

1 ☐ **Liturgy for Sunday: Reflections in Detail Session 9: Sending**

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2 ☐ **Introduction**

- Like the Gathering, the time of the Sending is adaptable to the community and the day.
- Also like the gathering, it is a forming of the assembly.
- This time, however, the forming is for the assembly's life in the world as this local expression of the body of Christ disperses.
- It is a time for sending and being sent; a time to thank God for the gifts of this assembly and prepare to extend them into the community.

3 ☐ **Introduction**

- It is a time to gather up the gifts of bread and wine so that they can be sent to those who were absent that day; a final time to thank God for those gifts.
- We hear for a final time the multiple voices of assembly leadership: presider announcing the blessing or benediction, the assisting minister announcing the assembly's dismissal, the assembly giving assent to both and adding its own voice in sending song.

4 ☐ **Introduction**

- Sending reminds us that every assembly gathering is a cycle, existing for a time and then dispersing.
- We are not the same individuals who walked in at the gathering: we have encountered the living Christ in Word and Sacrament—now we are empowered for ministry through the sending.
- Like Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, we can't remain forever in the assembly—our vocation sends us to a world in need, to live amidst the pains and struggles of our world.

5 ☐ **Introduction**

- Sending also reminds the assembly that the church is not contained within its walls, but extends as the body of Christ throughout the world.
- At a festive service, the sending might be more elaborate than on a Sunday morning. Usually, though, the sending is not so elaborate. In fact, it is normally the briefest of the four sections.
- Serves to turn us from the meal to point us back toward our life and ministry in the world.

6 ☐ **Introduction**

- Cross leads the way out of the assembly—sending is MOVEMENT: from the communion table to the cross in the world.
- The liturgy is complete, but the cycle continues.
- Not like the Jewish Sabbath—not the last day of the week, not a day of rest; first (and 8th) day of the week, day of meeting and worshipping.
- Cycle: Gather-Word-Meal-Sending-Gather-(etc)

7 ☐ **Introduction**

- This cycle returns us each week from the sending of the previous Sunday to the gathering on the next Sunday.
- Times when return to gathering is interrupted (sickness, exile, etc.)—Nehemiah and regathering for the first time in 70 years and hearing the law for the first time in decades.

- No matter how long we stay away, no matter how far we have strayed, we return again to the gathering and find that we are still connected to the body of Christ gathered there.

8 ☐ **Sending Song**

- Singing at the sending strengthens the assembly as it prepares to disperse.
- The sending song may give thanks for the meal just shared, may acknowledge gratitude for the assembly, or may empower the assembly for its mission in the world.
- At times it may do all of these.
- Though scattered throughout the community and world during the week, the source of our daily work comes from our Sunday assembly.

9 ☐ **Being Sent**

- This portion is not called “Going” which we would do, but “Sending” which God does.
- God sends us from this place to live our vocations in the world.
- The presiding minister proclaims God’s blessing on this assembly in this time of sending.
- He or she may make the sign of the cross over the assembly, and the assembly may also make the sign of the cross as a final reminder of their baptism.

10 ☐ **Being Sent**

- The assembly receives God’s blessing with the response “Amen!”
- Sending song may follow the blessing, and during the song the cross may lead the ministers back to the entrance of the space for the final dismissal.
- The assembly turns to follow the cross, perhaps bowing in reverence as it passes, then faces toward the world where it will live out its vocation.

11 ☐ **Being Sent**

- The cross leads us back into the world.
- Finally comes the dismissal. The assisting minister’s voice announces this final declaration.
- There are several options for wording the dismissal, four of which are given in ELW.
- If locally composed sentences are used, they should copy the brevity of these examples.
- In any case, the assembly responds “Thanks be to God!”