

A BRIEF EXPOSITION OF THE DIVINE SERVICE

The Divine Service is "God's service to us and our response to Him" (German "Gottesdienst"). Worship is not simply, or even primarily, what we do for God; rather, in worship *God comes to us* in His Word and Sacrament and we enter into the very Presence of God to receive His precious gifts of forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation through Christ Jesus. The focus of our worship then is Jesus Christ, revealed to us and present in His Word and Sacrament. These are the Means of God's Grace - the means by which the Holy Spirit, in His infinite love towards us, gives us life-saving faith despite our sinfulness. In worship then, God speaks to us and *we respond* by speaking His words back to Him. This is the rhythm of the historic Liturgy of the Church. The liturgy of the Divine Service is timeless, transcending contemporary culture and connecting us with the Church of the Ages. Like Moses before the Burning Bush; and Peter, James, and John before our Transfigured Lord in His Glory; in the Divine Service we stand in the Presence of our Holy God. Like them, we do so with a tremendous sense of reverence, awe, fear, and mystery.

General Notes:	Because we are in the very presence of God during the Divine Service, we should be dignified and reverent. Therefore, it is appropriate (but <i>not</i> required) that we bow our heads towards the altar before taking our seats, that we pray silently both before and after the service, that we stand for the last stanza of a Hymn if it is a doxology to the Triune God, and that we make the sign of the cross with the right hand (touching the forehead, then chest, then right shoulder, then left shoulder) at the mention of the Holy Trinity and at other times during the Divine Service (indicated by [+], below) in remembrance of our Baptism. Finally, it is generally understood that if the Officiant speaks a part of the Liturgy, the congregation responds by speaking; and if the Officiant chants a part of the Liturgy, the congregation responds with chant. Note that the Divine Service is divided into three sections: The Preparatory Office (from the Invocation to the Confession), the Office of the Word (from the Introit to the Prayer of the Faithful), and the Office of Holy Communion (from the Preface to the Benediction).			
	Sources	Historical Notes	Comments	
Hymn of Invocation [Variable]			It is up to the local congregation as to whether to sing a hymn of invocation prior to the beginning of the Divine Service.	
The Invocation [In the name of the Father...]	Romans 6:3-4 Matthew 28:19 Colossians 3:17 Matthew 18:20	Not found in the earliest liturgies, the Invocation was part of part of the priest's preparation.	The Invocation is addressed to God. It is by these same words that we were called to faith and life in Holy Baptism so we are reminded here of our Baptism. In these words, we affirm our faith in the Triune God, formally expressing our awareness of the Presence of God, placing ourselves in that Presence, and invoking the Divine blessing on the Service.	The Preparatory is traditionally spoken. [+ , at the Invocation.]
The Confession of Sins • Exhortation - "Beloved..." • Confession - "O Almighty God..." • Absolution - "Upon this your..."	Matthew 11:28 1 John 1:8-9 John 20:19-23 Hebrews 10:22	1314 A.D. Not found in earlier liturgies, the confession was part of the priest's preparatory prayers.	Before beginning the Service of the Day, it is fitting that we seek a purification of spirit, that we turn from ourselves to God and that in penitence and prayer we receive God's assurance of mercy and grace. The Exhortation calls us to do so. In the Confession (Latin: "Confiteor"), we kneel humbly	It is customary to kneel for confession. [+ , at "Our help..." and at the Absolution.] Private confession and absolution are

			before our God, acknowledging our sin and seeking purification of our Spirit. In the Declaration of Grace that follows, we receive from God Himself the assurance of God's mercy and grace that enables us to focus on our loving God.	not to be disregarded.
The Introit [Variable]	Psalms	400 A.D.	The Introit (Latin: "entrance") marks the actual beginning of the Service of the Day. It strikes the keynote theme of the entire Service, recognizing the glory of God and announcing God's grace using pertinent verses, usually from the Psalms. The Introit consists of an Antiphon, followed by a Psalm verse, followed by the Gloria Patri (below). The Antiphon is then repeated for emphasis.	The Officiant approaches the altar for the first time.
The Gloria Patri [Glory be to the Father...]	Romans 16:27 Ephesians 3:21 Philippians 4:20		The Gloria Patri (Latin: "Glory be to the Father") or Lesser Doxology (formulaic ascription of praise to the Triune God) connects the Old Testament Psalms with the fuller revelation of the New Testament. It affirms our belief in the divinity, equality, and eternity of the Three Persons of the Trinity.	Custom calls us to bow our heads here.
The Kyrie [Lord, have mercy...]	Matthew 9:27 Matthew 15:22 Matthew 17:15	300 A.D.	In the Kyrie Eleison (Greek: "O Lord, have mercy"), we pray to God for grace and help in time of need. It expresses our humility and appreciation of our own weakness and need in a sinful world.	
The Gloria in Excelsis [Glory be to God on high...]	Luke 2:14 John 1:29		The Gloria in Excelsis (Latin: "Glory to God in the highest") is the angelic hymn announcing the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ to the shepherds. In it, we join in the hymn of the angels in celebration of the Father's gift of His Son.	[+, at the end of the Gloria Excelsis.] Traditionally, the Gloria is eliminated during Lent and sometimes Advent.
The Salutation [The Lord be with you...]	Judges 6:12 Luke 1:28 2 Timothy 4:22		The Salutation / Response is a reciprocal prayer of the Pastor for his people and of the congregation for its Pastor before we together offer our petitions to God. They reflect the special relationship of love between the Pastor and congregation.	
The Collect for the Day	John 14:13 John 15:16	Traditional collects have	The Collect sums up (collects), all the prayers of the church into one	

[Variable]		been used in the church for over 15 centuries.	short prayer and suggests the theme of the day or season. The Collect generally consists of the (i) Address (names the person of the Trinity to whom the prayer is addressed), (ii) Rationale (notes the characteristic of God upon which the prayer is based), (iii) Petition (the blessing asked), (iv) Benefit (the goal of the prayer), and (v) Termination (a doxology).	
The Old Testament Lesson [Variable]	2 Timothy 3:15-17 Hebrews 1:1-2	Ancient.	The Old Testament reading almost always relates directly to the Gospel.	The lessons -- the very Word of God -- are the high point of the Service of the Word. The lessons appointed for the day follow a one year or three year cycle. See Luke 4:16-21.
The Gradual [Variable]		Ancient.	The Gradual, so-named because it was originally sung from a step (Latin: "gradus") of the altar, provides a musical echo to the passage just read and a transition to the next lesson.	
The Epistle [Variable]	Acts 13:15-16		The Epistle (Greek: "letter") is usually taken from the letters of the Apostles. Frequently, this lesson does not relate directly to the Gospel. Usually, it bears practical and serious thoughts for daily living.	
The Alleluia Verse [Alleluia... / Variable]	John 6:68 Joel 2:13	Ancient.	The Alleluia (Hebrew: "Praise ye the Lord") is a song of joy at the hearing of the Word of God. The accompanying verse usually reflects the mood of the day.	
Gloria Tibi [Glory be to you, O Lord.]	Hebrews 13:21 2 Peter 3:18		At the announcement of the Gospel, we sing the Gloria Tibi (Latin: "Glory to you"), joyfully affirming our recognition of the real presence of Christ.	It is customary to stand at the announcement of the Gospel.
The Gospel [Variable]	Gospels	Ancient.	The Gospel (Greek: "Good News") is the high point of the Office of the Word. It usually presents the central thought for the day, using either the words of Christ or an eyewitness account of His acts.	The Gospel may be read from the center of the congregation.
Laus Tibi [Praise be to you, O Christ.]	Romans 15:11 Ephesians 1:6,12		After hearing our Savior's Good News, we respond with words of praise in the Laus Tibi (Latin: "Praise to you").	
The Nicene Creed [I believe in one God...]	Matthew 10:32 Luke 12:8 1 John 4:15	Formulated in 325 A.D.; completed in 381 A.D.	The Creed (Latin: "I believe") is our individual, public confession of faith, spoken with the "one, holy, Christian and apostolic Church." It is a statement of Christianity's most basic and fundamental beliefs,	[+, at the end of the Creed]

			witnessing to the unity and universality of the Church.	
Chief Hymn [Variable]		The congregational hymn was one of the great contributions of the Reformation.	The Chief Hymn is the principal hymn of the Divine Service, and relates to the theme of the day. For this reason, it is chosen very carefully.	
The Sermon		Ancient. The restoration of the sermon to its ancient place and power is one of the marks of the Reformation.	In the Sermon, the preacher "rightly divides (or interprets) the Word of Truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). The Sermon contains elements of the two great doctrines of the Bible: the Law, which shows us our sins and our need for forgiveness; and the Gospel, which proclaims forgiveness of our sins, by grace, through faith in Christ Jesus. The Gospel predominates in the Sermon. The Sermon usually relates to the lessons of the day.	
The Votum [The peace of God...]	Philippians 4:7		The preacher ends the Sermon with the Votum (Latin: "we desire"), expressing our prayer that the Word we just heard in the Sermon may keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.	It is appropriate to respond to the Votum by saying "Amen."
The Offering	Luke 16:1ff	Ancient. Historically a processional.	We joyfully offer to God a portion of His gifts to us, as an outward response of our faith in Him.	
The Offertory [Create in me a clean heart...]	Psalms 51:12		In the words of David, we ask God to cleanse our hearts, to keep us in the one true faith, and to grant us the full joy of salvation.	
The Prayer of the Faithful	Acts 2:42 1 Timothy 2:1-4	Ancient. Corporate intercessory prayer has always been part of public worship.	In the Prayer of the Faithful, the Church performs its priestly role (which is communal and not individual) by representing the people of the world before God in prayer. The Prayer of the Church is therefore not the prayer of individuals for themselves nor the congregation for itself; but is indeed the prayer of the Church for the world, the work of the Church, and the Church itself.	
The Hymn [Variable]			The hymn leads to the Office of Holy Communion, preparing our hearts and minds for the blessings to be received.	
The Preface [The Lord be with you...]	Judges 6:12 2 Timothy 4:22	Ancient. The oldest and least-changed part of the liturgy.	The Preface begins the Office of Holy Communion. It begins with a simple but powerful dialogue between the pastor and the	

	<p>Lamentations 3:41</p> <p>Psalms 50:14</p> <p>Colossians 3:1</p> <p>Psalms 136</p>		<p>congregation, which unites the whole body of believers in reverence, adoration, joy, and thanksgiving in anticipation of the Sacrament. This is followed by the Common Preface, which begins "It is truly meet, right, and salutary" and ends with "Therefore with angels and archangels," thus uniting the Church with angelic host. In between is the Proper Preface, which is variable.</p>	
<p>The Sanctus [Holy, Holy, Holy...]</p>	<p>Isaiah 6:3</p> <p>Psalms 118:26</p> <p>Mark 11:9-10</p> <p>Matthew 21:9</p>	<p>Ancient. Jesus would have sung a version of the Sanctus.</p>	<p>In the Sanctus (Latin: "Holy"), we join with the "Angels, Archangels, and all the company of Heaven" in proclaiming the glory of the Father (first sentence), praising Christ our Savior (second sentence), and singing the song of the children of Jerusalem as they welcomed the Messiah on the first Palm Sunday (third sentence). Hosanna means "save us now" in Hebrew.</p>	<p>[+, at the words "Blessed is He..."]</p>
<p>The Lord's Prayer [Our Father...]</p>	<p>Matthew 6:9-13</p> <p>Luke 11:1-4</p>	<p>Ancient.</p>	<p>As children, we address our God as "Our Father," praying as our Lord Jesus Christ Himself taught us to pray.</p>	
<p>The Words of Institution [Our Lord Jesus Christ...]</p>	<p>Matthew 26:26-28</p> <p>Mark 14:22-24</p> <p>Luke 22:19-20</p> <p>1 Corinthians 11:23-25</p>	<p>Unique to Lutheran liturgy, the Words of Institution stand alone here.</p>	<p>The reverent, unadorned use of the Words of Institution (Latin: "Verba") focuses all our thoughts on the acts and words of Christ and expresses the Real Presence of Christ's body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine. Here, God is dealing with us in a loving manner, reminding us that Christ died for our sins.</p>	<p>[+, at the elevation of the Body and Blood of Christ.]</p>
<p>The Pax Domini [The peace of the Lord...]</p>	<p>Luke 24:36</p> <p>John 20:19</p>	<p>Ancient.</p>	<p>The Pax Domini (Latin: "Peace of the Lord") is the same greeting spoken by the risen Christ on Easter morning. It is the final blessing before we approach the altar to receive the gift of Christ's body and blood.</p>	<p>[+]</p>
<p>The Agnus Dei [Lamb of God...]</p>	<p>John 1:29</p> <p>Isaiah 53</p>		<p>The Agnus Dei (Latin: "Lamb of God") is our hymn of adoration to our Savior Jesus Christ who is truly present for us in the Sacrament. The Agnus Dei recalls the testimony of John the Baptist when he pointed to Jesus and proclaimed: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."</p>	

<p>The Distribution [Take, eat... the true body...] [Take, drink... the true blood...]</p>	<p>Matthew 26:26-28 Mark 14:22-24 Luke 22:19-20</p>		<p>By Christ's own words, "given and shed for you for the remission of sins," in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; God offers, gives, and seals for us forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.</p>	<p>Self-examination before Communion is appropriate. See 1 Corinthians 11:28. [+ , after we have communed.]</p>
<p>The Dismissal [May the Body and Blood...]</p>			<p>The Dismissal reassures communicants of the efficacy of the Lord's Supper in creating life-saving faith in Christ.</p>	<p>It is appropriate to respond to the Dismissal by saying "Amen." Silent prayer after communing is appropriate.</p>
<p>The Nunc Dimittis [Lord, now lettest thou...]</p>	<p>Luke 2:25-32</p>	<p>1525 A.D.</p>	<p>In singing the Nunc Dimittis (Latin: "Now depart"), we stand with Simeon as he looked upon the baby Jesus, in awe of the profound mystery that the Father would give His only Son in the flesh for the salvation of our souls. Having just received the Lord's Supper, we have truly seen "Thy Salvation, which [God] prepared before the face of all people."</p>	
<p>The Thanksgiving [O give thanks...]</p>	<p>1 Chronicles 16:34 Psalm 106, 107, 118, 136</p>	<p>1526 A.D. The Thanksgiving Collect was written by Martin Luther.</p>	<p>The Versicle calls us to give thanks and introduces the Thanksgiving Collect. In the Collect, we thank God for His life-saving Sacrament and pray that His gift of faith offered therein strengthens us to love God and one another.</p>	
<p>The Benediction [The Lord bless thee...]</p>	<p>Numbers 6:24-26 Luke 24:50 2 Corinthians 13:14</p>	<p>1523 A.D. Used uniquely in the Lutheran liturgy.</p>	<p>More than a prayer for blessing, the Benediction imparts a blessing in God's name, giving positive assurance of the grace and peace of God to all who receive it in faith. The words of the Benediction are those that the God gave to Moses (the Aaronic Blessing) and those used by Christ at the Ascension. The final word that falls on our ears from our gracious God is "peace," affirming our reconciliation to God through the blood of Jesus Christ.</p>	
<p>The Amen [Amen, Amen, Amen]</p>			<p>We conclude the Divine Service with a triple Amen, that is, "Yea, yea, it shall be so." This expresses our firm faith in the forgiveness of sins by God's grace through Jesus Christ, as heard and experienced in the Word and Sacrament of the Divine Service just ended.</p>	<p>[+]</p>

