

An Introduction to Sunday Worship

Our worship Is...

God-Centered

The Gospels of Jesus Christ is what gathers us together. We love to celebrate God's grace to us in his Son, and we worship him for his Spirit's work in our lives and in the world. The Church's adoring gaze is fixed on her **Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer and Friend**.

Active

People often think of going to church like going to the theater: as an audience, passively observing the performance. But worship is something in which the whole congregation is actively engaged. Music, prayers, and the other elements serve the Church by helping **worship arise from the congregation**, who should participate throughout the service.

Corporate

A worshipping Church is one group - the body of Christ - rather than simply a collection of individuals. **God has always chosen to be worshiped by his people corporately.** This is why so many of our prayers and confessions are offered in the first person plural: "Our Father," "We believe," etc.

Conversational

Public worship is the unique time of God meeting with his people. The whole service is a dialogue between God and the Church. There is an intentional structure to the service. It begins as...

1. God calls us to worship; we respond in praise and prayer.
2. God calls us to confess our sins; we do so humbly.
3. God assures us of the forgiveness we have in his Son; we praise his provision of mercy with our offerings and the doxology.
4. God graciously speaks to us in the reading of his Word; we respond with our prayers of dependence and songs of praise.
5. God proclaims the Gospel to us through the preaching of his Word; we respond with a common confession of faith.
6. God assures us of his love at the Table; we respond by participating and meekly receiving of the Holy Eucharist.
7. God has the last word of blessing, the benediction; we accept it on bended knees.

Ancient

We hope our worship has a sense of historical connectedness. **We draw from the deep well of the Church's worship through the centuries.** So we use ancient creeds and confessions, as well as time-honored hymns from various eras in Church history. The very structure of the service - or liturgy - also reflects the common pattern used consistently by the Church from the earliest recorded times until now.

Anglican

Evergreen is in the Anglican Liturgy, we appreciate a particular style that distinguish us from other denominations in the world. Heavenly worship, as described in the Scriptures, involves the glories of all the cultures of the earth being brought into Zion for the worship of God. We value are cultural expressions of the one ancient faith, and we worship to reflect the interaction of the Gospel in our place.

Structured

God's Word teaches us **that prayer, reading and preaching the Scriptures, Singing, the Sacraments, giving Tithes, Offerings, taking Oaths and Vows, and solemn fasting are all legitimate elements of public worship.** Therefore, we limit ourselves to these components in our Sunday worship. Every aspect of the order of service is consciously directed toward God as worship...

Call to Worship

God commands us to worship him. Therefore, we read the call to worship from various parts of Scripture, usually from the Psalms.

Singing

We believe it is important to sing often in worship. The first hymn comes as a processional to worship, and is specifically oriented towards praising the greatness of God as the Priests process to the Altar. We sing various Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs after our corporate prayer. During the Lord's Supper we sing of the communion we enjoy with God through his Son Jesus Christ.

Prayers

The first prayer is the Collect, which calls upon God's presence with us and his blessing and cleansing of all who are gathered for the service. The prayers of the congregation are designed to help us bring our requests to God as a congregation. The prayer for illumination before the sermon recognizes our need for the Holy Spirit to help us understand and apply his truth in our lives. We pray before the Holy Eucharist to give thanks and to set aside the elements to God's special use.

Confession of Sin and Assurance of Forgiveness

In order to stand before the holy God of the universe, we must be holy ourselves; we must come with clean consciences. Therefore, we confess our sins to him. The Prayer of Humble Access is structured to help us to just that. The assurance of pardon is the promise of the Gospel in God's Word given by his appointed Priest to the penitent member of the Congregation.

Offerings

Our Tithes, Alms and Offering is an acknowledgement that God is our Provider and that our ability to create wealth comes only from him. We give; because he first gave us all good things in his Son. We worship and imitate our gracious Father by bringing the first of our increase to him.

Sermon

God has chosen to work in the lives of his people by using his written and preached Word. Preaching was an activity of Jesus and the Apostles. The Scripture says preaching is a “foolish” means to convince and convert people, but that God has chosen this “weak” means to ensure that we give him credit for changing lives **rather than crediting the eloquence or creativity of a Priests.** The **Gospel is the uniting reason why we are a Church**, and the preaching of the Gospel ought to be a strong motivator in our coming together for worship apart from the Holy Eucharist.

Confession of Faith

We confess our common faith as we approach the Holy Altar, the Lord's Table. We often use the Nicene Creed, which was formulated very early in the history of the Church - this is a good example of what all Christians profess to believe. We also use another of the Church's great confessions in our worship – the Prayer of Humble Access. When we proclaim the Creed, you should note, that the phrase, “holy catholic church,” refers all who believe the Holy Gospel, rather than to the “Roman Catholic Church” in particular.

The Lord's Table

Jesus instituted this meal for the spiritual nourishment of his people, to be received by faith. We do not know how he uses this meal to strengthen and feed us, but experientially we know that he does, just as his Word promises. **At the Table we remember his death for us on the cross, and we anticipate his second coming and the wedding feast of the Lamb** that we are to enjoy with him then. This Supper is a time of **thankfulness, rededication, reassurance and hope** for the Christian. The Church invites any Baptized Christian who is a member of a church that proclaims the Holy Gospel to participate. We are also warned that God requires us **to come in sincerity and truth, so we must search our hearts and repent of our sins** before we come to the Table.

Benediction

The benediction dismisses the worshipers in the name of the Lord, assuring those who live in faith that the power and presence of God will accompany them. This is not a prayer. Rather, the priest is declaring the Lord's blessing upon his people. Therefore we do not need to kneel for it.

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