

The Shape and Source of Lutheran Liturgy

There are four parts to liturgical worship that illuminate the salvation plan of a merciful, loving, forgiving faithful God, revealed through the Son and continued to be made known through the action of the Holy Spirit:

#1 – GATHERING, #2 – WORD (PROCLAIMED), #3 – MEAL (SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR), #4 –SENDING

1. Gathering (Entrance Rite)

Brief Order Confession & Forgiveness {1 John 1:8-9}

Imagine people of the Hebrew scriptures responding to the prophetic call to repent together, confessing sins and asking God to remember the covenant and forgive them. We are united with their call and need.

OR Remembering our Baptism {Martin Luther}

This orients us to our baptism and the new life in Christ that is ours every day. Remembering our baptism retains the sacramental focus in services where Holy Communion is not celebrated.

Hymn

We sing in joy for the promise of forgiveness received. When we process in with the cross, we are visibly witnessing that redemption comes through the cross of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the visible focus and is united to the Father and the Holy Spirit, the goal and purpose of our worship and praise.

Apostolic Greeting {2 Cor. 13:13}

Pastor greets in the name of the Lord, people greet pastor with same greeting “and also with you”. We acknowledge that our worship is done together. We work together to say I love you and hear God’s I love you for us.

Kyrie (Lord, Have mercy) *(not used in all seasons)

Prayer that positions us to receive God’s Word and the sacrament of Holy Communion. We pray for the healing of the church, the world, and ourselves. Whenever people in bondage cry out “Lord, have mercy” to Jesus in the synoptic gospels, healing happens; our prayer witnesses the present action of Christ’s witness of healing. Luke 17:13; Luke 18:38-39; Psalm 123:2-3.

Hymn of Praise * (*not sung during Advent/Lent*)

Prayers for healing followed by hymn of praise for God coming to us/sacrificing his life for us.

Glory to God (Luke 2:14)

Worthy is Christ (Rev. 5:9-13; Rev. 19:4-9)

Prayer of the Day (summary of scriptures/theme for day)

(Prayers concluded by "Amen" -- Neh. 8:6; Ps 41:13; Rom 16:27; Heb. 13:20-21; Rev 7:12)

2. Word Proclaimed

First Reading – Old Testament/Acts

We hear how God has been faithful towards people of covenant.

The Word of the Lord {1 Peter 1:25}

Responses from scripture.

Thanks be to God {Romans 6:17; 2 Cor 9:15}

Psalm – sung in unison, antiphonally or responsorially. The Psalms are our first hymnal, "the prayerbook of the Bible." We sing as a witness to the people of the first covenant, who sang psalms as part of their worship. In the Revised Common Lectionary, the psalm is a bridge from OT reading to the Gospel.

Second Reading – New Testament
(*Epistles, Acts, Revelation*)

We hear how God continues to be faithful through the action of the Holy Spirit in the church (Christ's living body) through the eyewitnesses to the resurrection-who proclaimed Jesus as Lord.

Gospel verse/canticle/acclamation

Stand for the Gospel – center of our life, source of our redemption. We are saved by faith in Jesus Christ.

Lord, to whom shall we go? {John 6:68}

{LENT} Return to the Lord {Deut. 30:2; Num 14:18}

Gospel Text (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)

Glory to you O Lord

Response showing continued participation of all together.

Praise to you, O Christ

Sermon – Gospel proclaimed in current context of the day

Proclamation applies gospel to current day.

Hymn of the Day – gospel echoed in song

The Gospel in song -- unique to Luther's understanding of worship. People learned through singing God's Word.

Creed – Gospel summarized

Purpose is to affirm basic tenets of the Christian faith in response to heresies that threatened the church. Regular use affirmed by Luther's

Small Catechism, to unite the witness of the Gospel with the entire church.

Prayers of the People

We pray again, for gospel to be made known through the church, in the world and made known through people of God-healed, forgiven, redeemed and working tirelessly to make Christ known to others in need of grace.

3. Meal – Sacrament of the Altar

Peace is shared –

Preparation for receiving the sacrament. Unity and mutual forgiveness come from Christ, whose Word has just been proclaimed and whose meal we now prepare to share. {also Matthew 5:24...guides placement of exchange of peace}

“Peace of the Lord be with you always” {John 16:33; 20:19, 21, 26}

Offering/Offertory (some controversy now about it)

In gratitude for all we have received from God, we share our gifts with Him – these are gathered. Note faithful witness of worship leader giving empty plates to ushers. Value in baskets/plates coming forward full, along with gifts of wine and bread for communion.

“Let the Vineyards be fruitful”

“What shall I render to the Lord?” Psalm 116:12

“Create in Me a Clean heart” Psalm 51

Offering prayer

Great Thanksgiving

Preface dialog –

Oldest words in our liturgy & almost universally used by all Christians gathered for the Lord’s Supper

Preface and Sanctus (Holy, Holy)

Thanksgiving at the Table (also called Eucharistic Prayer)

Includes Words of Institution

{Mark 14:22-24; Matt 26:26-28; Lk 22:17-20; 1 Cor 11:23-25}

“Through him, with him, in him...”

Lord’s Prayer

“Our Father in heaven..”

{Matt 6:9-13; also Lk 11:2-4, Mark 14:36, Gal 4:6}

“For the kingdom, power and glory are yours...” {only found in some manuscripts – Mt 6:13; Rev. 4:11; 1 Chronicles 29:11}

Distribution of Holy Communion --- hymns

Patterns of receiving are often local customs. The earliest form was likely a common cup where bread was dipped into wine.

“Lamb of God” {John 1:29, 36; Rev 5:6-13; Rev 22:1-3}

Post Communion Canticle or hymn

“Thank the Lord and sing his praise” {Ps 107:8; 1 Chronicles 16:9; Ps 18.49; Ps 30:4; Isa 12:5}

“Lord, now let your servant...” “Simeon’s Song” {Luke 2:29-32}

Post-Communion Prayer

4. Sending

Blessing “The Lord bless you...” {Numbers 6:24-26}
or “Almighty God, Father, Son...”

An 11th century-Trinitarian blessing.

Hymn

We return to our work for Christ in the world, following the cross of Christ – when processed. We remember that Jesus worshipped in synagogue and then returned to ministry in the community/world around him. This is our purpose too, to take truth and hope of the cross of Christ {Gospel} into the world.

Dismissal

“Go in peace to love and serve the Lord” {Deut. 10:11-13; Judges 18:6; James 2:16}

“Thanks be to God” {2 Cor 9:15, 1 Cor 15:57 & others}

Thanks to Rev. Jill McGregor for developing this worship guide.