

Instructed Eucharist

Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit

January 22, 2017

What is the language of love? What are the ways we can communicate love to someone even if we do not share the same language? I believe there are four main universal components of love: music; shared meals; shared silence; and listening. Those four components are present as we gather to worship through the Eucharist and experience God's great love for people.

Prelude A time to reorient our hearts and minds as we **listen** to sacred music, often instrumental. This is a good time to stop our conversations and sit in **silence** and pray (see Prayer Before Worship, BCP, p. 833).

The Word of God

Procession This serves both a practical and a religious purpose: the leaders of the liturgy—clergy, servers, and choir—need to enter. By doing it in a formal way, our liturgy conveys reverence. We often enter to a **hymn** but it can be in **silence**. We process with important symbols of our faith—processional cross, torches, and Gospel book; and the people in the procession wear vestments, again as a way to convey reverence.

Opening Acclamation This varies by season. It is a call to order of our worship and a proclamation of what we believe as Christians in the Episcopal Church.

Collect for Purity This is a special collect—or common (“collective”) prayer that orients us toward God and asks for God's help in order that we may worship in a manner that is worthy of God.

Song of Praise This can also vary by season. Whether spoken or sung, a song of praise in this section of the liturgy is required by the rubrics of the BCP.

The Collect of the Day This collect varies from week to week. There might be a theme by season or it simply varies through the year. The weekly Sunday collects are listed on pages 211-236 of the BCP.

The Lessons The Episcopal Church participates with other churches in what is called The Revised Common Lectionary (“RCL,” see www.lectionarypage.net). The lectionary provides readings from the Old Testament (or Hebrew Bible) and the New Testament over a three year cycle (known as Years A, B, C). Much of the Bible is covered over this three year cycle. The people **listen** to the Word of God as a central part of our worship.

Psalm	A psalm is also appointed from the RCL lectionary and is read between the Old Testament and New Testament. It can be chanted by the choir and congregation; or read responsively by the congregation.
Hymn	A hymn can be used in place of the psalm and this may be called a gradual hymn. In services with music , there is usually a hymn before the Gospel is read. This is often called a sequence hymn. Music and singing are often how we prepare for or respond to the hearing of God's Word.
Gospel	<p>These readings also come from the RCL lectionary. One Gospel is the main focus for each lectionary year—A-Matthew, B-Mark, C-Luke. John is used more in year B and during certain seasons such as Easter.</p> <p>In the Eucharist, the Gospel is always read by clergy (lay people can read it during Morning and Evening Prayer). It is often read after a procession, again to convey reverence and the importance of what we are about to hear. The vergers, crucifer, and acolytes will often accompany the deacon or priest to assist as she or he reads the Gospel.</p>
The Sermon	The sermon (or homily) is usually preached by clergy. There are exceptions for special occasions like Youth Sunday. The preacher prepares through prayer and study so that the sermon connects the text with the Good News of Jesus, the reality of our lives in the world, and our call to Christian discipleship and participation in God's mission.
The Nicene Creed	<p>After a period of silence after the sermon, on Sundays we are invited to recite The Nicene Creed. It is a summary of our Christian faith as understood from Scripture and articulated by the church in the Council of Nicaea almost seventeen hundred years ago. Some language may feel dated or difficult to understand. Your clergy are always ready to discuss your questions and what the Creed means for us.</p> <p>Two "actions" are done during the Creed. People may bow at the words, "For us and for our salvation..." and then return to a straight posture at the phrase, "...and was buried." People may cross themselves at the end of the Creed, "We look for the resurrection of the dead..."</p>
The Prayers of the People	This is in response to the Word of God, the sermon, and the Creed. All the people, not just clergy, are priests, that is, people who pray for the good of others. There are six main elements of these prayers as detailed on p. 359 of the BCP. There are various forms for the Prayers of the People, listed on 383-393 of the BCP. The Celebrant adds a closing collect following these prayers (see options available, BCP, p. 394-395).

Confession of Sin/Absolution	We also respond to the Word and prepare for Holy Communion by reflecting on and publicly confessing our sin. This is done generally and as a community. Individual confession is a sacramental rite available as a spiritual discipline and for serious sin (BCP, p. 447-452).
The Peace	This is an announcement of the Good News—we have peace with God! We are also called to pursue peace with one another (Matthew 5:23, 24), i.e., apologize and seek forgiveness if we have offended someone.
[Announcements]	This is not a formal part of the liturgy, but it is a helpful way to know what is happening in our community. Some congregations, including ours, insert them at this point; others before or after the liturgy.
Offertory	This can be a simple sentence scripture said by the priest (BCP, p. 376-377) and can also include an offertory anthem sung by the choir. After the anthem, there is often an offertory hymn as the gifts and offering are brought up to the altar.
The Holy Communion	
The Great Thanksgiving	
Eucharistic Prayer	In Rite II, there are four liturgical options known as Prayer A, B, C, D. There are multiple components of the Eucharistic Prayer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sursum Corda</i> or dialogue (“The Lord be with you...”) is the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer. Again it is a time to orient ourselves toward God in worship as we prepare for the intimacy of Holy Communion with God. • <i>Proper Preface</i> varies by season in Prayers A & B (there are fixed prefaces in Prayers C & D). The preface reminds us of the Good News of God in Christ (BCP, p. 377-382). It begins, “It is right...”) • <i>Sanctus/Benedictus qui venit (BQV)</i> is a standard part of all Eucharistic Prayers. In it we echo the worship taking place in heaven as described by Isaiah (“Holy, holy, holy...”). We also echo a passage from the Hebrew Scripture (Psalm 118:26) that states that the one who comes in God’s name is blessed by God—the prophets, Jesus, the apostles-- and us. • <i>Institution Narrative</i> provides an overview of salvation history from creation, our sin, and the story of Israel and Jesus. This section is completed by the words of institution that Jesus gave at the Last Supper. • <i>Anamnesis-Oblation</i> is what we remember of our faith story and more than remember—what we enter into by faith, “Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts” (BCP, p. 363, 368, 371, and 374). • <i>Epiclesis</i> is when we pray for the Holy Spirit to descend upon the elements of bread and wine and transform them into the Body and Blood of Christ.

- Doxology is the Trinitarian closing prayer in which we praise God and the people say a loud, “AMEN.” That amen is when the Eucharist is truly made complete. The people’s voice and agreement validate all that the priest has prayed.
- Lord’s Prayer informs what we believe about God and how that faith shapes how we live.
- Fraction is when the Celebrant breaks the consecrated bread as an outward sign of Christ’s sacrifice for us. This is followed by a period of silence as we remember Christ’s great gift for us.
- Fraction Anthem follows the silence, the Celebrant proclaims, “Alleluia...” or some other anthem (“Lamb of God...”) and the people respond. This may also be sung by the choir and congregation
- Invitation is when the Celebrant calls the congregation to come and receive “The Gifts of God for the People of God.” We then come forward to share a **meal** together. It anticipates the meal we will share in God’s kingdom.
- Communion is received first by the Celebrant and other ministers and then shared with those who come forward. The gifts are taken to the seats of anyone who are unable to come forward. Clergy are usually assisted by lay Eucharist Ministers. The altar table is cleared after the meal is served. If there is music at a service, hymns are sung or instrumental music is played as Holy Communion is received.
- Post-Communion Prayer is when the people join together to give thanks and also to live what we have received—that is to be the body of Christ in the world that so needs Christ’s love.
- Blessing is when the Celebrant, the bishop if present, or a priest, blesses the people and proclaims again God’s great love for them.
- If there is music, a hymn is usually sung during the procession of the clergy, choir, and servers from the church.
- Dismissal is done from the rear of the church, by the front door, as we are called to leave this place, bringing the grace we have received to the world outside that needs it so much.

The Holy Eucharist is a complex and holy expression of God’s love for us revealed in Jesus and our love for God expressed in our thanks and praise. Again we use the universal language of love as expressed in music, silence, listening, and a shared meal. This form of Christian worship goes back many centuries—at least to a liturgy we have record of written by Justin Martyr in the year 150 AD. It has roots in the Jewish synagogue service and Passover Seder.