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# Worship



# AND WE'LL ALL SING ALLELUIA WHEN *We Arrive At Home.* -APPALACHIAN HYMN-

The beating heart of the Christian life is worship. In the Divine Service we are invited into the presence of God, holy and mighty and immortal. Before Him, the angels themselves must shield their eyes. Yet this same God, who is far beyond our ability to grasp Him, makes Himself available in ways reachable by us: the Word that is heard, the Supper that is tasted, the Community that is shared. To walk with Jesus Christ is to be worshipper of the God whom our Lord delighted in as loving Father. As students of Jesus, the first thing that we learn about worship is that it is firstly about God, and only secondly about us.

But it is about us. Worship is that moment when God answers our needs by giving us gifts we need the most. We need forgiveness and reassurance that we are walking on trustworthy ground. We need food and drink that will sustain us for the journey we are making. We need a guide, and we need companions; someone who will show us the way and a company to share the road. The forms of worship that we use (the liturgy) are one of the gifts God gives,

because it signals and shows where forgiveness and reassurance are found, it calls us to the feast, and it reminds us that the companions we have are not simply those around us in the flesh, but all of God's People across the globe and through the ages. The liturgy is a gift from God, yet a gift shaped and celebrated by countless men and women who in their own times and places asked of God the same things we are asking today.

In this issue of GPS, we are exploring the gift of worship. You will find reflections from the attendees of the Synod's Liturgical Conference at Concordia University, Nebraska; highlights from our choir's recent Music Boot Camp; and discussion of how worship is not the best way for the public to be introduced to a parish. There is a puzzle to work, materials to

study, and more!

We hope you enjoy this latest issue of GPS and I look forward to seeing you at Divine Service soon!

~Pr. Brooks



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# IS WORSHIP A PUBLIC EVENT?

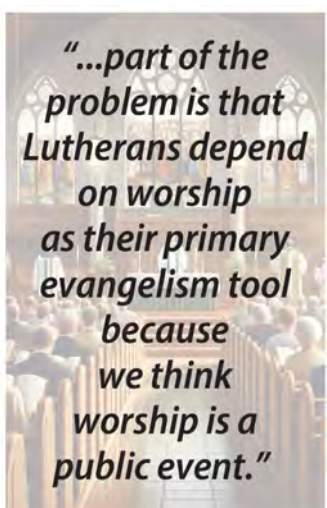
When I arrived at seminary in the mid-1990s, I discovered that I wasn't just stepping onto campus; I was also stepping into what was sarcastically called the "worship wars." People used that label to cover a lot of ground: whether parishes should choose "traditional," "contemporary," "blended," or "multicultural" liturgy; whether worship should be "seeker-sensitive;" who should be included in Holy Communion; and more. Some experts insisted that nothing about liturgy or worship styles was "sacred," and the only thing that mattered was connecting people to Jesus. Other experts insisted that the Church could reach out without "dumbing down" the beauty or content of its worship. While I was more concerned about the ELCA at that point in my life, the Missouri Synod also wrestled and warred over the same worship ground during those years.

I bring up this history because the core reason for the "worship wars" is still with us: what role does Christian worship play in an increasingly non-Christian environment? Many believers see worship as a "public event," where anyone can come, participate as they wish, and then draw conclusions about the truth of the Christian Gospel. Many would say that the ground floor level of evangelism is inviting someone to "church"—meaning the worship service.

But is worship really meant as a public event, open to anyone who might wander in? More specifically, is the Divine Service really the best "front door" or "ground floor" for introducing someone to the way of Jesus Christ? One truth that the champions of seeker-services identified back in the 1980s and 90s is even stronger today: the elements of the Divine Service reflect a culture that 21<sup>st</sup> century people no longer share. Non-Christians need the liturgy *interpreted* for them, for they do not have the cultural assumptions that make Christian worship understandable. And, in the same way that misunderstanding can occur between a native and a tourist, misunderstandings can arise for worship visitors and hamper the Church's witness.

An LCMS author recently made the point that most congregational growth is happening by "sheep-swapping," where a parish member moves his or her membership from one congregation to another, even

one denomination to another. The cultural assumptions of worship are not an issue, because the person is already a member of that Kingdom of God culture where worship is a normal activity. The author lamented that LCMS churches struggle to evangelize non-Christians, and I think that part of the problem is that Lutherans depend on worship as their primary evangelism tool *because we think worship is a public event*. We promote or advertise our worship, and people will come.



**"...part of the problem is that Lutherans depend on worship as their primary evangelism tool because we think worship is a public event."**

But people do not come, because worship is not public. Worship is where and when God gathers His people so that he can bless us. Worship is where and when we are gathered so that we can praise our God who has saved us. Worship is where and when we are with God and one another so that we can be the Body of Christ. Worship is not simply "ours" in our present moment, but unites and binds us with the whole People of God that stretch back in time and around the world.

Now, this is not a long set-up for me to say, "let's go find us a band!" What I hope you will consider is that non-believers need our friendship long before they need our invitation to worship. Our friendship will take different forms depending on the circumstances. For instance, the person who has never heard of Christ might be better served by an invitation to a small group to experience how Christian practices are a trustworthy path toward the good and the true. A person who is concerned about justice could be invited to a ministry opportunity to serve and bless others in need. A lonely person might only need someone who will join him or her for a meal on a regular basis. The options are as wide as your friendship group!

But the key is to be a friend. Let us look for ways that we might bless our neighbors, let them know that we see them, that they are valuable to us because they are valuable to God. When you invite, invite them to things where your friendship can grow. Our Lord will be at work, and in time they will seek Him, just as you have—they will be ready to worship. You won't have to go to war to get them there!

~Pr. Dave Brooks



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*We're hoping to schedule a class in early fall where you can learn more about Lutheran Worship and Liturgy. In the meantime, try this crossword puzzle of liturgical terms (see next page). Solution will be published in next week's e-news.*

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# The Liturgy Serves Us

*(Excerpted from an article in the LCMS Worship Library written by Rev. Robert Zagore. Rev. Zagore reminds us of the very practical nature of the Church's liturgy and hymnody.)*

*"Time passed and my experience grew. I began to learn the importance of the Church's prayer. Before I thought of it as a Lutheran family heirloom. The liturgy seemed to be like grandmother's china. It was set out for family gatherings and special occasions. It wasn't for everyday use. Besides, it was so old; no one except the family could appreciate its beauty."*

While at the seminary, I helped start an overnight chaplaincy program at a local inner-city hospital. The 11pm to 7am hours would be quiet and allow time for study and even sleep. Or so I thought...

This vision was shattered when a "Code Blue" came through on my first night. I found myself grabbing the hand of a dying man and saying the only words that would come into my mind, "Our Father, who art in heaven." As I spoke, I noticed others were praying, too. Only an occasional doctor's order broke the liturgy of the unscheduled evening prayer.

The room was no longer the valley of the shadow of death. It was the gate of heaven through which, that night, a righteous man passed.

For some, the words were only the vague shadows

from a childhood ritual. But they still were true. With others, I saw the time-ripened fruit of an ongoing relationship with God. I didn't have to teach them the words. They didn't have to struggle through their tears to understand. They knew the words and the words brought hope.

The structure and timeless nature of the church's worship calls order out of the chaos of a crisis. It is familiar, easily recalled, and theologically sound. The words revive a thousand moments in the presence of a merciful and loving Father and bring us there again.

Recently a dear saint died. When I last saw her, she was in a hospital bed that she would not leave alive. The last words I spoke to her were 3400 years older than she. Through three and a half millennia, these words had given what they promised. For nearly a century, they were the words with which her pastors had blessed her. "The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord

make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace."

The last word I heard her say, I overheard her say to God: "Amen."

"Sometimes the most valuable insights come from recognizing the genius of things which are always there." -Rev. Robert Zagore



# Liturgical Terms

## Across

**[4]** Means "to save" in Hebrew and a plea to God to have mercy on us.

**[6]** The person who carries a cross in procession.

**[9]** A biblical text sung prior to and in anticipation of the Holy Gospel.

**[11]** Latin for "now dismiss". Words of Simeon as he held the 40-day old Jesus in his arms.

**[12]** From the Greek for "words of praise" and an expression of praise to God

**[14]** A term for the Lord's Supper and from the Greek meaning "thanksgiving"

**[16]** The section of the church where the worshipers are gathered.

**[17]** From Latin meaning "sacrifice, victim" and term used for communion wafers

**[18]** A responsory prayer with repeated congregational responses.

**[19]** Those parts of the service that change from week to week.

**[20]** Means a "holy place".

**[22]** Directions on how to conduct the service.

**[23]** Affirmation that the prayer just prayed is the prayer of the entire assembly

## Down

**[1]** A Latin word meaning "holy" and sung at the beginning of the Communion liturgy.

**[2]** Comes from the Latin meaning "to loosen, set free, or absolve."

**[3]** Used at the beginning of worship services. Reminder of Baptism and accompanied by sign of the cross.

**[5]** Latin for "blessed be" and Zechariah's song of praise.

**[7]** A selection of psalm verses traditionally sung between the Epistle and the Gospel.

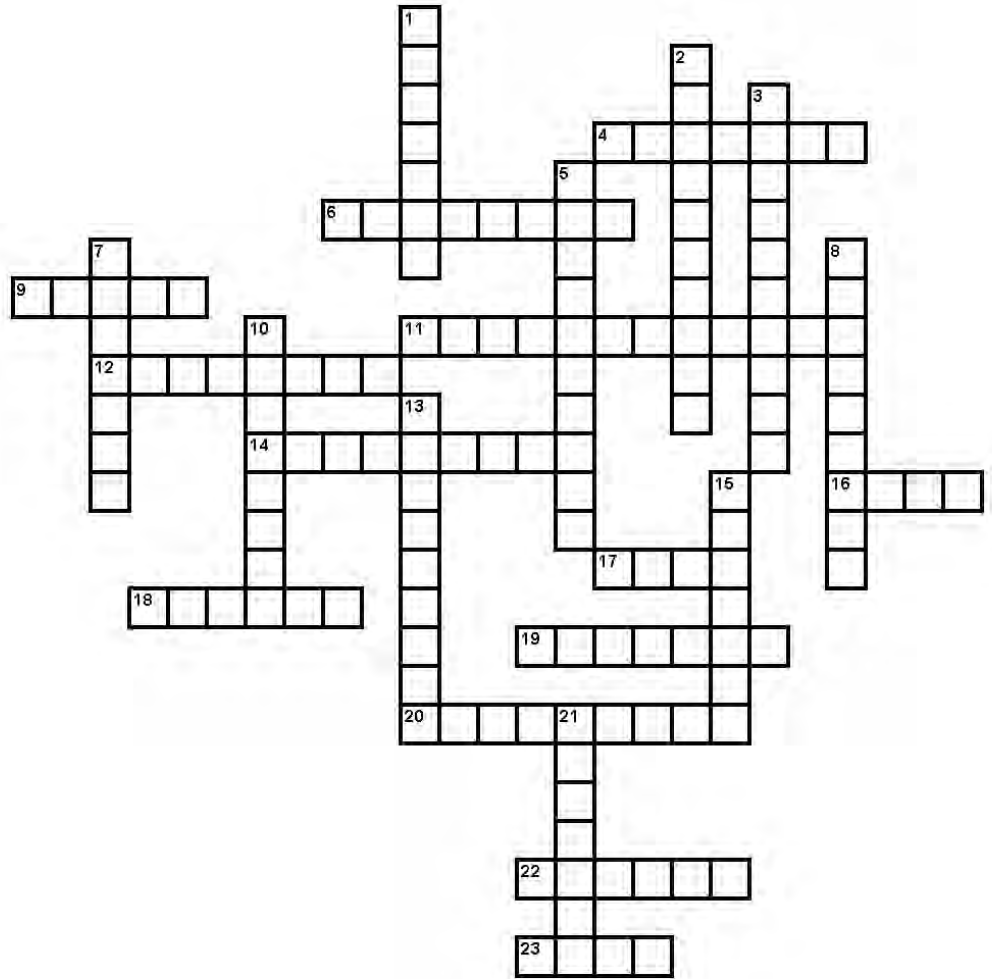
**[8]** Meaning "garment". Worn by the pastor and other liturgical assistants.

**[10]** Hebrew for "praise the Lord."

**[13]** The name given to all of the liturgical cloths that are placed on the altar, pulpit and lectern.

**[15]** Defined as "public service" - Proclamation of the Gospel and administration of the sacraments is God's service done on behalf of his people.

**[21]** Latin for "three days" namely, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday.





**JULY 9-12, 2024**  
**2024 INSTITUTE ON LITURGY, PREACHING & CHURCH MUSIC**  
**CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY, NEBRASKA**  
**(CUNE), SEWARD, NEB.**  
**PRESENTED BY LCMS WORSHIP –**  
**THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—**  
**MISSOURI SYNOD**

The Institute on Liturgy, Preaching and Church Music was a multiday worship conference designed for pastors, musicians, teachers, artists and Christians of all vocations engaged in the unique sphere of Lutheran worship.

Thoughtful speakers drew attendees into the Scriptures and their proclamation. Presentations and workshops on wide-ranging topics were offered so those in

attendance grew in knowledge and honed their craft. Above all, it was an experience with the inestimable value of gathering with fellow Christians for inspiring, Christ-centered worship, proclaiming the Gospel in word and song.

The Institute's theme was: "Songs of Deliverance: Psalms in the Great Congregation." The Psalter is the church's oldest hymnbook, filled with the songs of the Lord's deliverance: delivering Israel and David from their enemies, delivering the Lord's children from foolishness into wisdom, delivering the nations from blindness and foretelling the Anointed One's deliverance from death. The church takes these psalms up daily in Christ Jesus, who prays them first and best.

Pastor Brooks, Erin Hodge and Amy Robertson attended this 3-day event. Read about their experiences [here](#):

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## AMY ROBERTSON

### **My Experience at the 2024 LCMS Inst. on Liturgy, Preaching & Church Music**

Last month, Pastor, Erin Hodge and I attended the LCMS 2024 Institute on Liturgy, Preaching and Church Music. Thank you to the GAB and to the whole church for sending me to this conference. Although planned several months in advance, God provided it at exactly the right time for me. I'm sure Pastor and Erin would say the same.

We met back in late March and early April to discuss which sessions each of us would attend. A "divide and conquer" strategy was agreed. We each attended

different sessions, and then de-briefed afterwards to discuss and share.

For me, this was a new experience. I had not attended such a conference before. My focus was attending different sessions related to the Psalms in worship. For example, different psalm settings, different musical expressions, and multiple ways to involve the congregation as a whole. I learned different chanting styles and the purposes behind them, as well as other techniques both modern and ancient. Pastor, Erin and I have already had brief discussions about how to expand our use of the Psalms in our worship, and I hope to expand on that as we enter into the Autumn. I purchased a congregational resource in two parts, cantor and congregational book already donated to

Grace, and the accompanist book to be published later this year, which will also be donated to Grace. Through these resources I hope we can enrich our worship and our praise to God.

During the conference, I learned more about the Psalms themselves. Which ones are "merciful" and full of hope, which ones are "confessional" and still full of hope, and which are "penitential" and again, full of hope. Psalms provide solace in times of trouble, strength in times of battle, and comfort in times of mourning. The Psalms give us the words to confess our most private thoughts and feelings to our Triune God. God has given the Psalms to every generation, and they are full of His promises to His church, to His people.

The most personal and meaningful part to me was the opportunity of daily worship within the Christian Community. These activities fed my soul, and I am most grateful for this. Thanks be to God, and to the whole community of Grace Lutheran Church for giving me this opportunity.

Peace of Christ, Amy Robertson

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## ERIN HODGE

### Nebraska in July?

I confess that my eagerness to learn more Lutheran liturgy and music was tempered by my expectations of the Midwest in summer. I was in for a pleasant surprise.

The conference was attended by a delightful throng of ministers, musicians, and parishioners. I had the pleasure of meeting Lutheran musicians from around the country – and around the world! In one session, I discovered kindred spirits who loved 16th century motets *almost* as much as me. The next day, I discussed growing music programs with a musician from Australia. The keynote sessions highlighted the importance of early church music and the Psalms. I filled my notebook with ideas.

When I met with other organists and discovered that I am not the only Lutheran Music Director with an unusual passion for puns!

I am incredibly grateful to the congregation for its support. I learned valuable lessons in Lutheran history, music, and worship. I can't wait for next year's conference – in Durham!

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## PASTOR BROOKS

After a seven-year gap due to the Covid pandemic, Concordia University in Seward hosted the Institute on Liturgy, Preaching and Church Music in July 2024. Thanks to the generosity of Grace members over the years, we were able to underwrite expenses for three members of the Grace community to attend. Amy Robertson, Erin Hodge and I spent a pleasantly humid-free week on the Concordia campus with fellow lay leaders, church musicians, and pastors to study and reflect on the role of the Psalms in the Church's worship.

Gathering under the theme "**Songs of Deliverance: Psalms in the Great Congregation**," Erin, Amy and I were treated to excellent presentations on the history of the Psalms and how they point to Christ; on how the Psalter has served as a key source for the Church's song and hymnody; and on how to integrate use of the Psalms in worship. And worship was the key component of the whole week, for those 600+ persons of all ages who traveled to Seward experienced the fullness of the Church at prayer as they sang the Daily Prayer services, celebrated the Holy Eucharist and be blessed by excellent musicians and choirs (the Institute Youth Choir was a particular delight!). What is more, by the week's end, we had prayed or sung through all 150 Psalms! For myself, the opportunity to be a worshipper, listen to God's Word, hear good sermons and sing with a congregation was the true joy of the week.

Each day, we would attend a variety of seminars that we had carefully chosen during the spring registration period so we could maximize the Institute's value to Grace. We would talk during lunch and during the evening drive back to our hotel, sharing what we had learned and discovered. We hope to begin introducing some of the fruits of the Institute with you all this coming Fall.

In addition to our reflections, more details about the week are available online with The Reporter, the official newspaper of the LCMS. Most of all, we hope you will remember that your voice is a gift, the song of deliverance is for you, and the joy of the Church is when all of God's People join in prayer and song.





# Alright, musician! Line up and sing me a scale!

While the title “Boot Camp” suggests long hikes and stern drill instructors, the participants in Grace’s recent Music Boot Camp said that the day was anything but that! Both members of the choir and persons interested in learning more about singing and being a part of a choral group came out on Saturday and tackled everything our own Erin Hodge could throw at them.

Participants were instructed in care of and good use of a wonderful instrument—God’s gift to each of them of their voice. Reflecting on the day, words like “wonderful,” “fun,” and “enlightening” were frequently used. The fellowship and camaraderie of the day

were highlights (camaraderie? —it really **does** sound like a boot camp!).

There are plans to host another boot camp in the future, and if you sing at all, you won’t want to miss the chance. As one participant wrote afterwards:

*Whether you are an experienced singer or not, the music boot camp will be an enjoyable and educational day. Come for the joy of singing in praise of our Lord; come for the fellowship with your brothers and sisters in Christ; come and get out of the house for a few hours! Just come!*

## THREE WAYS MUSIC IMPROVES YOUR EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL WELLBEING

It was instrumental in the liberation of God’s people from Egypt, as they sang a song of praise in their exhaustion, experiencing great joy. The psalms are filled with songs of praise for God in both good and difficult times. The Apostle Paul, in Colossians 3:16, encourages us to let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing songs and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in our hearts to God.

Let’s explore three ways music can improve your well-being:

### 1 MUSIC BRINGS US INTO GOD’S PRESENCE

When our mouths are filled with praise for God, He is present, and His presence changes things. Luther

clearly understood this. For Luther, who sometimes struggled with melancholy, music was a gateway into the presence of God. He plays music second to theology. He wrote, “Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise. The gift of language combined with the gift of song was given to man that he should proclaim the Word of God through music.”

### 2 MUSIC STRENGTHENS OUR FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

As time goes by many hymns, including Lutheran hymns, become increasingly meaningful to us. It wasn’t just the often-majestic tunes but the inspiring words that told a story of the love of Jesus or his grace and forgiveness. Hymns, built on a solid biblical and

theological foundation, tell a story. They share the truth.

Hymns reflect our confession of faith, remind us of God's promises in Jesus, and can lift our spirits as we learn scriptural truths. Luther said, "My heart, which is so full to overflowing, has often been solaced and refreshed by music when sick and weary." Consider the joy a shut-in may experience when a familiar hymn is shared. It touches both the head and the heart.

## 3 MUSIC EVOKES EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

A recent article in AARP magazine shared how music has a transformative nature. The author states how

music can build unity and security, feelings of spiritual awe and even alleviate chronic pain or the debilitating sense of anxiety. Music therapy has helped many patients with dementia and Alzheimer's.

The author writes, "By stimulating the brain's memory network, music can trigger memories that were thought to be lost forever." Certain music no matter the genre, can trigger pleasant recollections, transporting us to joyful times and inspiring hope and wellness in the present.

How much truer this is when music conveys the eternal truths about Jesus and His love!

*(Original article found in "Interest Time," a publication of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund.)*

# The Congregation in a Secular Age

There once was a woman who was part of a small church. She had been committed to the congregation, teaching Sunday School and deeply rooted in the lay leadership. After the last of her children graduated and left home, her own [sense of purpose] became fragile and fragmented. One Sunday she decided not to go to church. That one week turned into ten. Soon, she realized she could never go back. When she finally met with the pastor more than a year later, she explained that there was no real reason why she stopped participating, no direct sense for why she lost commitment. It just happened.

It had simply washed away, like a tide had come and retreated, leaving nothing but blank sand.

What she had experienced was disintegration, the loss of her life story. The story of her life was parenting the children in her home. That story had ended, and without that anchor, her other commitments faded.

The pastor and the congregation lived with the burden that they had done something wrong. But it really wasn't the pastor nor the congregation. It was simply the logic of the modern world which says that we use

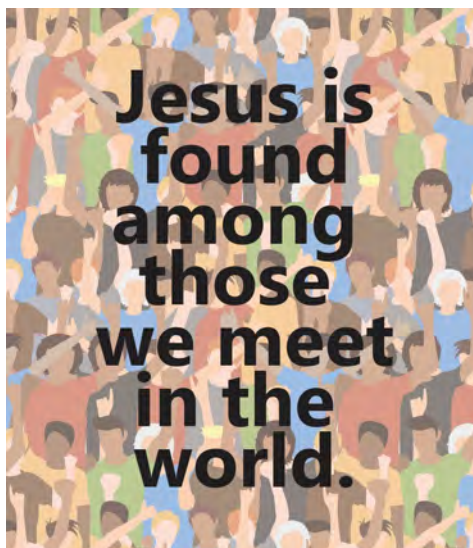
things until we no longer need them. In a world that measures all things by the amount of time it needs, the amount of energy it needs, the amount of commitment it needs, we find that even our relationship to Jesus can become a means to an end that we prefer—even if those ends are "good" ones.

This phenomenon—a type of "ghosting"—is increasingly common because we can no longer see that we are not simply including God in the story we tell about ourselves, but we have been included in the story of God. And, in a world that seems to be accelerating day by day, the only antidote to the disintegration and alienation we experience is to reencounter the world, to do as Jesus said—*GO*—because Jesus is found among those we meet in the world. A

congregation and its people can resist disintegration by renewing its desire to encounter the world, to teach what is true, to share what is lovely, to celebrate what is joyous.

In other words, do ministry.

*This essay is adapted and condensed from The Congregation in a Secular Age, by Dr. Andrew Root, pp. 186-87, © 2021*





## ***The Work of the People: Participating in Worship***

Walking into the sanctuary may be familiar to many of us, but, if you pause to think about it for a moment, you are doing something unlike any other activity you do during your week. For in that moment, you are taking up a task that is unique to the People of God—you are beginning your service as a priest of God.

*you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*<sup>10</sup> *Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.* (1 Peter 2:9-10)

Yes, you are a priest! One of several, even one of many, but you are a priest. As you enter worship, remembering that truth about yourself and your fellow priests may help you shake off the dust of the world outside with its consumerism, its tribalism and its distractions.

You are here to serve, not be served.

You are here to be in community, not be part of a clique.

You are here to keep awake and watch, not be dulled and inattentive.

Don't make the mistake of thinking you're a part of an audience, where the pastor is the actor and God is the prompter off stage. No, you are the actor, the pastor is giving prompts, and God is the delighted Audience.

### ***Getting ready***



As you enter the sanctuary, you will certainly want to greet friends and fellow worshippers you see. Once you sit down, take a moment to greet the Friend who has brought you again to His house. Inside the cover of the

LSB hymnal are prayers to be used at different times during worship. Feel free to use one of those, or to simply bow your head and offer a word of thanks to God!

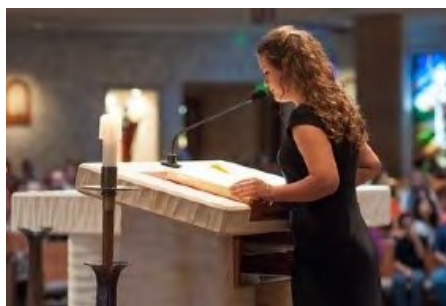
Before worship formally begins, the pastor will call us all to examine ourselves and make confession to God. In that moment of silence, it is appropriate to lift up to God any specific sin that is troubling your heart in that moment. If nothing particularly troubles you, then it enough to remind yourself in the silence of your heart, "Dear God, cleanse my heart and hold it for yourself."

### ***All God's Children Got a Place in the Choir***



There's no getting around it: worship is about singing. Rarely do we sing, except maybe to ourselves, while we're in the car, or maybe at a baseball game. Joining in singing the liturgy and the hymns is a key part of sharpening our attention and participating in our community. Singing is a powerful way for us to pray together, and it marks us as being a part of God's New Creation, and such a truth requires more than just words! Don't be afraid to sing. God gave you your voice, and He wants you to use it.

### ***Here is Wisdom! Let us attend.***



The lessons appointed for each Sunday touch and inform each other. The Church has learned through the Holy Spirit to unite the chosen readings, and the same



Spirit works through what we hear to kindle and strengthen faith in Jesus Christ. As we listen attentively, we hear allusions and references that connect the poems, the stories and the histories of God's people down through the ages. Their story is also our story!

The sermon in the Lutheran tradition is primarily proclamation—God has triumphed! I have Good News! While teaching or exhortation can certainly be a part of a sermon in the Divine Service, such activities are not the sermon's central purpose. Rather, the sermon announces God's will for His People, reveals how sin has disrupted God's loving will, and tells what God has done in Christ to ensure His good purposes prevail. The sermon participates in the Word, which means it is also meant to kindle and strengthen faith in Christ.

### ***The Eucharist***



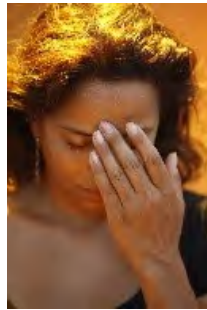
The altar is the central object or element in the sanctuary, for it is there that Christ is most tangibly present. Like the sermon, the Eucharist is a proclamation about Christ, but it is also a revealing, a presenting forth of Christ. The Eucharist is also the moment when the full truth of who we are is revealed—we are God's People, gathered together, gathered around the Lord, both receivers of His good gifts and sharers with one another the fullness of life together. This sacrament means people interacting with other people!

When you come to the communion rail, you may immediately kneel in anticipation of the elements being brought to you. When the pastor approaches, place your right hand over your left (left over right if you are left-handed) that the Host may be placed in your hand. At the approach of the Cup, use your dominant hand to control the base of the chalice to direct it to your mouth, or, if you are taking an individual cup, use your dominant hand to take a glass from the communion tray. Wait until all have communed and the pastor has blessed the group, then return to your seat.

### ***Departing***

We are dismissed from our service that we may go into the world ready to serve, united in community, alert and watchful for the signs of Christ at work in our daily lives. As a first step, don't be too quick to head to the doors! Take a moment in departing to greet others, paying attention for opportunities for prayer for a brother or sister, whether for his or her need or joy.

### ***A Note on Optional Things***



There are several things that occur in worship that are “optional” (the Lutheran Reformers called such things “adiaphora”). Typically, these connect to questions regarding “what should I do with my body?” The making of the sign of the cross when the Holy Trinity is named is a good example of an adiaphoron, although you are probably thinking of several more.

There are two points to keep in mind when considering such “optional” things:

1. Engaging in activities such as crossing oneself, bowing, kneeling/genuflecting, or other such physical activities are entirely in the arena of Christian freedom. We have been made acceptable to God through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and our liturgical habits/practices do not make us more or less acceptable to God. We do not sin if we don't do them.
2. Point one does not mean that such habits/practices are useless or a bad idea. We are embodied beings, and we know (and sense) that our souls and our bodies interact with one another, even if how can be mysterious. God has claimed you in baptism; the sign of the cross made upon your forehead or on your body is a physical reminder of that fact which is good to remember. The King of the Universe has come to you in Holy Communion; kneeling or bowing before him is a reasonable sign of respect.

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Sunday Service at 10:10 AM  
824 N. Buchanan Blvd.  
Durham, NC 27701-1572  
919-682-6030  
[www.gracedurham.org](http://www.gracedurham.org)

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## Grace Lutheran Church

Our new logo tells a story. It reflects our purpose and our goal: we are walking the way of **GRACE** that we might share God's blessing in our **HOMES**, our **NEIGHBORHOODS**, our **CITY**, and our **WORLD**.

The four points of the cross remind us of the first four parts of **GRACE**:

We **GROW** with Jesus

We **REJOICE** in God

We **ANSWER** with hope

We **CARE** for our neighbors

Each of these points moves us to the circle where we **EMBRACE** community. When Jesus calls us to life with him, it is not alone or solitary, but rather a life with and among others.

Our paths may be varied, winding, wandering and twisting, but as we walk the excellent way (1 Corinthians 12:31) we find Jesus who is the heart of life. The circle and the heart work together to mark out the four areas where we practice the way and find the Lord: in our homes, among our neighbors, around the city, and out in the world.

The cross in Duke blue and the heart in Carolina blue reminds us of our commitment to be God's People in the Durham/Chapel Hill area, "between the Blues."

*<sup>31</sup> But earnestly desire the higher gifts.  
And I will show you a still more excellent way.  
~ 1 Corinthians 12:31 ESV*

Mission Statement: We are called to *Welcome Everyone to Walk the Way of GRACE*, and walk in that way in our individual lives, in our shared life in our various communities, in our common life with our neighbors, and even to the world at large as God sends us. The *Way of Grace* is to: **GROW** with Jesus, **REJOICE** in God, **ANSWER** with hope, **CARE** for the neighbor, and **EMBRACE** community.

Vision Statement: God has a plan **FOR OUR LIVES**, and so we teach how to walk in the path of Jesus Christ; **FOR OUR NEIGHBORHOODS**, and so we work to build healthy and strong communities; **FOR OUR CITY**, and so we share life with our neighbors in Walltown, Trinity Park, Duke, and the Triangle; and **FOR OUR WORLD**, and so we go with Good News.

Core Values: Because God loves us first, we value worship rooted in Scripture and Sacrament, service to all people, and being a welcoming community that loves and forgives one another.