, mood, and disposition.

Again the people cry out in invocation of the Spirit, "Amen. Come Holy Spirit," paralleling the cry for the return of Christ and echoing the traditional antiphon of Pentecost, "Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love."

Finally all the themes are gathered together in the yearning for the unity of these prayers at this Eucharist with those of all God's servants "of every time and every place" in the ceaseless prayer of Christ the High Priest, looking toward the Last Day of his final triumph.

Join our prayers  
 with those of your servants of every time and every place,  
 and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great High Priest  
 until he comes as victorious Lord of all.

The people then join in the grand doxology of the Holy Trinity, which is similarly phrased in the *Lutheran Book of Worship*, the Roman mass, and the *Proposed Book of Common Prayer*.

Through him, with him, in him,  
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
 all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father,  
 now and forever.

The general outline of the Great Thanksgiving is thus:

Thanksgiving for Creation  
 Dialog  
 Sanctus  
 Remembrance of Redemption  
 Narrative of Institution  
 Anamnesis  
 Supplication for the Kingdom transformed into Epiclesis  
 Doxology



The *orans* (Latin for “praying”) posture is appropriate for the opening sections of the Great Thanksgiving, with hands open and uplifted. During the Words of Institution, at “took bread,” the presiding minister takes and holds the bread (the host or the loaf; not the paten), raising it. At the words “took the cup” the minister takes the chalice, raising it. The gestures are not so much to imitate what Jesus did at the Last Supper as to connect his words of promise visually with *this* bread and *this* cup. At a freestanding altar, it is appropriate, having lifted the element, to turn slightly to the left and to the right to show the bread and cup to all the congregation. These gestures should be ample and deliberate, not hurried. One should pause in reading the text to allow enough time to execute them comfortably. The bread is not broken at this point; this is the Thanksgiving, the blessing of God. The breaking of the bread comes later.

During the congregation’s proclamation of the mystery of faith, the hands are joined. They are outstretched again for the paragraph “Therefore gracious Father. . . .” The hands may be joined again for the congregation’s response, “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”

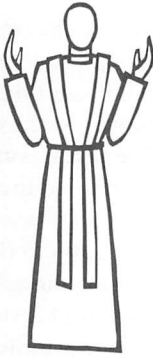
During the paragraph “Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit . . .” the presiding minister’s hands may be spread over the bread and cup (as at the Thanksgiving over the water in Holy Baptism). The hands remain spread over the elements as the congregation responds, “Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.” Or, since there is not agreement among Lutherans concerning the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the bread and wine, the presiding minister may simply resume the praying posture.

For the last paragraph, “Join our prayers . . . ,” the hands are joined before the breast to emphasize the unity the prayer speaks of.

At the final doxology, “Through him, with him, in him,” the bread and the cup are elevated together. This gesture is especially appropriate at a freestanding altar where it can be seen easily. Traditionally, the host was held above the chalice, but if a loaf is used, it is better to hold it in one hand and the chalice in the other, lifting them side by side. Or, the presiding minister may lift the bread and the assisting minister on the right may lift the chalice. The elevation here should be interpreted as Luther interpreted it<sup>24</sup>—a gesture of praise to accompany the praise-filled words for the confession and adoration of Christ’s presence. (Illustration, page 240.)

When the altar is against the wall, the presiding minister may turn and face the people for the Words of Institution (“In the night in which he was betrayed . . . we proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”) Or, one assisting minister could hold the altar book and another assisting minister hold the bread and cup, and the entire Great Thanksgiving could be done facing the people.

240 CELEBRATING THE HOLY COMMUNION



Holy God, mighty Lord. . .



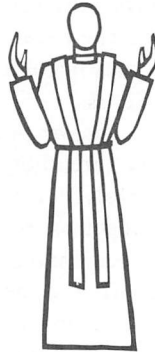
This is my body.



This cup is the  
new Covenant



*Christ has died.  
Christ is risen.  
Christ will come again.*



Therefore, gracious  
Father. . .



*Come, Lord Jesus*



Join our prayers. . .



*Through him, with him, in him. . .*

OR



AT THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Ministers Edition of the *Lutheran Book of Worship* provides four eucharistic prayers. There was not room to include them all in the Pew Edition, and while it is desirable for the congregation to have before them the entire text of a service, it is not absolutely necessary. Prayer I, "Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father," is the prayer in the Pew Edition. Prayer II, "You are indeed holy, O God," is a more festive elaboration of Prayer I and is especially suitable for the days of Christmas and of Easter. The congregation is able to participate in the responses of Prayer II even without the text before them, since the lines which cue the responses are the same as in Prayer I. When Prayer II is used, the assisting ministers should say the responses loudly to assist the people in joining them. For further variety, the two prayers are so structured that sections of one may be used within the other (e.g. "Therefore, gracious Father, with this bread and cup" from Prayer II may replace the section that begins with the same words in Prayer I). The sung doxology, "Through him, with him, in him . . .," is used only with Prayer I and Prayer II. Both prayers I and II were written by the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship.

Prayer III is a modification of the Prayer of Thanksgiving in the *Service Book and Hymnal*, which, in a slightly revised form, appeared in Spanish in *El Culto Cristiano* (1964) and in English translation in *Worship Supplement* (1969). The prayer has a basically trinitarian shape and is based on proposals for a eucharistic prayer made by Luther Reed<sup>25</sup> and Paul Zeller Strodach,<sup>26</sup> which were drawn from ancient models (the *Liturgy of St. James*, the *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, *Apostolic Constitutions*, the *Roman Missal*, the *Liturgy of St. Basil*). Prayer III has no congregational responses except the "Amen" at the end, which the people should be taught to say loudly and boldly as the principal Amen of the service.<sup>27</sup> (In the *Service Book and Hymnal* this Amen was given to the minister as part of the prayer and was not a congregational response to the prayer.) Since in this prayer the doxology is said, the Amen is said, not sung.

Prayer IV is a translation by Gordon Lathrop of the classic prayer attributed to Hippolytus of Rome (late second-early third century). Because of its age and its manner of setting forth the Gospel, this prayer is of immense ecumenical significance. When it is used, this prayer follows the third sentence of the Preface dialog ("Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give him thanks and praise"). The Preface itself and the Sanctus are omitted, for they were not part of this prayer, which developed before the Preface and the Sanctus were introduced. Prayer IV is especially useful on weekdays or whenever a simple service is desired.

For those who wish to follow the sixteenth-century Lutheran Church

Orders rather than the wider practice of the Christian church, the use of the Words of Institution alone is permitted as a second option, following the Sanctus. This use is based on Luther's Latin and German Masses in which he solved the problem of the offensive sacrificial language in the Roman Canon of the time by discarding the entire prayer and leaving only the bare words of Scripture.<sup>28</sup> The Words of Institution in Luther's revisions were connected to the Preface and were followed by the Sanctus. It was not a happy solution, for the effect of this drastic action was that these words of Scripture came to be understood as consecratory in themselves<sup>29</sup> and the "moment of consecration" located precisely here. The words thus came to be understood by many in a magical sense, and the original error of misunderstanding sacrifice was compounded. Moreover, the barrenness of this central act of the Christian assembly obscured the richness of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving.

Luther suggested, however, that the "words of blessing" be sung, and in the German Mass he provided a tone. The tone he provided was the gospel tone, thus reinforcing the proclamation of these words. Chanting the words was common in Germany and Scandinavia and was brought to North America, but it was eventually dropped. Those who use the bare Verba should consider chanting these words so that something of the spirit of praise be retained and so that this part of the Eucharist not pass by the congregation too quickly.

A third option, following the Sanctus, is to offer a prayer of thanksgiving and then to say the Words of Institution to remove them somewhat from the immediate context of prayer. This is the recent custom of Scandinavian Lutheran churches and is also employed in the *Worshipbook* of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and the *Book of Common Order* of the Church of Scotland. The prayer of thanksgiving (its source is the 1942 *Mass Book* of the Church of Sweden) is less comprehensive than the Eucharistic Prayer, briefly recounting what God has done in Christ and praying for the Holy Spirit. The presiding minister may chant the Words of Institution after the prayer to give them dignity and solemnity.

Those who plan the service must not be led to choose the Verba alone simply because that will shorten the service. There are other ways of keeping the service within a reasonable time limit, and this central act of Christianity is not the place to make cuts. The options of the Verba alone and of prayer followed by the Verba are provided for those who find the traditional Eucharistic Prayer theologically unacceptable. If some are convinced theologically that the Verba must not be set within a prayer, let them choose the prayer of thanksgiving followed by the Verba. If on

theological grounds some find that unacceptable, let them use the Verba alone. Otherwise the Eucharistic Prayer should be used.

Then, the Great Thanksgiving, which began with the preface dialog, is concluded by the assembly praying the Our Father. This familiar and beloved prayer thus becomes the table-prayer of the congregation. It should be sung to give it solemnity and joyfulness and to set this apart from the many other ways the prayer is used by Christians. The traditional music is provided in the Third Setting of the Holy Communion (Ministers Edition, p. 299) and may be used with any of the settings.

If the Peace has not been shared before the offering, it may be exchanged here. This is the location of the Peace in the Roman Catholic Mass. Sharing the Peace before the offering is a reconciliation in preparation for offering the great Prayer of Thanksgiving; sharing the Peace before the communion is a reconciliation in preparation for sharing the sacrament of unity.<sup>30</sup>

If a loaf of bread is used for communion, after the Our Father it is broken for distribution. The assisting ministers may help the presiding minister in breaking it, if it is to be broken into many pieces. It may, however, simply be broken in half by the presiding minister and then at the distribution pieces may be broken off from the half-loaf for each communicant. This practice makes a paten unnecessary. But if the bread makes crumbs, a basket or plate should be used in the distribution.

The rubrics permit the presiding minister to say at the breaking of the bread, "When we eat this bread we share the body of Christ." But words may be unnecessary; the action speaks powerfully for itself. Words in fact are too limiting here and too didactic. The act of breaking the bread speaks of a host of associations, both religious and secular—Jesus feeding the multitudes, sharing with the poor, a dinner table—and all are relevant.

A parallel action is permitted also. The presiding minister may lift the cup and say, "When we drink this cup we share the blood of Christ," and the congregation may respond, "Reveal yourself to us, O Lord, in the breaking of bread, as once you revealed yourself to your apostles." The action of lifting the cup is liturgically pointless. It has no purpose, either practical or symbolic, and is introduced here simply to parallel the action with the bread, to give equal time to the chalice. The congregational response may be taught as part of the private preparation of those about to receive communion or it might be set to music and sung as part of the music during the communion.

If an invitation to the Lord's Table is necessary, an assisting minister may say, "Come, for all things are now ready. The gifts of God for the people of God."

When the bread has been broken, the presiding minister receives the bread and wine.<sup>31</sup> The presiding minister throughout the service represents Christ the host, and here the communing of the self parallels the action of Jesus at the Last Supper, who following the usual Jewish custom, ate the bread himself and then gave it to the disciples and drank some wine and gave the cup to the disciples. Having received communion, the presiding minister administers the bread and wine to the assisting ministers.

Additional vessels required for the communion (patens or plates, chalices) are then brought to the altar and filled. Sharing the cup of wine is the action that the New Testament indicates. It is implied in Jesus' command "Drink of it [the cup] all of you . . ." and it is fundamental to St. Paul's concept of the sacrament.<sup>32</sup>

Various chemical and bacteriological studies have established the hygienic safety of the common cup. Where circumstances prevent sharing the chalice directly, the use of a pouring chalice still preserves something of the basic point. The use of pre-filled individual glasses destroys the significance of the one cup, is excessively individualistic (which is contrary to the spirit of the sacrament), and is totally undesirable historically and theologically. The use of paper cups is distasteful aesthetically, liturgically, and theologically; and disposable cups of plastic or paper are the product of a garbage-producing, throw-away culture that respects neither the creation nor the sacramental element.

The presiding minister distributes the bread and an assisting minister the cup. (The original reason was that the presiding minister, as pastor, would know the people in the parish and who was able to receive and who was not. The deacon followed with the chalice and passed over any to whom the presiding minister did not commune.) When the number of communicants is large, several people should assist in the distribution so that each communicant may be addressed personally without unduly prolonging the time of the distribution. Even in small congregations, at least one assisting minister should assist in the distribution. There is no reason why the pastor should do it alone. Assisting ministers need not be ordained. In fact, laypeople should be appointed for this ministry on principle, for the presiding minister should be assisted by others whose ministries contribute to the whole work of worship.

Communicants kneel at the altar rail or stand in a row or semi-circle before or around the altar. Kneeling is especially suitable for Advent and Lent and penitential times. Standing is appropriate during Easter; the

ancient church even forbade kneeling during the great fifty days of rejoicing. The distribution is traditionally done from the minister's left to right, since this is most convenient for right-handed ministers.

The bread is placed in the communicant's hand. It is the more ancient and more natural practice. The medieval custom of putting the bread on the communicant's tongue, which has been followed by many Lutheran parishes, arose to prevent the carrying away of the host or part of it for superstitious use. Communicants should be taught to place the right hand open on top of the left to make a "throne" for Christ, as an ancient explanation puts it,<sup>33</sup> and to raise both hands to the mouth. If the piece of bread is quite large, the communicant will have to take the bread in the left hand in order to bite it.

When individual glasses are used, the communicant will receive the bread in the right hand (symbolically the honorable hand) and raise it to the mouth. The glass is held in the left hand until the time of the administration of the wine.

When the common cup is used, communicants should be taught to assist the minister who delivers the chalice by raising the head and by grasping the base of the chalice to guide the cup to the mouth. The minister wipes the rim of the chalice with the purificator and turns the chalice after serving each communicant.

A continuous procedure for distribution is desirable to enhance the sense of the unity of the congregation. As communicants leave the altar, others immediately take their places. The point is to move the congregation smoothly and quickly and to suggest something of the unity of the eucharistic assembly, which the individual "tables" do not indicate effectively.

An alternate procedure is for the ministers to remain in one place while the communicants come to them in procession. The presiding minister, who distributes the bread, might remain in the center and assisting ministers, each with a chalice, might be on either side. There should be sufficient space between the minister with the bread and the minister with the chalice so that communicants will be able to chew the bread before receiving the wine. This is especially necessary when a loaf of bread is used instead of wafers.

When the congregation is large, pairs of ministers may be stationed at various points in the aisle to make the distribution without undue delay.

The moment of reception is an intensely personal appropriation of what is being celebrated corporately. The pace of distribution must be such that the minister can address the words to the communicant personally. The

touch of the minister's hand placing the bread in the hand of the communicant is also significant in this personal communication as is the extending of the chalice. All this underlines the "for you" of the formula of distribution that Luther emphasized so strongly. The wording of the formulas of distribution—"The body of Christ given for you"; "The blood of Christ shed for you"—is to be followed precisely.

Since its introduction into the liturgy, the *Agnus Dei* (drawn from John 1:29; Isaiah 53:7; Revelation 5:6ff.), has undergone a number of variations in Latin and in the vernacular forms. The last line was originally like the ending of the other lines, "have mercy on us;" in the tenth and eleventh centuries it became common to make the last line "grant us peace." The liturgies of the Reformation translated it "grant us your peace," and the German form added "Christ" before the opening address "Lamb of God." Further variations were made in the *Agnus Dei* in requiem liturgies. When this canticle is used, it may be sung at the breaking of bread, at the communion of the ministers, or as the first hymn during the communion of the congregation. "Jesus, Lamb of God," Canticle 1, another version of the text, may be used instead. "O Christ, thou Lamb of God," hymn 103, may replace "Lamb of God" on occasion. Choral settings of the *Agnus Dei* are numerous and could be substituted occasionally for the congregational song. Choral performance of the canticle has the advantage of not being under the same pressures of time as prevail for much of the other music of the service.

Provision should be made for all participants in the service, including organists, singers, servers, and ushers, to receive communion. The ensuing silence that may result from the participation of the musicians at the table provides the congregation with an opportunity for quiet reflection and meditation. There need not be "wall to wall music."

Music during the communion may include congregational hymns as well as choral and instrumental music. The music should reflect the spirit of the day or season, not only that of the Lord's Supper. Music and hymns during the communion can foster a spirit of joy and thanksgiving. Instrumental music based on hymn tunes can be especially effective. Cantatas or other long works may occasionally be sung during the distribution if they are liturgically suitable. Periods of silence are also appropriate and are to be preferred on penitential occasions such as Ash Wednesday and Holy Week.

After all have received communion and have returned to their places, the congregation stands. The presiding minister may give a blessing. This blessing which is provided is optional for a number of reasons. It is a reflection of the medieval mentality which saw the communion in terms of



things—bread and wine; body and blood—rather than in terms of a personal encounter with the risen Christ. Attempts to avoid the misleading traditional language, however, fall flat and seem to say little that is specifically connected with the Eucharist. Words, in fact, seem to fail after the experience of the Eucharist, and this blessing may well be omitted. Having received the blessing of the sacrament, what more can be added? Moreover, the benediction at the end of the service follows soon after.

A post-communion canticle or hymn is prescribed as a concluding song of thanksgiving for the sacrament and as a covering to the actions of the ministers who clear the altar. “Thank the Lord and sing his praise,” which speaks of both thanksgiving and the obligations of those who have communed to lead the new life, is appropriate for festival days and seasons. It should not be used during Lent because of its Alleluias. Simeon’s song, “Lord, now you let your servant go in peace,” has been the traditional canticle in Lutheran liturgies. There is a large number of chant, polyphonic, and concerted settings of the *Nunc Dimittis* and one of these might be sung by the choir on occasion. A hymn, such as “O Lord, we praise you, bless you, and adore you” (215) or the metrical paraphrase of Simeon’s song, “I leave, as you have promised, Lord” (349), may be sung instead of a canticle. Because the congregation will need to know the pitch, the organ should introduce the canticle.

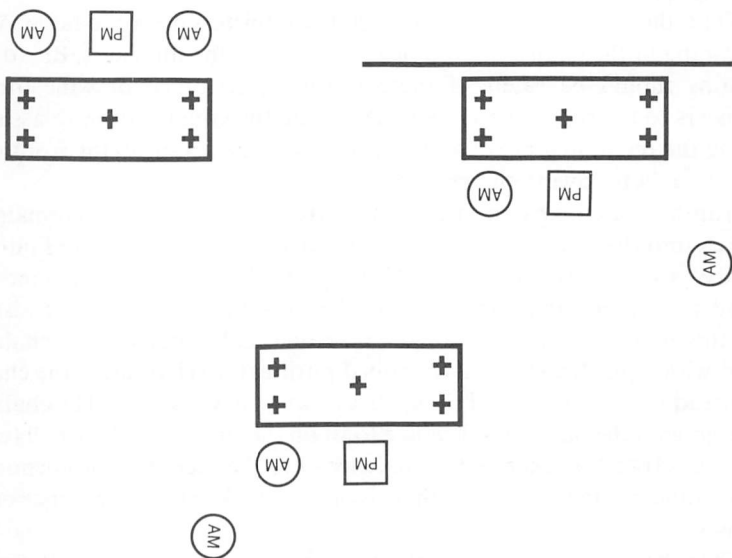
While the canticle or hymn is sung, the ministers clear the table. Wine remaining in the chalice should be consumed by the ministers. Bread that remains should be eaten. If there is too much bread or wine for the ministers to consume easily, they may invite the congregation to assist by taking the remaining bread and wine down to the people in the front rows immediately following the service.

Crumbs from the paten or plate are eaten, and any that still remain are shaken into the chalice. A little water from a small cruet is poured into the chalice, swirled around to mix with the remaining drops of wine and crumbs of bread, and consumed by the presiding minister (and also by assisting ministers if there was more than one chalice in use). The chalice is dried with a purificator, and the soiled purificator is left inside the chalice or spread over the mouth of the chalice as when it was vested. The chalice is covered with the paten (if it is made to fit on the chalice) and the pall (when one is used) and is taken to the credence or to the sacristy. The corporal is folded (and put in the burse, if there is one) and taken to the credence or the sacristy.

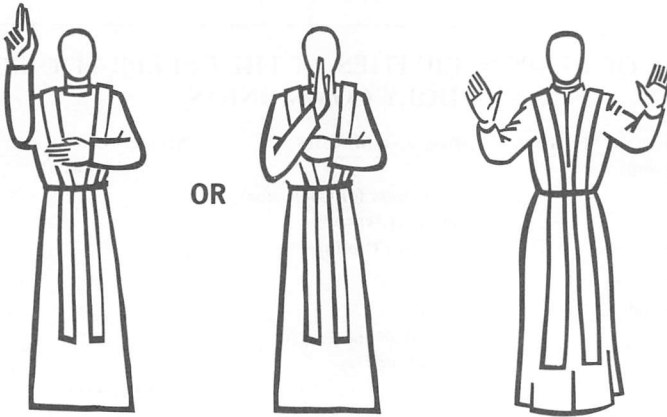
When the chalice and paten are left on the credence (or on the altar when it is against the wall) they are covered with the veil.

After the table has been cleared and the canticle or hymn has been sung, the assisting minister leads the post-communion prayer. The prayer “We give you thanks, Almighty God” is a traditional Lutheran post-communion prayer from Luther’s *German Mass* of 1526. The prayer “Pour out upon us the spirit of your love” is the Easter post-communion prayer in the Roman Catholic Mass. The prayer “Almighty God, you gave your Son” is from the *Book of Common Prayer* for the Second Sunday after Easter; it is now appointed for Proper 15, the Sunday closest to August 17, in the *Proposed Book of Common Prayer*. The Maundy Thursday prayer “Lord God, in a wonderful sacrament” may be used instead of one of the three provided in the text of the Holy Communion.

The presiding minister, behind the altar or in front of it, blesses the people using either the simple trinitarian blessing or the Aaronic benediction. “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost,” which in the *Service Book and Hymnal* was appended to the Aaronic benediction, following Swedish use, is omitted. Since the benediction is a biblical text, it is allowed to stand without a “Christianizing” addition. Moreover, the expanded form was not entirely satisfying grammatically. The sign of the cross should be small and restrained, the size of the cross one would trace on oneself.



POSITIONS FOR THE BENEDICTION



TRINITARIAN BLESSING

AARONIC  
BENEDICTION

An assisting minister may dismiss the people. Both the dismissal and the response should be said vigorously. Our service of God does not end, but rather it assumes a different form as the people go about their daily tasks.

Especially when the dismissal is used, the service should come to a prompt and unembellished conclusion. Ordinarily there should be no closing hymn. There is ample opportunity for congregational singing elsewhere in the service, and when the dismissal is used, a closing hymn destroys the point of the dismissal.

The performance of loud or vigorous concluding organ music seems to be a matter of individual taste. While a postlude may lend a certain joyous relief to the moment, the advisability of playing music which few can hear because of loud talking of those who leave the church or for which hardly anyone may stay to hear the conclusion, seems to be highly questionable. It is better simply to allow people to talk to one another without musical interference.

Moreover, the playing of chimes and the ceremonial extinguishing of the candles unnecessarily prolong the service. It should be clear to all who share in the service that it comes to its conclusion with the benediction. (Illustrations, pages 250-251.)

## APPENDIX I

### WHEN THERE IS NO COMMUNION

When there is no communion the rubrics indicate how the service is to conclude. An alteration is necessary to give a satisfactory order. One could simply do the Liturgy of the Word of God (entrance rite, readings, sermon,

TABLE OF RESPONSIBILITIES AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY COMMUNION

FIRST ASSISTING MINISTER (Deacon)	PRESIDING MINISTER	SECOND ASST. MINISTER (Sub-deacon)
	Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness* Apostolic Greeting	
In Peace. . . .		
Glory to God. . . .	Salutation and Prayer of the Day	
		First Lesson**
Second Lesson**	Gospel Sermon	
The Prayers	“Into your hands, O Lord. . . .” The Peace	
		Receives money, bread and wine Assists in setting the table
Sets the table		
Begins Offertory Prayer “Merciful Father. . . .” OR “Blessed are you. . . .”		
	The Great Thanksgiving Distribution of the bread	
Distribution of the cup***		Distribution of the cup***
Post-communion Prayer		
	Benediction	
Dismissal		

- \* The Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness may be led by an assisting minister who is ordained.
- \*\* If the deacon is to preach, a reader reads the First Lesson, the sub-deacon the Second Lesson, the deacon reads the Gospel. Or lectors from the congregation may read the first two lessons.
- \*\*\* In large congregations, others may assist in the distribution of the Holy Communion: ordained pastors distribute the bread; laypeople administer the wine.

A COMPARATIVE CHART OF THE EUCHARISTIC LITURGY  
OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC, LUTHERAN, AND  
EPISCOPAL CHURCHES

ROMAN CATHOLIC	LUTHERAN	EPISCOPAL
Entrance Song	Entrance Hymn	(Hymn, Psalm, or Anthem)
In the Name of the Father. . . .		
The grace. . . .	The grace. . . .	Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. <i>And blessed be his kingdom now and forever.</i> Collect for Purity
Confession of sins		
Kyrie ("Lord have mercy")	Kyrie ("In peace . . .")	Kyrie ("Lord have mercy")
Glory to God	Glory to God <i>or This is the feast</i>	Glory to God
Opening prayer	Prayer of the Day	Collect of the Day
First Reading	First Lesson	First Lesson
Responsorial Psalm	Psalm	Psalm, hymn, anthem
Second Reading	Second Reading	Second Lesson
Alleluia or Tract	Verse	Psalm, hymn, anthem
Gospel	Gospel	Gospel
Sermon	Sermon	Sermon
	Hymn of the Day	
Creed	Creed	Creed
Intercessions	Prayers	Prayers of the People Confession
	The Peace	The Peace
Offertory	Offertory	Verse, hymn, psalm, anthem
Prayer over the gifts	Prayer	
Preface	Preface	Preface
Sanctus	Sanctus	Sanctus
Eucharistic Prayer	Eucharistic Prayer	Eucharistic Prayer
Our Father	Our Father	Our Father
Sign of Peace		
Lamb of God	Lamb of God	
Communion	Communion	Communion
Communion verse	Canticle or hymn	
Prayer	Prayer	Prayer
Blessing	Blessing	Blessing

prayers) and give a blessing after the prayers, but the service would then not include an Offering. The Offering is the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and the structure of the Holy Communion makes this clear. Thus, when there is no communion, after the sermon and the Hymn of the Day, the Creed may be said, the Offering is gathered. The Offering may be presented at the altar, but some may prefer to reserve this action for the Eucharist when both money and bread and wine are offered. If the money is presented at the altar, the Psalm verses, "Create in me," or another appropriate hymn may be sung.

The prayers follow. The first prayer provided in the text of the service is a condensation and adaptation of one of the prayers said at Matins and before the Holy Door in the service of the Orthodox church. "Its origin is shrouded in the dim light of the early Christian centuries."<sup>34</sup> It appeared in the *Service Book and Hymnal* in Tudor language, as an additional alternate General Prayer. It is a splendid, brief yet comprehensive general intercession. It may also be used at other times than in this service, as for example, in Morning Prayer. The other form of prayer provided follows the pattern of the prayers in the Eucharist. Other forms of general prayers, such as the Litany or the Responsive Prayers, may be used instead.

The service (without communion) concludes with the Our Father and the Aaronic benediction. No provision is made for a closing hymn, but one is less contrary to the spirit of this form of the service than to the spirit of the whole Eucharist.

The conclusion of the service when there is no communion is that which has been familiar to users of *The Lutheran Hymnal* and the *Service Book and Hymnal* (and the earlier *Common Service Book*).

The value of the ante-communion is that it familiarizes the congregation with the first part of the Eucharist. Its drawback is that it destroys the integrity of the Eucharist by stopping half-way through and suggests that the Holy Communion is an optional office that may on occasion be attached to the standard Sunday service.

Those congregations which do not celebrate the Holy Communion weekly and which desire a suitable service for non-communion Sundays should consider the possibility of using the Service of the Word or Morning Prayer. Perhaps there should be no one alternate to the Holy Communion but rather two or three that could vary according to the season of the church year.

## APPENDIX II

### THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

The Service of the Word is a freshly-conceived service (it has no historic liturgical roots) designed for those times when a full liturgical order is desired which does not include the Lord's Supper. While congregations are encouraged to celebrate the Holy Communion as the chief Sunday service, some situations and events may require a non-eucharistic liturgy. The Service of the Word may be substituted for the Holy Communion on Sundays when the sacrament is not celebrated. It may also be used on weekdays. It has great flexibility, making it readily adaptable to a variety of occasions and circumstances. Further, an ordained minister is not required for the leadership of the service.

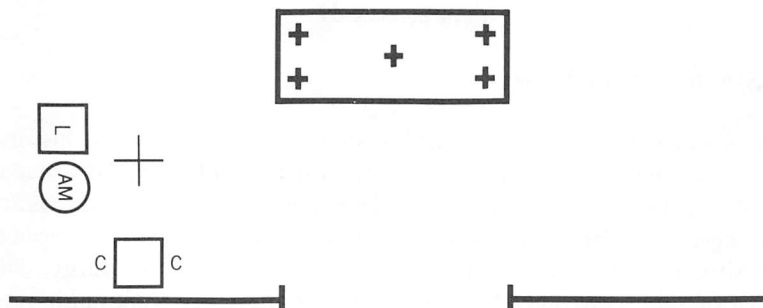
A prelude of vocal or instrumental music may precede the service. The usual utilitarian acts of ushering and lighting the candles may be necessary but should not be given undue prominence.

The Service of the Word begins with a hymn of praise or invocation of the Holy Spirit. Sturdiness of text and tune are the usual qualities of effective opening hymns. Since this service has ample provision for biblical song, a psalm is not appropriate as a substitute for this hymn. The hymn may be treated as a hymn for the entrance of the ministers. On festivals it may be sung in procession by the choir. Or the ministers (and choir) may enter at the end of the prelude and go to their places for the hymn.

The principal symbol for this service is the Bible (or lectionary), which should be of appropriate size and dignity. The book may be carried in the procession and placed on the reading desk. The focal character of the reading desk in this service may be heightened by placing tall, free-standing candlesticks on either side. These may be the torches carried in procession. The processional cross might be placed near the reading desk also.

It is best not to use the altar at all for this service, since it is primarily a service of reading and preaching. If the altar is used at all, let it be for the prayers and the benediction. But reserving the use of the altar for the Holy Communion exclusively heightens its effectiveness at that time.

It is not appropriate to use chairs behind the altar for this service, since they are associated with the function of presiding over the Eucharist. Seats for the leaders should be placed at the side of the chancel. (Illustration, page 252). In informal situations, the ministers could sit with the congregation.



## THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

Care must be taken to insure that the readers and speakers may be heard by all. Some acoustical situations allow a flexibility which in other situations is disastrous. But acoustics are not always to blame. Leaders must learn to speak clearly and to project their voices. Public reading is an art which requires instruction and practice. Whatever the arrangement, it is natural for speakers to face the congregation for the lessons and the sermon, (and benediction if it is bestowed by one who is ordained). At other times the leaders may speak from their places, facing across the chancel. They need not turn to face the altar for prayer or for the Creed.

The Dialog sets the tone for the service that follows. Other appropriate dialogs may be substituted for those provided. The book which introduced this service to the church, *Contemporary Worship 5: Services of the Word*, provided two others. For Christmas and Epiphany:

Blessed are you, O Christ, Son of God,  
 you were before time began  
 and came into the world to save us.

Blessed are you, Sun of righteousness,  
 you shine with the Father's love  
 and illumine the whole universe.

Blessed are you, Son of Mary,  
 born a child, you shared our humanity.

*Let heaven and earth shout their praise.*

Blessed are you, Son of David,  
 born to rule, you received  
 gifts from the Wise Men.

Blessed are you, Son of man,



baptized by John, you saved us from ourselves.  
Blessed are you, heavenly King,  
teaching and preaching, healing and comforting,  
you proclaimed the kingdom.

*Let heaven and earth shout their praise.*

With all the voices of heaven  
we celebrate the coming of our Savior.

*Let heaven and earth shout their praise.*

With all the creatures on earth  
we sing and dance at his birth.

*Praise and honor and glory to you,*

*O Lord most high.*

When this dialog is used, the first group of lines (“Blessed are you, O Christ, Son of God”) may be used during Christmas and the second group of lines (“Blessed are you, Son of David”) used from the Epiphany to Ash Wednesday. When the dialog is said antiphonally by two sides of the congregation (which is to be preferred to simple responsive reading), the verses could be printed out so that the lines beginning “Blessed . . .” are given to alternate sides of the congregation.

The dialog for Easter is as follows:

Christ is risen.

*He is risen indeed. Alleluia!*

Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*He gave us new life and hope  
by raising Jesus from the dead.*

Rejoice, then, even in your distress.

*We shall be counted worthy when Christ appears.*

God has claimed us as his own.

*He called us from our darkness into the light of his day.*

Christ is risen.

*He is risen indeed. Alleluia!*

In the Service of the Word the use of the Apostles’ Creed is intended as a remembrance of Baptism. The statement introducing the Creed asserts that connection. The translation “He descended to the dead” is to be preferred to the traditional “He descended into hell” to prevent misunderstanding and to preserve the integrity of the newer translation, which is both proper and accurate. The emphasis on Baptism at the beginning of this service is intended to complement the Eucharist.

The special biblical emphasis of the Service of the Word emerges clearly as the liturgy unfolds. A variety of biblical canticles is presented for singing by the congregation, thus exposing the people to the expressive potential of large segments of scriptural poetry in its natural medium of song. Canticles 14, 15, 16, 18 and 19 provide a selection of Old Testament canticles. Other canticles from the Old Testament may be used instead. Occasionally a choral setting of an Old Testament canticle may be appropriate.

To stress the character of seasons or days of the church year, as well as to introduce variety into the execution of the liturgy, the congregation should become familiar with more than one canticle and, in time, with more than one setting of each. The suggested Psalm tones offer other melodies for singing by the congregation. Those who introduce variety into congregational song must remember the necessity for clear and careful introduction of new musical elements into the service. Pastor, choir director, and organist will need to exercise patience and ingenuity to familiarize the people with the music before the congregation is expected to carry on alone. The choir can be of immense help in this process. The choir may sing the canticle for the congregation for several weeks before the people are requested to assume their responsibility.

When choral or solo settings of a canticle are used, the congregation should be encouraged to meditate on the canticle text being sung, and care must be taken not to impede the progress of the liturgy.

The canticles are intended for performance by the congregation with the assistance of the choir. Some of the canticles call for division of the congregation into two sections, one of which may be the choir. The canticle is to be sung, not read. There is ample reading in this service already. Moreover, the logic of the service is impaired if a hymn is regularly substituted for the canticle. It is a service of reading and biblical song and hymns, and the word of God is set forth both in the readings and sermon and in the biblical song (canticles).

The appointed Prayer of the Day is said, preceded by the salutation. There may be a time of silence between the salutation and the prayer to allow for the people to gather their thoughts and intentions. The leader stands at the reading desk for the prayer, facing the people for the salutation and for the prayer. (One need not always face the altar to pray.) Or the leader may say the prayer standing in front of the chair, facing across the chancel, the assisting minister holding the book.



The Lord be with you



*And also with you.*

Let us pray



The Prayer

Provision is made for two readings, usually one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament. When the Service of the Word is used on Sunday, the lessons appointed for the Eucharist are appropriate. At other times the daily lectionary (Ministers Edition, pp. 97-104) provides citations of the readings for the day.

The lesson that will be used as the sermon text should be read second, even if the usual order of Old Testament and New Testament is reversed.

When three lessons are read, two lessons are read before the psalm. A brief silence may separate the first two lessons.

When one of the readings is from the Gospels, even if it is the appointed Gospel for the day, it is not treated as the reading of the Gospel as in the Eucharist with acclamations and the people standing. In the Service of the Word (as in Morning and Evening Prayer) the congregation sits to hear all the lessons.

Following the first lesson (following the second lesson if three lessons are to be read) a psalm is sung. Psalms are an important part of the biblical material in this service. On Sunday or other festivals, the appointed psalm may be sung, as at the Eucharist. On weekdays, the table of Psalms for Daily Prayer (Ministers Edition, p. 96) will indicate the psalm choice. A hymn or anthem may be used instead of the psalm, especially if a New Testament lesson is read first.

Following the second lesson (the third if three lessons are read), a response is made. The response, as the word implies, is a liturgical reflection on the lessons just read. The response is intimately related to the lessons, to the theme of the day, or to the season of the church year. It may also be cast in general terms as an expression of praise for God's revelation of himself. The response may be musical (vocal or instrumental), literary, dramatic, or choreographic; and it should be of sufficient substance and clarity to shed light on that which it follows.

Musical performance by choir or cantors is highly recommended at this point. The classical responsories from Matins follow a rather strict form (verse, response, verse, refrain, verse, refrain) in which Scripture is used to comment on Scripture and unfold its meaning. The *Worship Supplement* provides a simple formula for the execution of seasonal responsories. Other music that fulfills the requirements of the response may be employed.

After the response a time of silence for meditation is kept. The silence is integral to the service and should be more than a moment's pause, if the people are to engage in reflection and meditation. In fact, a congregation unused to silence will require more time to get into meditation than one

that is accustomed to using silence. A substantial silence of one or two minutes (or more) is intended.

Introducing silence to a congregation requires some instruction. The people must know what to expect; otherwise, it may appear that someone has missed a cue. Unpracticed congregations require some time to begin to make use of the silence creatively. In a silence of two minutes, the first minute may be spent in restlessness, coughing, shuffling in the pews. Then, when the people settle down, the silence may be considered to have begun. Most people will welcome a time of quiet; such times are not easily found in a busy world. Neither music (not even soft organ music) nor the movement of leaders should intrude. All, including the leaders (especially the leaders, if they are in fact to lead the congregation), sit in quiet meditation. It is not a time to gather notes, or leaf through the book. The preacher determines the end of the silence by approaching the reading desk to begin the sermon.

The sermon is integral to this service. If a sermon is not desired, Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer should be used instead. The sermon may be delivered from the reading desk from which the lessons were read to show the relationship between the readings and the sermon. Exposition of the readings need not be limited to an address. On occasion, other forms of proclamation—dialog, drama, cantata—may be employed also. If such possibilities are to be explored, a good deal of advance planning is necessary so that they may be done well.

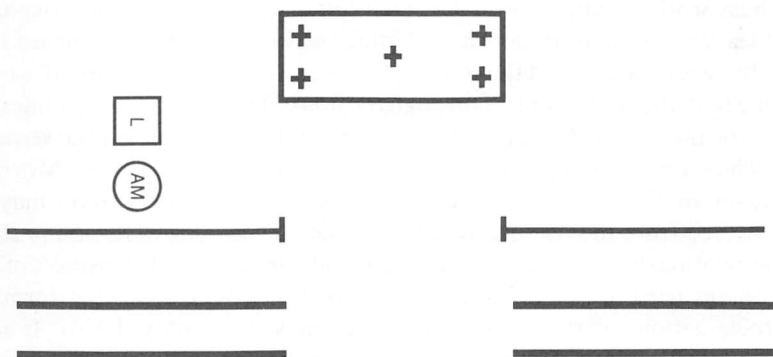
After the sermon, a hymn is sung. When this service is used on Sunday or another festival, the Hymn of the Day is an appropriate choice. In any case, this hymn should reinforce the message of the lessons and sermon. It is appropriate for this hymn to receive more elaborate musical treatment by the use of instruments in addition to the organ, alternation between choir and congregation, alternate harmonizations, or descants. Chorale concertatos or similar extended compositions based on hymns would be desirable occasionally.

The Offering is not a required element in this service as it is in the Holy Communion. Nonetheless, it expresses the giving of oneself in service, and when an Offering is gathered, it follows the proclaimed word. The ritual giving of empty plates to ushers prior to collecting the Offering is liturgically an empty gesture and should be discouraged. Appropriate choral or instrumental music may be performed as the Offering is gathered. The Offering need not be presented at the altar, since in the Service of the Word the Offering is not ceremonial preparation for the eucharistic meal by which bread and wine are given for use in the sacrament. When there is no communion, the gathering of the gifts of money is liturgically sufficient.

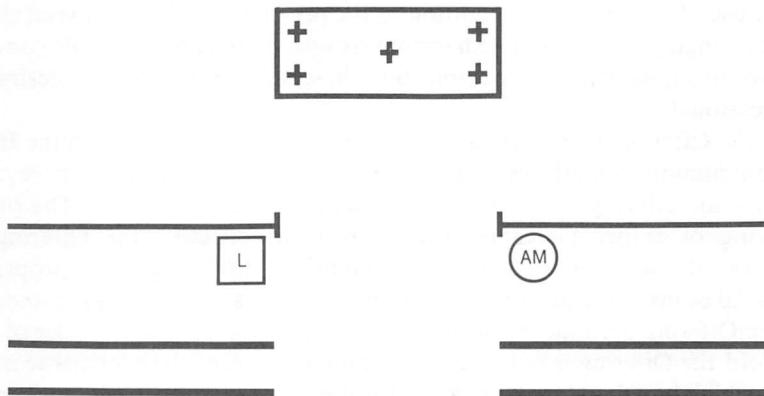
If, nonetheless, a presentation of the gifts at the altar is made, it is done simply and unostentatiously, without special music, or gestures, or prayers.

The prayers of the people are offered, led by an assisting minister. The congregation may kneel for the prayers. The one who leads the prayers remains at the chair or may kneel at the altar rail or may stand before the altar facing the same direction as the people.

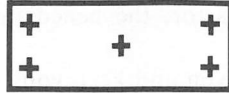
THE PRAYERS



OR



OR



The prayer that is provided in the text of the service is preserved here as a classic of the Lutheran tradition. It first appeared in the *Church Book* of the General Council in 1868 and may have been translated or adapted from German sources by Joseph A. Seiss.<sup>35</sup> It was retained in the *Common Service Book*, *The Lutheran Hymnal*, and the *Service Book and Hymnal*. The prayer may be used intact (omitting paragraph 6, indicated by the red line in the left margin, when no offering has been presented) or it may serve as a model for the prayers prepared for each use of this service. Other possibilities for prayers are the Responsive Prayers, the Litany, the form of intercession in the Holy Communion, or a series of collects. Whatever form of prayer is used, it is concluded with the Our Father.

A New Testament canticle appropriate to the season or occasion is sung. Canticles 17, 20, 21 provide a selection of New Testament canticles. *Te Deum*, *Magnificat*, *Nunc Dimittis*, *Benedictus*, *Gloria in Excelsis*, and “Worthy is Christ” also may be used. Occasional use of choral settings or hymn paraphrases of the New Testament canticles is appropriate. As with the Old Testament Canticle, the logic of the service is impaired if a hymn is regularly substituted for the canticle.

The Aaronic benediction is given. The form provided in the text is for unordained leaders. When the leader is not ordained, the benediction is given by the leader standing before the chair. The leader does not face the people; the leader makes no gesture of blessing the people, for that is the

prerogative of the pastor. The leader and the people may make the sign of the cross on themselves at the end of the benediction (or at the words “the Lord bless us”).

When the leader is a pastor, the benediction should be cast in the declarative form:

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor  
and give you peace.

At the appropriate place, the sign of the cross is made over the people by the pastor. The pastor should give the benediction from the reading desk, facing the people. If the prayers have been led from before the altar, it is appropriate for the pastor to give the benediction from there.

A concluding hymn may be sung as a recessional hymn. If the book was brought in in the procession, it may be carried out at this time, flanked by torches and preceded by the cross. The congregation bows as the cross passes. A choral or instrumental postlude may be performed, but as at the Holy Communion, it need not be considered a necessary conclusion to the service.