

ORDER OF SERVICE

n. d.: “When Parson Hall came in, all stood up until he had mounted to the pulpit. Then the deacons seated themselves at a table on a raised platform in front of the pulpit. After them the dignitaries sat down, followed in proper order by the rest of the congregation. A deacon having placed an hourglass upon its appropriate stand, the first prayer was uttered, every man standing up. This prayer usually occupied from one-half to three-quarters of an hour. The scriptures were then read, and briefly expounded. A psalm was now ‘lined’ out, either by the parson, or a deacon, to be followed by another prayer, not quite as long as the first one. The sermon came after the second prayer and other psalm [*sic*]. This discourse usually occupied an hour and a half....” [CT/Cheshire; Beach 1912, p. 118]

n.d.: [quoting from a “contemporary observer” who describes “services in a Puritan meeting house] “They come together about 9 or before and the Pastor begins with a solemn prayer, continuing about a quarter of an hour. The Teacher then readeth and expoundeth a Chapter; then a Psalme is sung, which ever one of the Elders dictates. After that the Pastor preacheth a [p. 180] Sermon and sometimes *Extempore* exhorts. Then he concludes with prayer and blessing. ... [new paragraph, still quoting:] About two in the afternoone, they repair to the meeting-house againe; and then the Pastor begins as before noone, and makes a Sermon. After and before he prayeth. After that ensues Baptisme, if there be any, by washing or sprinkling, which is done from the Deacon’s seate, the most eminent place in the church next under the Elder’s seate. The Pastor most commonly makes a speech or exhortation to the Church and parents concerning Baptisme, and then prayeth before and after. Which ended follows the Contribution.... Once a moneth is a Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, whereof notice is given usually a fortnight before, and then all others departing save the Church, they receive the Sacrament.... [p. 181] ... Then is a Psalme sung, and with a short blessing the Congregation is dismissed.” [sources given as “*Lechford, Plaine Dealing, 16-19; comp. Cotton, Way of the Churches, 67-69*”] [ME/York; Banks 1935, vol. II, pp. 179-181]

n.d.: “The psalms were traditionally sung in two places during the service, according to the Rev. John Cotton. The following was the usual order of worship in New England churches of the time: [indented, smaller type:] Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession / Scripture Lesson / Exposition of Scripture Lesson / Psalm / Sermon / [Psalm] / Concluding Prayer, ending with Benediction” [MA/Concord; Billings 1985, p. 173]

1641 + 1663 + ca. 1774 + 1807 + 1826: “FORM OF WORSHIP. 1641. The Pastor begins with prayer, and the Teacher reads and expounds a chapter. The practice of reading the Scriptures was dispensed with here about sixty years ago [i.e., about 60 years before this book was published in 1834]. It was revived in the First parish 1807, and in the South Parish 1826. When it was dropped, the worship began with singing. Formerly, when a portion of the Bible had been read, one of the Ruling Elders would give out a Psalm. Then a sermon, and sometimes an extempore

address would follow. This service was often beyond an hour. Then came singing, a prayer, and a blessing. In the afternoon performances, Josselyn says, 1663, that a Psalm was sung before the benediction." [MA/Ipswich; Felt 1834, p. 212]

1663 – see 1641

1676 (imagined date): "The service begins with a prayer continuing about a quarter of an hour. The pastor then reads and expounds a chapter and announces the forenoon psalm. [There follows a description of a psalm tune being lined out and sung; see LINING OUT][The people then] await the discourse of the beloved [Rev. Samuel] Hooker as he turns the hour-glass and announces his text.... [p. 14] ...After a concluding prayer and a blessing the people retire for a little time to their homes to eat their frugal Sabbath meal and talk over the lessons of the day. [new paragraph] The afternoon service is like the morning, except, after the concluding prayer, all children born since the last Sabbath are presented for baptism.... One of the deacons now rises and announces 'Brethren of the Congregation, now there is time left for contribution...' The magistrates first, and others in the order of their rank, now come forward and bring their offerings to the deacon at his seat. Then new members, if there are any, are admitted, a concluding psalm is sung, if time permits, and with a blessing the congregation is dismissed." [CT/Farmington; Gay 1891, pp. 13-14]

1680, 20 June (imagined date): Samuel Sewall visits second meetinghouse in Woburn in his imagination on a Sunday in June 1680; morning service consists of 1) invocation, 2) singing psalm (text from Bay Psalm Book, lined out), 3) the reading of "bills" or "notes" written by members of the congregation, 4) "the long prayer," 5) singing another psalm (text from Bay Psalm Book, lined out), 6) sermon, 7) "short prayer," 8) benediction; afternoon service consists of 1) singing psalm, 2) long prayer, 3) singing (text not specified), 4) sermon, 5) "word of exhortation" (Sewall, the visitor, speaks at some length), 6) "short prayer," 7) singing psalm, 8) Scripture benediction [MA/Woburn; Sewall 1868, pp. 95-108]

n.d. (1739-1805): "The order of services was mainly that of the Congregational Church of our time, the invocation, the singing of a hymn, the reading of the scriptures, the long prayer, another hymn, the sermon,...a third hymn, and the benediction." [this is during the period between the completion of the old meetinghouse in 1739 + the building of the next meetinghouse in 1805] [RI/Barrington; Bicknell 1898, p. 436]

n.d. (ca. 1748) + between 1748 and 1780: "The order of service adopted by the church at its organization commenced with singing one of the Psalms of David, which was first read by the pastor; then the tune was set by some one chosen for the purpose, after which one of the deacons, standing on the floor in front of the pulpit, proceeded to 'line off' the psalm for the congregation to sing. The singing was followed by the 'long prayer' of 'about a quarter of an houre.' It was a custom in those days for members of the congregation who were in trouble by reason of

illness or special trial to ask the prayers of the church by ‘bills’ or ‘notes;’ [←punctuation *sic*] and these were read by the pastor before beginning the long prayer. Then came the sermon, whose length was determined by the hourglass, placed on the pulpit before the eyes of both the minister and the congregation; and it is a well-attested fact that the ministers met the requirements of the occasion better than many in their congregations, who frequently needed the kindly efforts of the tithing-man to remind them of the duty of the time and place. The sermon was followed by a shorter prayer, and the service was closed with the benediction. This brief order of service was enriched during Mr. [Rev. William] Lawrence’s ministry [1748-1780] by the addition of the invocation, reading of the Scriptures and a congregational hymn...” [MA/Lincoln; Lincoln 1899, p. 25]

between 1748 and 1780 – see n.d. (ca. 1748)

1770, 22 July: “The following paragraph is from Dr. Stiles’s Itinerary of this date: [new paragraph] The course of divine Service in the [First] Congreg^a Chh. at Providence under Rev. Mr. [David Sherman] Rowland is this.—The Congregation rise & the Minister asks a Blessing on the Word & the divine presence in the Solemnities of public Worship—then the people sit, & the Minister reads a Chapter in the Bible—then the bills asking prayers &c are read by the Minister—then the Assembly rise & the Minister prays for a quarter & half an hour—then sing Watts Version of Psalms the people striking in with the Organ, & many sing standing, perhaps half the Congregation—then Minister takes a Text of Scripture, expounds it & preaches—the people sitting—Sermon being ended, the people rise & the Minister prays a short prayer—then singing & the Organ—then Minister pronounces the Blessing & dismisses the Congregation. But the Organ does not then play. This is the Forenoon Service. The Afternoon the same, only in addition, between the last prayer & singing is the contribution—& the last singing always concludes with the Xtian Doxology, & when it comes to the Doxology the whole Congregation rise & stand with great Solemnity. And after the Blessing is given, the Minister publishes the Banns of Marriage. The organ is a Chamber Organ, as large as a Desk & Book Case, containing about 220 Pipes. . . .” [RI/Providence; Stiles/Dexter 1901, p. 60]

1771: “*Sept. 11, Wed.* This day was appointed by the church for my [i.e., Manasseh Cutler’s] ordination. ... [p. 34] ... [new paragraph] The singers had placed themselves in the front gallery, and by my desire they began the solemnity with an anthem. ... [first prayer; sermon preached by Cutler’s father-in-law Rev. Thomas Balch of Dedham; prayer; the charge; prayer; right hand of fellowship] Then I appointed of the 132d Psalm, Mr. Watts’[s] version, from the pause to the end, four verses, common meter, to be sung. I then gave notice that an anthem would be sung after the blessing was [p. 35] given. Deacon Patch then desired all the ordained ministers to repair to Mrs. Wigglesworth’s for refreshment. I then gave the blessing, and an anthem concluded the solemnity. The first anthem that was sung was, ‘I was glad when,’ etc. The last, I think, was called the Daughters of Judah, or the Daughters of

Jerusalem. The parts were conducted with great decency and decorum." [MA/The Hamlet→Hamilton; Cutler 1888, vol. I, pp. 33-35]

ca. 1774 – see 1641

1774: At the ordination of Nathan Strong as minister to the First Church in Hartford, "...The religious Services began with an Anthem...[followed by a prayer, Strong's minister father Nathan Strong's sermon and "a very affectionate Address to his Son and the Church and People of his Charge," another prayer, the "Charge," another prayer, and the "Right Hand"]...A Psalm and an Anthem the closed the whole." [CT/Hartford; contemporaneous account quoted in Walker 1884, p. 337]

"In the summer of 1777, 'by general desire,' the First Church commenced to begin the public worship of the sabbath with singing." [MA/Boxford; Perley 1880, p. 248]

1798-1817: "The *forms* of worship in that church [Derby, Conn. Congregational] were, at the period of which I speak, very nearly uniform throughout our state. There was first the invocation, then reading the scriptures, then the first singing. After this came the general prayer." [CT/Derby; letter from Rev. Charles Nichols (b. 1798 in Derby; lived there until ca. 1817) "To My Dear Christian Brother, Rev. Mr. [J. Howe] Vorce," written at CT/New Britain, 24 June 1876; quoted in Orcutt 1880, p. 297; no more here about order of service]

early 19th c.: "Suppose we attend a service during the ministry of Mr. [Frederick William] Hotchkiss in the early part of last century [Hotchkiss was minister of the First Church of Christ in Saybrook from 1782 to 1844].... [p. 53] The service itself was a simple one almost certainly with no responsive portions in it. The Invocation, three Hymns, a considerable Scripture Reading sometimes with exposition, a Pastoral Prayer of inclusive character and sometimes too great length..., were followed by the Sermon. I do not think that the collection of offerings was a regular feature of the service at this time.... Appointments for the week were made as necessity arose.... Funerals would probably be announced.... The service would close with a brief prayer and Benediction." [CT/Saybrook; Chapman 1947, pp. 52-53]

n.d. (early 19th c.): "It was customary to open the services with an anthem." [MA/Brookline; Woods 1874, p. 258]

1807 – see 1641

1825-1835: "The service opened morning and afternoon with singing..." [CT/North Haven; Thorpe 1892, p. 289]

1826 – see 1641