



GENERAL RUBRICS OF THE LUTHERAN LITURGY



I. FOR THE ORDER OF MORNING SERVICE, THE ORDER OF THE HOLY COMMUNION, THE ORDER OF MATINS, THE ORDER OF VESPERS

When the Officiant stands before the altar, he faces the altar for all sacrificial acts and the Congregation for all sacramental acts.

THE SACRIFICIAL ACTS

Of the Morning Service and of the Order of the Holy Communion are the Trinitarian Invocation, the Confession, the Introit, the Hymns and Canticles, the Gradual, the Creed, the Prayers, the Offertory, the Preface, the Sanctus, and the Words of Institution.

In the Order of Matins: the Hymns, the Opening Versicles, the Psalmody, the Versicle after the Lection, the Canticles, and the Prayers.

In the Order of Vespers: the Hymns, the Opening Versicles, the Psalmody, the Versicle after the Lection and the Versicle after the Office Hymn, the Canticles, and the Prayers.

THE SACRAMENTAL ACTS

Of the Morning Service and of the Order of the Holy Communion are the Invitation to Confession, the Declaration of Grace, or the Absolution, the Salutation, the Lessons, the Sermon, the Votum, the Salutation, the Benedicamus, and the Benediction.

In *the Order of Matins*: the Invitatory, the Lection, the Sermon, the Salutation, the Benedicamus, and the Benediction.

In *the Order of Vespers*: the Lection, the Sermon, the Salutation, the Benedicamus, and the Benediction.

The word "shall" in the Rubrics makes that part of the Service obligatory, while the word "may" leaves it optional.

When turning at the altar, the Officiant shall ordinarily turn by his right side to face the Congregation and by his left side to face the altar.

Whenever Holy Communion is celebrated in a Church Service, the Order of the Holy Communion shall be used in its entirety.

The Propria, or Propers (as distinguished from the fixed portions of the Service, called the Ordinary), that is, the Introit, the Collect, the Epistle, the Gradual, and the Gospel for the Day, shall be used throughout the week following, except on these Days for which other appointments are made.

Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and Trinity Sunday are designated as the Feasts of the Church Year; all other Festival Days are designated as the Festivals of the Church Year.

THE COLLECTS

The Collect for Ash Wednesday is said in every Lenten Service after the Collect for the Day.

Whenever the Collect for the Day is said, the full termination as appointed shall be used. If other Collects are said after it, as at Matins and Vespers, the full termination shall be used with the Collect for the Day and the last Collect only. The last Collect in Matins is the Collect for Grace, the last in Vespers the Collect for Peace.

The short termination of the Collects used after the Collect for the Day will usually be: *through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord; or: through the*

same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Exceptions to this rule will be found printed in full in the texts of the Additional Collects.

When the Petition is addressed to God the Father, the full termination is: *through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.*

When the Petition is addressed to God the Son, the termination is: *who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.*

When the Petition is addressed to God the Holy Ghost, the termination is: *who livest and reignest with the Father and the Son, ever one God, world without end.*

When mention is made of our Lord in the body of the Petition, the termination is: *through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.*

When mention is made of our Lord at the end of the Petition, the termination is: *who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.*

When mention is made of the Holy Ghost in the body of the Collect, the termination is: *who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the same Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.*

When the Petition is addressed to God the Holy Trinity, the termination is: *who livest and reignest, ever one God, world without end.*

THE MUSIC

The music of the Service is not a part of the Liturgy and may be altered as circumstances permit or require.

Liturgical chant, more so than any other type of church music, is not a musical interpretation of the text; it is only the bearer of the text and hence should be sung in a simple, straightforward manner. To a lesser

extent, the same thing is true of Hymn tunes. This is in keeping with the spirit of the objective character of liturgical worship, which disdains sentimentalization and tawdriness, musical and otherwise.

The Officiant shall chant those portions of the Service to which the Choir or the Congregation responds with chanting.

The primary function of the Choir is to lead the Congregation in the singing of the Liturgy and the Hymn, and to sing the Propers of the Liturgy when they are beyond the capacity of the Congregation.

In view of the fact that the music presented by the Choir and organist is part of the Service of Worship, it is imperative that this music be in keeping with the spirit of the liturgical character of the Service.

From time to time the Choir may sing parts of the Ordinary in more elaborate choral settings.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Notices to the Congregation, except in connection with requests for Intercession, ought not to be read during the Services.

HOLY BAPTISM

Unless otherwise ordered in a Congregation, public Baptism may be administered after the Opening Hymn, in which case the Opening Hymn may well be a baptismal hymn.

MIDWEEK EVENING SERVICES

The Order of Vespers may be used for midweek evening Services. In place of the Lection during Lent, a portion of the History of our Lord's Passion may be read.

II. THE ORDER OF MORNING SERVICE AND THE ORDE OF THE HOLY COMMUNION

THE PREPARATORY SERVICE

For the Invocation and the Preparatory Service the Officiant may stand at the foot of the altar steps, advancing to the altar at the Introit.

When the Service begins with the Introit, the Officiant shall proceed to the altar at once.

Since the Preparation is not a part of the Service proper, it is preferable that the Officiant and the Congregation speak the entire Preparatory Service. The Congregation may kneel until the Declaration of Grace has been spoken.

THE INTROIT

The Introit for the Day with the Gloria Patri should be sung by the Choir. If a Choir is not available, the Introit may be said or chanted by the Officiant; in this case the Gloria Patri may be said or sung by the Congregation.

The Introit for the Day, including the Gloria Patri, should either be sung or spoken throughout.

The Antiphon, which announces the keynote of the Introit, shall be repeated after the Gloria Patri.

If the Confessional Service immediately precedes the Communion Service, the latter shall begin with the Introit.

THE KYRIE

The Kyrie shall be said or sung by the Congregation.

A ninefold, but not a fourfold or sixfold (the Officiant speaking the first line; the Officiant speaking each line) Kyrie may be substituted for the threefold Kyrie. In place of the English text, the Greek form, "Kyrie Eleison,

Christie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison," may be used in either a threefold or a ninefold form.

THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

The Gloria in Excelsis shall be used on all Feast and Festival Days; at other times a versified form of the Gloria in Excelsis (Hymns 237, 238, in *The Lutheran Hymnal*), or another hymn of praise, may be used. The Gloria in Excelsis shall also be used at all services of Worship in which the Administration of Holy Communion takes place, except that in this case it may be omitted during the Seasons of Advent, Pre-Lent, and Lent.

THE LESSONS

Before the Epistle for the Day an appointed Lesson from the Old Testament may be read, but the Epistle for the Day and the Gospel for the Day shall always be read.

When the Minister announces the Gospel for the Day, the Congregation shall rise and then chant, Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

THE GRADUAL FOR THE DAY AND THE HALLELUJAH

The Gradual for the Day or the Sentence of the Season should be sung by the Choir. If a choir is not available, the Officiant may say the Gradual or the Sentence for the Season; or the Congregation may simply sing the Hallelujah after the Epistle has been read. Hallelujah is not sung during Pre-Lent and Lent.

Special choir music may be sung in place of, or preferably in addition to, the Gradual, between the Epistle and the Gospel. When this is done, it is important that the textual content of the choral selection harmonize with the theme of the Liturgy and Service. A hymn of Invocation to the Holy Ghost may be sung to replace the Gradual; the classical Gradual Hymn of the Lutheran Church is "We Now Implore God the Holy Ghost" (*The Lutheran Hymnal, Hymn 231*).

THE CREED

The Nicene Creed shall be chanted or said by the Congregation on all Feasts and Festivals and whenever there is a Communion; at other times

the Apostles' Creed may be used in its stead, or a versified form of these Creeds may be sung. Cf. Hymns 251, 252, 253, in *The Lutheran Hymnal*.

On Trinity Sunday, the Athanasian Creed may be used after the Gradual.

THE VOTUM

When saying the Votum at the close of the Sermon, the Preacher may raise his hand in blessing and make the sign of the cross.

THE GENERAL PRAYER

Before the General Prayer at the altar the Officiant may announce special Petitions, Intercessions, or Thanksgivings which have been requested. He may also make mention of the birth, contemplated marriage, death, etc., of members of the Congregation.

One of the General Prayers appointed for the Services shall always be used. The Litany may be used instead of the General Prayer, except when there is a Communion.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

The Celebrant may make ready the Communion vessels immediately after the Offertory.

If there be another Minister to assist in the Distribution, he may approach the altar during the singing of the Agnus Dei.

THE PROPER PREFACE

The Proper Preface shall be used throughout its respective Season. The Preface of the Holy Trinity may be used on any Sunday for which no other Preface is appointed.

THE SACRED ELEMENTS

In making ready the elements for Holy Communion, so much of the bread and wine shall be placed in the proper vessels as in the judgment of the Celebrant will be required for the Administration.

If the consecrated bread or wine be spent before all have communed, the Celebrant shall consecrate more, saying aloud so much of the Words of Institution as pertains to the element to be consecrated.

When all have received the Holy Sacraments, the Celebrant shall cover what remains of the bread and wine with the veil.

When the Service has been completed, the Celebrant or a deacon shall remove the sacramental vessels from the altar to the sacristy and dispose of that part of the bread and wine which remains: He shall carefully remove the bread from the paten and ciborium to a fit receptacle, there to be kept against the next Communion.

He shall pour what remains of the consecrated wine into the piscine or upon the ground at a proper and convenient place outside the church.

III. THE ORDER OF MATINS

THE INVITATORY

The Invitatory always precedes the Venite, Psalm 95. It varies with the Season. Other appropriate Invitatories may be used.

After the Venite and the Gloria Patri the whole Invitatory shall be repeated.

THE PSALM

In the reading or chanting of the Psalter at Matins, Psalm 95 (Venite) shall not be used.

On Trinity Sunday, the Athanasian Creed may replace a Psalm.

THE ANTIPHON

An Antiphon may be said or chanted with each Psalm.

When an Antiphon is used with the Psalm, it shall be chanted before the Psalm and repeated after the Glori Patri.

THE LECTIO

One Lesson shall, more may, be read. On Sundays or Festivals one Lesson shall be read from the Epistles and one from the Gospels. A Lesson from the Old Testament may precede the Lesson from the Epistles. Lessons shall not be chosen from the Psalter.

The Epistle and the Gospel for the Day shall not be used as Lessons at Matins.

In announcing the Lesson the Officiant shall say: The First (or Second or Third) Lesson is written in the ____ chapter of ____ beginning at the ____ verse. The Lesson ended, he shall say: Here endeth the First (or Second or Third) Lesson. After that, facing the altar, he may say or chant: But Thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us.

THE RESPONSORY

The Responary varies with the Season and may be sung by the Choir after the last Lesson. Other appropriate Responsories may also be used.

THE SERMON

The Sermon or Address may follow the Lesson and Responary as appointed.

MATIN CANTICLES

The Te Deum. Proper at Matins on all Sundays except in Advent and from Septuagesima to Good Friday; also proper on Feasts and Festivals and during their Seasons.

The Benedictus. Proper on all Sundays in Advent and from Septuagesima to Good Friday; also proper for daily use.

The Benedicite. Proper on Feasts and Festivals and during Eastertide, when the Te Deum is not used.

The Dignus Est Agnus. Proper during Eastertide and Ascensiontide. May also be used during the Trinity Season.

The Beatitudes. Proper during the Trinity Season, but may be used any other time except Sundays.

Any of the other Canticles, except the Magnificat and the Nunc Dimittis, may be used at Matins on any Day except Sunday or a Feast or a Festival. Confitebor Tibi is traditionally associated with Monday, Ego dixi with Tuesday, Exultavit cor meum with Wednesday, Cantemus Domino with Thursday, Domine audivi with Friday, and Audite coeli with Saturday.

An Antiphon may be sung with any of the Canticles except the Te Deum. It should be sung before the Canticle and repeated after the Canticle by the entire Choir.

THE PRAYERS

Instead of the Prayers appointed, the Suffrages, the Litany, or other Prayers may be used. The Bidding Prayer may be used in the same manner on any Wednesday or Friday in Lent and on Good Friday.

THE COLLECT

The Collect for the Sunday is ordinarily said at Matins throughout the week. The Collect for Grace shall be the last Collect used at Matins. A Versicle may be used before any Collect after the first.

IV. THE ORDER OF VESPERS

THE ANTIPHON

An Antiphon may be said or chanted with each Psalm.

When an Antiphon is used with a Psalm, it shall be sung before the Psalm and repeated after the Gloria Patri by the entire Choir. The Psalm is sung to the tone of the Antiphon.

THE LECTION

One or more Lessons from the Old or New Testaments shall be read.

The Epistle and the Gospel for the Day shall not be used as Lessons at Vespers.

In announcing the Lesson the Officiant shall say: The First (or Second or Third) Lesson is written ____ in the ____ chapter of ____ beginning at the ____ verse. The Lesson ended, he shall say: Here endeth the First (or Second or Third) Lesson. After that, facing the altar, he may say or chant: But Thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us.

THE RESPONSORY

The Responary varies with the Season and may be sung by the Choir after the last Lesson. Other appropriate Responsories may also be used.

THE SERMON

The Sermon or Address may follow the Lesson and Responary as appointed.

VESPER CANTICLES

The Magnificat. The proper Canticle at Vespers at all times.

The Nunc Dimittis. A proper substitute for the Magnificat only when Vespers are said or sung as a late Office.

The Dignus Est Agnus. Proper during Eastertide and Ascensiontide. May also be used during the Trinity Season.

On Festivals a special Versicle may be used before the Canticle.

An Antiphon may be sung with the Canticle.

THE PRAYER

Instead of the Prayer appointed, the Suffrages or the Litany or other Prayers may be said.

THE COLLECT

The Collect for the Sunday is ordinarily said at Vespers throughout the week until Friday; but on Saturday the Collect for the following Sunday is said. The Collect proper for any Festival may be used at Vespers of the day before. The Collect for Peace shall be the last Collect in the Order of Vespers. A Versicle may be used before any Collect after the first.

V. MISCELLANEOUS

THE LITURGICAL COLORS

The Liturgical colors are white, red, green, violet, and black. Their significance is as follows:

White: Color of the Godhead, eternity, robe of the glorified Christ and the Angels, perfection, joy, purity.

Red: Color of fire, fervor, blood, martyrdom, love, victorious truth of Christian teaching based on the blood and righteousness of Christ.

Green: Color of abiding life, nourishment, rest; dominant color of nature.

Violet: Color of royal mourning and repentance.

Black: Absence of color, symbolical of death.

THEIR PROPER USE

White: From and with Vespers of Eve of Nativity through the Epiphany Octave. On Maundy Thursday, when Communion is celebrated. From and with the Vespers of Easter Eve through to the Vespers of the Eve of Whitsunday. On the Feast of the Holy Trinity and during its Octave. All the other Festivals of Christ, i.e., Presentation, Annunciation, Visitation, and Transfiguration. On the Day of St. Michael and All Angels. On the Day of the Conversion of St. Paul; the Nativity of St. John the Baptist; All Saints' Day; the Dedication of a Church and Its Anniversary; on days of general or special thanksgiving and on the festivals of saints not martyrs.

Red: From and with the Vespers on the Eve of Whitsunday through to the Vespers on the Eve of Holy Trinity. The

Festival of the Reformation and its Octave. On commemorating the death of martyrs.

Green: From and with Matins on January 14 to Vespers of the Eve of Septuagesima. From the Second Sunday after Trinity through the Trinity Season to the Vespers of the Eve of Advent.

Violet: From and with the Vespers on the Eve of Advent to the Vespers on the Eve of the Nativity. From and with Vespers on the Saturday before Septuagesima and throughout Pre-Lent and Lent, to Vespers on the Eve of Easter. For the Day of Humiliation.

Black: For Good Friday *only*.

Variants: In some parts of the Lutheran Church green is used from Septuagesima through Shrove Tuesday. In that case white should be used from Matins on January 14 until, but not at, Vespers on the Saturday before Septuagesima. Violet may be used from Matins on the Monday after Rogation Sunday until, but not at, Vespers on the Wednesday before the Ascension Day, and on Holy Innocents' Day when it falls during the week.

The Solemnization of Holy Matrimony and the Order for the Burial of the Dead shall not affect the proper color of the Day or Season in use when these Services are held.

THE ALTAR LINENS

The Fair Linen, a cloth covering the altar, extending one third or two thirds or all the way to the floor at the narrow ends, shall always be upon the altar.

THE SACRAMENTAL LINENS

The *Corporal*, a square of very fine linen, is laid on the center of the Fair Linen cloth. Upon it the sacramental vessels are placed.

The *Pall*, a small square of stiff material covered or lined with linen, is used to cover the chalice. It should be removed at the Consecration.

The *Purificators*, squares of heavy linen, are used to cleanse the rim of the chalice during the Administration.

The *Veil*, made of silk or of the finest linen, is used to cover the sacramental vessels upon the altar or credence table. It is removed before the Preface and should be folded carefully and laid upon the altar and again placed over the sacramental vessels after the Administration at the Nunc Dimittis.

When not in use on the altar, the sacramental linens should be properly folded and kept in the *Burse*, a square envelope made of strong cardboard, covered with silk or heavy linen.

HEADGEAR FOR WOMEN

It is a laudable custom, based upon a Scriptural injunction (1 Cor. 11:3-15), for women to wear an appropriate head covering in Church, especially at the time of divine service.

On and after Easter Day, 1955, in any case of a contradiction between these General Rubrics as they are here printed and other rubrics published elsewhere in the official service books of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America, these General Rubrics shall govern.

(The General Rubrics of the Lutheran Liturgy are from
The Lutheran Liturgy. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House; 1941, 417-427)