

Some Notes on Worship

Have you ever wondered why Lutherans worship “the same old way” each Sunday? Why do we use this thing called “liturgy” out of the hymnal?

The very word “liturgy” means “the people’s work.” It is the gathered assembly known as the family of God, gathering together to accomplish the task of worshiping God and learning God’s purpose and will for our lives.

It also has the historical tradition of teaching Scripture through music. Each part of the LBW liturgy is a part of the Bible that is sung, with additional spoken portions. Included each week, as well, are lessons from a 3 year cycle of readings designed to ensure that those who participate in the church’s worship as a family of God will learn God’s revealed purpose and will in Christ Jesus, as well as the necessity of why God has chosen to act in this manner. Other services not used for Sunday worship (such as Matins, Vespers, and Compline) follow the same pattern of “Scripture set to music.”

Study after study today shows that the vast majority of Americans will identify that the Bible is at least one of the most “influential” books ever, and yet that same majority rarely (or even never) read it. With such statistics, Lutheran Worship plays an ever-increasingly critical role in aiding to teach the faith handed down to us through the Word of God! To follow Jesus means to learn what God’s will is for us, and we learn through knowing God’s Word!

In addition, other music is added into the worship offered by God’s people that express the truths of the faith as formulated by God’s Word. Many of the great hymns of the church teach us about faith and everyday life, and also tell us great stories of faith and witness by those who composed them. Many of them are also Scripture being told through Music.

For example: Hymn #346 - “When Peace, Like a River,” was written by a man named Horatio Spafford. Here is the story:

...Spafford planned a European trip for his family for his wife’s health. At the last minute he had to remain in Chicago, but sent his wife and four daughters ahead as planned... intending to follow them in a few days. [His wife’s ship], however, was struck... on November 22, 1873, and sank within twelve minutes, taking the lives of his four daughters. ...Spafford wrote this hymn aboard ship as he sailed to meet her [after being informed by the captain that they were at the location where his daughters perished.] (Hymnal Companion, 1981, p. 396)

Other great hymns, like “Amazing Grace,” “Silent Night,” and countless more have similar stories of faith behind them!

Here are some Scripture references from our “liturgy” each Sunday:

Confession of Sins.	1 John 1:8-9
Apostolic Greeting.	2 Corinthians 13:14
Kyrie.	Luke 17:13; 18:38-39
	Psalm 123:2-3
<i>Hymn of Praise</i>	
“Glory to God”....	Luke 2:14
“Worthy is Christ”....	Revelation 5:9-13; 19:4-9
Salutation.	Ruth 2:4; Luke 1:28
<i>Gospel verse</i>	
“Alleluia”....	John 6:68
“Return to the Lord”....	Deuteronomy 30:2; Numbers 14:18
Sharing the Peace.	Matthew 5:23-24; Romans 16:16; John 20:21
<i>Offertory</i>	
“Let the Vineyards”....	1 Corinthians 10:16; John 6:35
“What Shall I Render”....	Psalm 116:12-19
Sanctus (“Holy, Holy, Holy”).	Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 21:9
Words of Institution.	Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
Lord’s Prayer.	Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4
Agnus Dei (“Lamb of God”).	John 1:29
<i>Post Communion Canticle</i>	
“Lord Now You Let”....	Luke 2:29-32 (Simeon’s Song)
“Thank the Lord”....	Colossians 3:17; Psalm 7:17; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:11
Benediction.	Numbers 6:24-26
Dismissal.	Luke 7:50

references

Manual on the Liturgy, 1979, Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, P.H. Pfatteicher, C.R. Messerli, editors, 421 p.

Hymnal Companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship, 1981, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, M.K. Stulken, editor, 647 p.

<http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1745/religious-knowledge-in-america-survey-atheists-agnostics-score-highest>

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