

Narrative Worship Script - Heritage

(before the Welcome/Announcements)

The basic pattern of this service – gathering, word, meal, sending – is a structure that originates from the earliest documented Christian liturgies. It is also a pattern we can observe in how God interacts with people throughout the Bible. As the people of God, we are joined together by the gifts of God’s grace, for the sake of the gospel, into the life of the one triune God.

(before the Confession and Forgiveness)

As we gather together as the body of Christ, we are reminded that Sunday is the day of Christ’s resurrection. We are assembled, brought together from different places, as a witness to the risen body of Christ, active and moving in the world today. We begin in humility, confessing our sin and hearing God’s word of forgiveness.

(before the Gathering Hymn)

Singing during our gathering includes both hymns old and new. The songs that gather us together surround and support a people who come to worship with different frames of reference and different emotions. The gathering song moves each individual into the communal experience and purpose of worship.

(before the Greeting and Prayer of the Day)

During the gathering, the presiding minister and the assembly greet each other in the name of the triune God. The presiding minister gathers the assembly into prayer. All of worship is based on the foundation of prayer and can be understood as dialogue with God.

(before the First Reading)

The word of God is proclaimed within and by the gathered assembly. The first Bible reading, usually from the Old Testament, is followed by a psalm sung in response. This pattern of proclaiming the word is as ancient as the synagogue worship of the Jewish people.

(before the Psalm)

From their origin, the psalms were intended to be sung. Certainly the meaning of the text can be communicated when spoken, but the quality of this ancient poetry is inherently musical.

(before the Second Reading)

The second reading, usually from the New Testament letters, bears the witness of the early church. After the second reading, we stand to greet the gospel and sing an acclamation.

(before the Gospel Acclamation and Reading)

Christians have inherited the practice of publicly reciting the appointed biblical texts and responding to the recitation with singing. The read-sing-read-sing

sequence continues. The gospel acclamation consists of two parts, alleluia and a verse of scripture, which acclaim the living Word, Jesus Christ, present in the gospel reading.

(before the Message)

Preaching brings God's word of law and gospel into our time and place to awaken and nourish faith.

(before the Hymn of the Day)

God's word is further proclaimed as we sing our faith aloud. The hymn of the day is the principal hymn of the service and is a distinctively Lutheran element in the liturgy. The assembly participates in proclaiming and responding to the word of God with a common voice. The hymn of the day typically relates directly to the season or day, the lectionary readings, or the preaching.

(before the Prayers of Intercession)

As the assembly prays for the whole world, we remember we have a high priest who continually intercedes for us. The prayers follow a pattern that encourages us to turn our hearts and eyes outward to the world. We pray for the needs of the church, for all of creation and the people of the world, for those in need, and for the local community. We also give thanks for the lives of the saints who inspire us in our pilgrimage.

(before Sharing Christ's Peace)

Passing the peace of Christ is an ancient component of Christian worship and liturgy. Our modern day version of peace passing is descended from an earlier act of worship known as "the kiss of peace." The practice of verbally and physically sharing Christ's peace trains our hearts, hands, and tongues in the ways of peace.

(before the Offering, Choral Offering, Offertory Response, and Offering Prayer)

A collection of material goods for the church's mission, including the care of those in need, is a sign of the giving of our whole selves in grateful response for all God's gifts. The table is set with bread and wine, also part of the gifts we offer to God. The choir provides an offering of music, a sacrifice of praise.

(before the Dialogue, Preface, and Holy, Holy, Holy)

Before the Lord's supper is shared, the presiding minister leads us into thanksgiving. The words of the opening dialogue are known as the "Sursum Corda," which is Latin for "hearts lifted." This dialogue is found in the most ancient of Christian liturgies, dating all the way to the third century. The presiding minister and assembly exchange a formal greeting. Then the assembly is invited to lift their hearts to God. The final exchange indicates the assembly's agreement to the presiding minister continuing to offer the remainder of the Eucharistic Prayer on their behalf. The proper preface follows, which relates to the liturgical season or day. The assembly then joins with the whole creation in singing the angels' song: "Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might."

(before the Words of Institution and Lord's Prayer)

The grace of God's gift is always proclaimed in Jesus' own words of command and promise at the table. The term "Eucharist" comes from the Greek word meaning "thanksgiving." The service of Holy Communion is connected to every meal in which Jesus gave thanks before breaking bread. The thanksgiving concludes with the prayer our Lord Jesus taught us.

(before Sharing the Meal and Prayer after Communion)

In Christ's body and blood given to us, God forgives us and nourishes us for mission. We sing as the bread is broken and as the meal is shared. After sharing the meal, we pray, asking God to send us in witness to the world.

(before the Benediction, Sending Hymn, and Dismissal)

God's mission sends us out. God's mission includes the gifts of grace that we share in worship. Now, we are sent to continue our participation in God's mission by sharing these gifts of grace with the world. With the blessing of God, we go out to live as Christ's body in the world.