

## Instructional Bulletin Text

As all have been united in Christ at baptism, all participate in the worship liturgy. **Liturgy** (which means “work of the people”) is the order of worship passed to us from both the early years of the Christian church and Jewish synagogue.

The first section of the **Liturgy** is the **Gathering** when we assemble as one single household of worshippers and prepare to worship God.

**Invocation** means “to call upon” and here we call upon God who is known by the name “Father, Son and Holy Spirit” as revealed to us in Scripture.

**Confession and Forgiveness** is our opportunity to have all sins taken away by God’s declaration in the Absolution. We are forgiven because God says so in Jesus’ death and by his promise – not because we feel forgiven.

**Hymns** give us the opportunity to praise and thank God. The first hymn we sing is the Gathering Hymn which calls us together as the body of Christ.

The **Apostolic Greeting** is Paul’s salutation or blessing from 2 Corinthians, word for word.

The **Kyrie** is a later addition to the liturgy, having come to us first in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The full phrase is *Kyrie Eleison* and means “Lord have mercy” in the original Greek. This is the response of the people to each part of the prayer.

There are two **Hymns of Praise**: *Glory to God* and *This is the Feast*. These are sung by us to praise Christ and signify that we are a faith centered in Jesus. Both of these hymns are almost word for word from Scripture: *Glory to God* is the hymn of the angels to the shepherds at Christ’s birth in Luke 2:14 and is sung most days of worship. *This is the Feast* is based on Revelation 5, 15, and 19 and is sung during the season of Easter and on All Saint’s and Christ the King festivals.

The **Prayer of the Day**, once called the **Collect**, refers to the bringing together of the themes of the day. This prayer ends the Gathering and begins the liturgy of the Word.

The **Liturgy of the Word** centers on the spoken and preached Word. It is based on the liturgy used in the synagogues during the time of the apostles and was well known to early Christians.

There are typically four readings each worship service. The readings rotate on a three-year lectionary cycle which assigns the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke (and the other readings) to a particular church year that begins with Advent and ends with Christ the King. Readings from the Gospel of John are assigned to all three lectionary cycles.

The **Gospel Verse** serves as a processional hymn for the one who goes to the place where the Gospel will be proclaimed.

The **Gospel Acclamation** is the congregation’s acclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ.

We stand for the **Gospel** reading to remember the resurrection and to show respect for Christ. The Gospels are a narrative account of Jesus' life and ministry while on earth. Matthew, Mark and Luke are called "Synoptic" Gospels because they are alike in many ways. Synoptic means "seen together." This is largely due to the belief of Biblical scholars that the Gospel of Mark was used as a source for the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The Gospel of John is very different from the Synoptic Gospels, both in terms of structure and content.

The **Sermon**, or the proclamation of the Word just read, is also from the synagogue tradition and has its roots deeply embedded in Hebrew practice.

The **Hymn of the Day** is especially chosen to reflect the sermon or theme of the day.

The **Credo**s – there are three – are ancient statements of belief that were found to be necessary to distinguish Christian from non-Christian faith. The word Creed is from the Latin for "I believe". Typically in worship we recite either the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed. The Athanasian Creed is sometimes recited on Trinity Sunday.

The **Prayers of Intercession** are Jewish in origin. The central concern for prayer in the assembly is for "others", that is intercessory prayers. The Prayers of Intercession end the Liturgy of the Word.

The sharing of the **Peace** reminds us of the first words the Risen Christ spoke to his disciples and also begins the portion of worship that is the Meal.

The **Offering** was originally a gift of bread and wine for use in Holy Communion or Eucharist. Once Holy Communion was over, the remaining bread and wine were distributed to the poor. Only later did the offering evolve, for the sake of need, to monetary contributions (it became impractical to try and share actual food with the poor far away).

The **Offertory Canticle** explains how the simple gifts of bread and wine are presented to God whereby God uses them to be present to us.

The **Offertory Prayer** is the prayer of our intended stewardship of all the gifts God gives to us – that we may use them for God's purposes.

The **Great Thanksgiving** begins with a dialog encouraging our worship of God in Jesus Christ. Thanksgiving is "eucharistia" in Greek.

The **Proper Preface** proclaims the praise of the assembly in words that conform to the Season or Day.

The **Sanctus**, "Holy, Holy, Holy", refers to the Trinity and bridges the Thanksgiving and the Eucharistic Prayer.

The **Eucharistic Prayer** is a longer prayer which sets Christ's Supper within the context of the history of salvation, culminating in Jesus Christ and the gift of his body and blood.

The **Words of Institution** are those words Jesus used at the Last Supper, instituting the Eucharist.

The **Lord's Prayer** is that prayer which Scripture tells us Jesus taught his disciples. The Doxology "For thine is the kingdom ..." is a later addition which praises God.

The **Agnus Dei**, which means Lamb of God, is a prayer addressed specifically to Christ present in the Eucharist as a sacrificial offering once for all. The Fraction, or breaking of the bread occurs here.

The **Communion** itself is the distribution and reception of that which Jesus has promised to us – his Body and Blood. We, therefore, affirm that it is the Body and Blood of Christ with the bread and wine – not a mere symbol, but Christ's real presence. Jesus Christ himself is present to forgive us and strengthen our faith.

The **Post Communion Canticle and Prayer** are elements of thanksgiving and praise for the gift of Jesus Christ.

**Benediction** means "good word" and is the final blessing from God before we leave the worship. It begins the fourth part of the worship Liturgy – the Sending.

The **Sending Hymn** challenges us to leave worship and take the love of Christ out into the world.

The **Dismissal** is our being sent out to respond to God's love in Jesus. Our true response to the Liturgy, and our life as Christians, begins when we leave the worship space to accomplish God's ministry and mission in our world.