



**A simply simple,  
straightforward, easy,  
uncomplicated, effortless,  
and painless explanation  
to the Liturgy**

**FOR LUTHERANS**

**LITURGY**



**MATTERS**

In the movie Shrek, there is a scene where Shrek (who is an ogre) and Donkey (who is a talking donkey) are having a conversation. Shrek tries to explain to Donkey that ogres are like onions. Donkey asks, "You mean they stink?" Shrek says, "No Donkey. Ogres have layers." The Divine Service is like an ogre. It doesn't stink, but it has layers too.

This simply simple, straightforward, easy, uncomplicated, effortless, and painless explanation to the Liturgy is a peeling back of the Liturgy's layers. It can be read like a devotion, taking one lesson a day, or at your own pace.

My prayer for you is that the Holy Spirit will enlighten your mind, stir your heart, and create a longing and love for the gifts God gives us in the Divine Service. I hope you will see, believe, love, cherish, and be proud of the Liturgy of Christ's Church and in being Lutheran.

### **Lesson 1 - The Lutheran Reformation**

To understand the Divine Service one must understand the Lutheran Reformation. The intent was never to strip the church of everything that came before in her 1500 years of history. What the Lutheran reformers did was to subject the doctrine and practice of the Church to Scripture.

This is important to grasp. Doctrine and practice that contradicted Scripture were reformed according to the Word of God; and if that was not possible, then they were abandoned. "Therefore, since the Mass among us follows the example of the Church, taken from the Scripture and the Fathers, we are confident that it cannot be disapproved. This is especially so because we keep the public ceremonies, which are for the most part similar to those previously in use" (Augsburg

Confessions. Article XXIV par. 40).

The Lutheran Church accepts tradition that is subject to the Word of God. Universal tradition and local tradition. Both have places in the life of the Church. The Divine Service is made up of Word, Sacrament, & tradition.

### **Lesson 2 - Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi.**

This is a popular rule of Prosper of Aquitaine. It means the Law of Prayer is the Law of Belief. In other words, how you worship shapes what you believe. Many people are unaware of this truth. They have been told and believe worship forms are neutral.

There is no such thing as neutrality in worship form. There is no Lutheran Substance and Non-Denominational Style. No Lutheran Substance and Baptist Style. No Lutheran Substance and Pentecostal Style. Etc. By worshiping like a Non-Denominational, Baptist, Pentecostal, etc., you will become one in practice & doctrine.

That's the heart of lex orandi, lex credendi: you are what you do. This is why the Divine Service is to be loved and cherished above all other forms of worship. The Divine Service catechizes the Church's children in the truth of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic faith.

### **Lesson 3 - Theology of Lutheran Worship**

Gottesdienst is the German word translated as Divine Service. It lies at the heart of what it means to worship as a Lutheran. The term Gottesdienst can be understood in two ways. The first is God's service to us. The second is our service to God.

This term Gottesdienst describes what Lutherans believe about worship. God comes to us first with His gifts of Word and Sacrament. In response to His service for us, we thank Him in praise, thanksgiving, and offering.

For a Lutheran, the motivation to attend worship isn't about giving to God but receiving from Him. The focus isn't on me or my doings. It's on God and His doings. "This is how God wants to become known and worshiped, namely, that we receive blessings from him, and indeed, that we receive them on account of his mercy and not on account of our merits" (Apology of the Augsburg Confession. Article IV. Par. 59-60; Kolb/Wengert).

#### **Lesson 4 - Who do Lutherans Worship?**

To be Lutheran is to be an evangelical, catholic, Christian. Our faith didn't start with Martin Luther in the Reformation. It is the faith that was revealed by God in Christ through His prophets and apostles. The God of Lutherans is the God of the Bible: The Holy Trinity- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The God of Lutherans is the God of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. Who is worshipped and confessed throughout the ages. Before the Emperor and world, our fathers confessed in the city of Augsburg, "Our churches teach with common consent that the decree of the Council of Nicaea about the unity of the divine essence and the three persons is true. It is to be believed without any doubt...Our churches condemn all heresies that arose against this article" (Article I of the Augsburg Confession).

Evangelical catholics believe the Father is our true Father. That we are His true children. We believe that Jesus Christ redeemed us, lost and condemned creatures,

purchased and won us from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil by His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death. We believe we cannot by our own reason or strength believe in Jesus or come to Him. But the Holy Spirit calls us by the Gospel, enlightens us with His gifts, sanctifies and keeps us in the truth faith.

### **Lesson 5 - Why Lutherans Worship**

Lutherans believe that people cannot be justified before God by anything they have done, do, or will do. Before God all are sinners and have fallen short of God's glory. Everyone is equally condemned and damned by the Law (Romans 3:9-20).

Lutherans believe people are freely justified for Christ's sake through faith. This faith is a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8-10). To receive this gift, God established the Office of the Holy Ministry to preach His Word and administer His Sacraments. Through the Means of Grace, the Holy Spirit creates, grows, and sustains faith.

Lutherans worship because it is God's will for us to be gathered around His Word & Sacraments to save us. He gathers and serves us through His under shepherds with these Holy Means of Grace to create, sustain, and strengthen our faith.

### **Lesson 6 - How Lutherans Worship**

Lutherans worship by being gathered by God around the Means of Grace-His Word, Holy Absolution, Holy Baptism, and Holy Communion. These precious gifts are set to an order that we call Liturgy. Like a diamond set to a ring.

The Liturgy is the worship of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. It belongs to all tribes, tongues, and nations. The Divine Service is true contemporary worship. It has been contemporary to every generation of Christian from the Apostles all the way till today.

Lutherans love and cherish the Liturgy because it is the language of our Mother the Holy Church. Through the Liturgy, evangelical catholics learn how to talk and walk in the presence of their Father, Brother, and Comforter.

### **Lesson 7 - Liturgy: Public Service**

The word Liturgy comes from the Greek word Leitourgeo. Usually it's defined as the people's work. Which can be misleading if not explained. Leitourgeo actually refers to a public service done for the benefit of others. It includes the people's work, but the focus isn't on the people but the public service done for others.

For example, the State builds roads and bridges for people to travel on. The taxes gathered from individuals are used for the benefit of the community. Liturgy is a public service done for the benefit of someone else.

In the Divine Service God is doing liturgy to us as we respond in liturgy to Him. Lutherans are gathered for Divine Service to receive God's public service on their behalf, and to respond in public service to Him.

### **Lesson 8 - Liturgy: Law & Gospel**

Once the idea-Lutherans are gathered by God for Divine Service to receive His public service on their behalf-is grasped and understood, it changes everything. It separates Lutherans from all other denominations. Every other denomination goes to worship to give something to God. The focus is all about them. Their actions. Their

emotions. It's all works righteousness. For Lutherans, it's the total reverse. It's all about God. Our actions and emotions are a response to Him.

The Lutheran understanding of worship changes the whole focus of worship. Instead of it being driven by the Law (I do this, so that I earn that), it is Gospel (God does this, and I thank Him for what He has done).

The Liturgy is meant to preach and teach Law & Gospel. The Law exposes our sin and helplessness. The Gospel brings Christ and the forgiveness of sins. What we cannot do, God does for us.

The Lutheran Church has always fought to promote, maintain, and defend the Divine Service in the face of all opponents. Whether that be the Pope, Non-denomnethobapticalists, or fellow Lutherans who want to be like their non-Lutheran neighbors.

### **Lesson 9 - Liturgy: The Church in Action**

Liturgy is action. Just like cooking. Cooking is not a list of ingredients of a recipe on a piece of paper. Cooking is an act. You are not cooking until you are actively preparing, mixing, baking, grilling, roasting, etc., the food. The same is for Liturgy. Paper with liturgy printed on it is like a recipe. Liturgy is when you are actively doing it.

The Divine Service is meant for you to participate in it. Sitting in church while not speaking or chanting the responsive parts of the Liturgy is not worship. Nor is not singing the hymns.

The Liturgy isn't designed for entertainment. It is meant to draw you into the mysteries of God. There is milk for the new born and solid food for the mature. as you enter the heavenly Jerusalem to receive God's gifts. It

has milk for the new born and meat for the mature believer.

### **Lesson 10 - Divine Service: In the Beginning**

During the days of the Apostles, Sunday was the day of worship. The reason for this is twofold. First, Christ is the fulfillment of the Law. Everything in it points to Him. Christians are no longer bound to a specific day of the week. Christ is our Sabbath. Second, Sunday was the day of Christ's resurrection. The Church worshipped on Sunday because each Sunday was Easter.

In those early days of the church, the Divine Service was separated into two services: The Service of the Word and The Service of the Sacrament. The Service of the Word was held in the morning and the Service of the Sacrament was held in the evening. With the Service of the Sacrament, the Church had a potluck type dinner called an Agape Feast or Love Feast. This feast was a community meal, kind of like what churches do today throughout the year.

### **Lesson 11 - Divine Service: The Two Become One**

After the year 100 AD, the Service of the Word and the Service of the Sacrament would be joined into one service on Sunday mornings. The Agape (Love) Meal with the Service of the Sacrament fell out of practice.

The Divine Service/Mass is the Communion service of the Christian Church. It has been the practice of the Universal Church from the beginning to celebrate Holy Communion every Sunday. There never was a Sunday that didn't have Holy Communion.

Every Sunday Communion was continued by the Lutheran Reformers: "Among us the Mass is celebrated



every Lord's day and on other festivals, when the sacrament is made available to those who wish to partake of it, after they have been examined and absolved" (Apology of the Augsburg Confession. Article XXIV. Par. 1. Kolb/Wengert).

The practice of Lutherans not offering Communion every Sunday is an abnormality of historical accident. It is Lutheran belief and practice to celebrate the Divine Service every Sunday and a worthy goal to restore it in congregations that no longer have every Sunday communion.

Help restore every Sunday Communion to all Lutheran congregations by being an advocate.

### **Lesson 12 - Divine Service: The Chief Service**

In Lutheran tradition, the term divine service has been used for other services of the Church. To distinguish between non-Communion services and the Communion service, the later was called the Chief Divine Service.

The usage of divine service for other services besides the Chief Divine Service has fallen into disuse in our time. Today, when Lutherans speak of Divine Service, they are referring to the Chief Divine Service.

Whether called the Chief Divine Service or the Divine Service, it consists of three parts: Service of Preparation, Service of the Word, and Service of the Sacrament.

### **Lesson 13 - Service of Preparation: The Keys**

The Service of Preparation is Confession & Absolution. Confession & Absolution is based upon the power and authority Christ has given to the Church, exercised

through the Office of the Holy Ministry. This power and authority is called the Office of the Keys:

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19).

"Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld." (John 20:21-23).

### **Lesson 14 - Service of Preparation: The Gospel for You**

The Keys are used publicly in the Service of Preparation and in private Confession & Absolution. In private Confession & Absolution a Christian meets with their pastor to confess whatever sin is troubling them and receive holy Absolution. In public Confession & Absolution a common confession of sins is spoken by everyone and receive holy Absolution.

The Absolution of public and private Confession is the same forgiveness of sins. The difference lies in how the Absolution is given to you: publicly or privately.

If a particular sin is troubling you or doubt plagues you, seek out private Confession & Absolution with your pastor. There God speaks His Absolution to you. Pastors are bound by their vows not to break the Confessional Seal. What is confessed, stays between the person, pastor, and God.

Public Confession & Absolution can be used by families and couples who have been fighting or having a bad week with one another. There they can confess together in the common Confession and receive Absolution for their sins and be reconciled in holy Absolution.

### **Lesson 15 - Service of the Word: Entering In**

The Service of the Word is also called the Service of Catechumens, meaning Service of Learners.

In the early church, visitors were only permitted in the Service of the Word. The Service of the Sacrament was reserved for baptized Christians only. When the Service of the Word ended, visitors and catechumens would be dismissed. Catechumens means learners. It was and is used as a term to describe people wanting to join the Church.

The Service of the Word begins with the Introit and ends with the Prayer of the Church. Introit means "He enters". It is a Psalm.

The practice of singing/chanting Psalms is an ancient practice of the faithful. When we chant the Psalms we are doing what believers in the OT did, what Jesus did, and what Christians for 2,000 years have done.

### **Lesson 16 - Service of the Word: Call Upon the Lord**

Having entered in the Beloved cries out to her Beloved in the Kyrie. Kyrie is a Greek word meaning "O, Lord". Traditionally, the Kyrie is sung three times-pleading the Lord for mercy.

In Divine Service Settings 1 & 2, the Kyrie is stated as a fivefold prayer.

When the Kyrie is sung three times, it is based on the order of events in Luke 18:35-43. There a blind man calls out for mercy from the Lord. Just like we do. He cried persistently. We cry persistently. His prayer was answered. Our prayers are answered. He and "all the people with him" glorified and gave praise to God. We glorify and give praise to God with the Gloria in Excelsis.

### **Lesson 17 - Service of the Word: Singing with the Angels**

The Gloria in Excelsis is one of the oldest hymns of the Christian Church. It is a hymn of adoration that celebrates God's glory manifested in the gift of His Son.

The name Gloria in Excelsis is Latin from the first words. Similar to how Sundays can receive their name from the first words of the Introit in Latin i.e. Invocavit.

The Gloria was sung by the angels at the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:14). Luther says of the Gloria, "It did not grow; nor was it made on earth; it came down from heaven."

After Gloria in Excelsis, comes the Collect of the Day. The Collect of the Day is a prayer designed to do something special. The word collect means to bring or gather together.

The Collect of the Day is a prayer that brings or gathers together the main thought from the Scripture readings that will soon be read. It offers a prayer to God for the congregation on that thought.

All the collects used in the Lutheran Church were completed by 800 A.D. Of course, there are new collects written and old ones modified, but generally speaking, the collects have been in use for 1300 years.

## **Lesson 18 - Service of the Word: The Word Read**

The reading of Scripture is an ancient practice of God's people. The Christian Church inherited and continued the practice. We see Jesus in Luke 4:17, 20 reading and preaching from Isaiah in a synagogue, "And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written...And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing'."

In 1 Timothy 4:13, Paul encourages Timothy: "Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching."

The public reading of Scripture and preaching from belongs to the stewardship of the Office of the Holy Ministry.

Throughout history, pastors would read. If there were lecturers, it would be men studying to be pastors. There was always a close association between reading, preaching, and the Office of the Holy Ministry.

The public reading of Scripture is the responsibility of the Office of the Holy Ministry. For this reason, there should be no female lecturers.

## **Lesson 19 - Service of the Word: Lectionaries**

The Readings from Scripture are three. Normally, one reading is from the Old Testament, another from an Epistle of the Apostles, and then a reading from one of the four Gospels.

A Lectionary is a book that orders the Scripture

readings for the entire year. There are two lectionaries in the LCMS: The One Year and Three Year.

The 1 year lectionary is the Historic Lectionary of the Christian Church. It has its beginnings in the early church and developed through time.

The 3 year lectionary was created by the Roman Catholic Church in 1969. Lutherans would adopt and modify this lectionary.

Today, you can find a Bible anywhere. Ranging from cheap to expensive. But for thousands of years, the reading of Scripture in synagogue or church was the only way for the ordinary man and woman to hear Scripture.

## **Lesson 20 - Service of the Word: The Faith of the Church**

Traditionally, after the Readings, the Creed is confessed. The reason for this is the Creed serves as a heresy check for the Sermon. It helps to keep the pastor and congregation faithful to the faith once delivered.

For Divine Service, the Nicene Creed is used. On minor services-Matins, Vespers, or any service where Communion is not celebrated, the Apostles' Creed is used.

The Creed is the truth of Scripture. It is the faith of all Christians throughout the ages. We do not create it, instead we receive it, and pass it on to the generations after us. When we confess the Creed, we are confessing before all of heaven and earth: This is the truth.

In our day, you can find pastors and churches who write their own creed to be confessed during worship. If you ever find yourself in this situation, don't confess that

creed. It's not the faith of the church. At best, it's the faith of the person writing it. Which, with all the false teaching out there, we need to be careful that we don't confess doctrine of demons.

No pastor or congregation has been given the authority by Jesus to rewrite the faith of the Church. If you encounter this at a church, turn around and run!

### **Lesson 21 - Service of the Word: Sir, we would like to see Jesus**

Following the Creed is the Hymn of the Day. This hymn is to reflect the theme of the Scripture Readings and can also reflect the theme of the Sermon.

The Sermon is based upon one or all of the Readings. A sermon is the preached Word of God. Here the Holy Spirit takes the preached Word and applies Law and Gospel to the lives of the hearers.

In the Lutheran Church, traditionally, sermons come to an end with "The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your heart and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen." This is called the Votum. The Votum is a blessing for the congregation and is taken from Philippians 4:7.

### **Lesson 22 - Service of the Word: A House of Thanksgiving & Prayer**

After the Sermon, the Offering is collected. Offering is a sacrifice of thanksgiving by the individual Christian. With it, we thank God for all the blessings He has bestowed on us in life and in His House.

Our sacrifice of thanksgiving supports the ministry of the Lord's House. Offering is a spiritual act between God and

the believer. It is based on the thank offering offered in the Temple (Lev. 7:11-18; Deut. 26:1-11) and the tithe for alms (Deut. 26:12-15).

Depending upon what setting of the Divine Service is in use, the Offertory' is sung before or after the Offering is collected and presented to the Lord at the altar. The Offertory is Psalm 51.

The prayers of the Church are then offered up unto to the Lord. Here the congregation assembled as the people of God offer up prayers to God on behalf of all people. The Service of the Word concludes with the Prayer of the Church.

One thing of note with the Service of the Word, and generally with all of the Divine Service, Scripture is either directly quoted, paraphrased, or it inspires. In other words, we take God's Word that He speaks and speak it back to Him. You can't find a more biblical worship than the Divine Service.

### **Lesson 23 - Service of the Sacrament: The Mystery Revealed**

Here in the Service of the Sacrament, heaven and earth meet. The book of Hebrews pulls back the curtain to the spiritual realm that is around us:

"But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel" (Hebrews 12:22-24).



Behold the mystery of the Divine Service. When gathered for the Lord's Supper, we are brought into the heavenly Jerusalem. The city prepared by God. Surrounding us are all the saints and angels of heaven.

We join them in the marriage feast of the Lamb. All our loved ones who died in the Lord are present and are a part of "the assembly of the firstborn" "the spirits of the righteous made perfect".

When we go to Divine Service, we visit the heavenly Jerusalem!

### **Lesson 24 - Service of the Sacrament: With All the Company of Heaven**

The Service of the Sacrament begins with the Preface. The Preface functions to realign our hearts and focus on the heavenly Jerusalem. To which, we will be making a pilgrimage.

Following the Preface comes the Proper Preface. The Proper Preface is a prayer of thanksgiving reflecting the season of the Church Year it is prayed in.

The Sanctus is sung after the Proper Preface. It is a song of thanksgiving composed from two Scripture passages: Isaiah 6: 2-3 and Matthew 21:9. Sanctus means "holy." With the Sanctus, the Church on earth joins the Seraphim in Heaven, who continually sing Holy, Holy, Holy as revealed in Isaiah 6.

The second part of the Sanctus takes the words from the pilgrims, who greeted Jesus in His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The Church on earth uses these words to greet Jesus, the One who comes in the Name of the Lord for His Holy Supper.

The Sanctus reveals the communion between the Church Triumphant and the Church Militant. The body of Christ is joined together in worship of her King.

### **Lesson 25 - Service of the Sacrament: The Body and Blood of Christ**

Next follows the Lord's Prayer. It is placed before the Consecration for two reasons. First, not only was it taught by Jesus, but it is the culminating prayer of thanksgiving i.e. Eucharist. Second, in this prayer we ask, "Give us today our daily bread." That petition for bread is a prayer for the bread of the altar. We are praying to receive from God the Lord's Supper. Which, He grants us.

The Consecration is the Words of Institution spoken over the bread and wine. This Consecration is a continuation of Maundy Thursday. It is Jesus, Who creates the Sacramental Union between the bread & wine and His Body & Blood.

In the Holy Supper, we have earthly and heavenly elements. The earthly elements are bread and wine. The heavenly elements are Christ's body and blood. It is a mystery and a supernatural miracle that takes place.

When you point at the bread and say "That is the body of Christ." It's true. When you point at the wine and say "That is the blood of Christ." It's true. Christ's body and blood are supernaturally present in, with, and under the bread and wine.

Unlike Rome, we do not seek to explain this mystery with Greek Philosophy (Transubstantiation). Unlike our Protestant neighbors, we do not deny this mystery because our reason can't understand it. We Lutherans accept God can do whatever He wants. Even when we don't understand how He does it. Our reason bows before the Word of God and remains silent.

## **Lesson 26 - Service of the Sacrament: Behold the Lamb of God**

The bread is elevated when it's consecrated and the chalice is elevated when it's consecrated. This is done not as a sacrifice to God but as a confession of the real presence of Christ in His Supper and adoration body of Christ. This elevated chalice is the blood of Christ. Where Christ's body and blood are, there He is.

After separate elevations, both are elevated with the host over the chalice and the Pax given—"The Peace of the Lord be with you always." The Pax is a blessing.

The Agnus Dei, which means Lamb of God, is sung to Christ, now present in the bread and wine. The Lamb of God Who took away the sins of the World on the cross is now present to take away our sins in the eating and drinking of His most holy body and blood with faith clinging to the promise: "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins."

The Distribution of our Lord's body and blood takes place after the Agnus Dei. Here we receive in our hand, in our mouth, the real, true, actually present body and blood of Christ.

The body eats for the soul through the mouth, while the soul eats for the body through faith. When we eat and drink, believing the promise: "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins", we eat and drink Christ's body and blood worthily. Forgiveness of sins is truly ours. We are cleansed and united with the body of Christ in heaven and on earth.

## **Lesson 27 - The Service of the Sacrament: The Blessing of Christ**

When the body and blood are received, a blessing is spoken to those who communed: "Now this, the true body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, keep you in the one true faith unto live everlasting. Amen."

This blessing is given as an assurance that the body and blood eaten and drunk in faith, was received as a blessing and not a curse.

The Nunc Dimittis is sung as a thankful response to God for the reception of Christ's body and blood. Like Simeon, we have held, seen, and received the salvation promised to Israel. We can depart in peace from the Lord's House and this life.

The Divine Service comes to a close with the Benediction. This blessing is known as the Aaronic Benediction. It is found in Numbers 6:22-26: The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace.

The first verse offers God's blessing and protection. The second verse announces the favor and mercy of God. The third verse assures us of God's love. To lift up one's countenance is an ancient form of speech for bestowing one's love, gazing longingly and feeling upon another, like a spouse for their spouse or parent for their child.

## **Lesson 28 - Who Are We?**

In the 1980's a false teaching spread like wildfire throughout American Christianity. You can still find it

today: Everyone is a minister. This originated from the Church Growth Movement (CGM) which uses Marketing and Business strategies of the secular world in spiritual matters.

CGM was the impetus for removing crucifixes, crosses, and sacred art from churches because they offend unbelievers. It turned the Divine Service into a seeker pleaser and many houses of worship into entertainment centers. Everyone is not a minister, but everyone is a priest.

St. Peter teaches in his first epistle, "you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (2:5). Peter goes on to say, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (2:9).

This doctrine is called the Priesthood of All Believers. All believers have been made priests in Christ. As members of this royal priesthood, we are to offer up spiritual sacrifices. Hebrews 13:15-16 teaches, "Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."

The sacrifices we offer as the Priesthood of All Believers are spiritual sacrifices: thanksgiving, praise, offering, help to our neighbors, a holy life, and alms.

## **Lesson 29 - Understanding Actions**

### **Understanding Actions**

The Divine Service is God's service to us. It also is our response as priests to Him. We offer the sacrifices of praise for what He has done. The actions of God toward us in the Divine Service are called Sacramental. Our actions toward God in the Divine Service are called Sacrificial.

The Sacramental parts of the Divine Service are:

- The Holy Absolution
- The Readings of Scripture
- The Sermon
- The Distribution of the Holy Supper
- The Benedictions i.e. Blessings

The Sacrificial parts of the Divine Service are:

- The Confession of our Sins
- The Prayers
- The Hymns and Canticles
- The Creed
- The Offerings

The direction in which a pastor faces during the Divine Service indicates if a sacramental or sacrificial action is being done. When a pastor faces the congregation, it is a sacramental action—God doing something through the pastor to the congregation. When the pastor faces the altar, it is a sacrificial action—the pastor and priests offering up spiritual sacrifices to God.

## **Lesson 30- Reverence & Devotion**

You will find different times in the Divine Service where we stand up, sit down, or kneel. There are reasons for this.

Generally, we stand for prayer and praise. We sit for instruction. And we kneel to confess our sins, during the consecration, and receiving the body and blood of Christ.

Standing is also done to give honor. We stand in honor of the Trinity at the last stanza of a hymn that has a triangle before it. The triangle reminds us to stand in honor of the Blessed Trinity, whose Name is sung in that stanza. We also stand in honor of the Gospel, when it is read.

We sit for instruction/teaching and long hymns. Kneeling is a sign of humility. We kneel to God. We come to Him humble, on our knees, to receive His grace, mercy, and peace.

### **Lesson 31 - Bowing: Outwardly expressing an inward reality**

Bowing shows reverence, honor, and worship. It is done at different times in the Divine Service.

We bow to the altar when welcomed to the Table of the Lord. This bow is an act of reverence to Christ now present in Holy Communion. We bow to Christ after we have received His body and blood.

We bow in reverence and honor for the Name of the Trinity at the end of the Introit when the Gloria Patri (Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost) is chanted.

We bow during the Nicene Creed at the words "And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit...and was made man". This is to show reverence to the Incarnation.

Whether we sit, stand, kneel, or bow, all these things serve as devotional aids. They are things we can incorporate into our lives to help give expression to the love of God that is born from faith in our heart. They are beautiful aids that have been a part of the Church for thousands of years.

### **Lesson 32 - Sign of the Cross: An Ancient Tradition**

The early Christians saw in Ezekiel 9:4 a prophecy of the sign of the cross. Ezekiel 9:4 in the Greek reads, "Go through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark (Greek letter tau) on the foreheads of the men that groan and that grieve for the iniquities that are done in the midst of them." The Greek letter tau is the same as our T, which is in the shape of a cross.

Making the sign of the cross is a very ancient practice of Christians.

The early church father Tertullian writes, "At every forward step and movement, at every going in and out, when we put on our clothes and shoes, when we bathe, when we sit at table, when we light the lamps, on couch, on seat, in all the ordinary actions of daily life, we trace upon the forehead the sign" (The Chaplet, chapter 3).

The sign of the cross is made to remind us of our baptism, as a sign of blessing, a sign for protection, and also a sign against the demonic.

It's a beautiful practice that every Lutheran should make a part of their devotional life.



## **There and Back Again**

Our journey into the spiritual realities of the Divine Service has come to its end. We have peeled back the layers and I pray you have come to love the Liturgy and the mysteries it contains.

I also hope you dare to be proud of being Lutheran and unashamedly want to be Lutheran in belief and practice. It is a joyful blessing. This is why Satan attacks so fiercely to rob the Saints of their heritage.

As you are gathered to the House of the Lord, may your eyes be open to the heavenly Jerusalem into which you have come. Surrounded by all the saints and angels of heaven, receive our Lord's gifts and offer up your sacrifices of thanksgiving, as His priest, for the glory of His Name.

Amen. And again I say, Amen!