

# **The Divine Service**

Why we do what we do (An overview) Part 1

The Divine Service is structured to deliver God's Means of Grace (the Gospel in Word and Sacrament). The congregation responds in faith, praise, and thanksgiving.

## **The Opening Hymn**

Purpose: The opening may be a general call to worship, but it often also helps set the theme of the day's service. Using Scripture, the hymn focuses the congregation on God's Word and the day's message.

Scripture:

- Psalm 100:1-2: "Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!"
- Psalm 95:1-2: "Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!"

1. How does the psalm encourage us to come into God's presence?

- Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

2. What is a way that Paul encourages us to "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly"?

3. Where can you find what Scripture you are singing in a hymn?

## **Invocation**

Purpose: We begin the service in the name of the Triune God. We are calling on the Lord to be present as he has promised. We confess that the basis of our worship is having been baptized into his name.

Scripture:

- Matthew 28:19: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

4. What important gift does the invocation ("In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit") bring to mind?

- Psalm 124:8: "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

5. When we call on God's name, what are we acknowledging? How does this set the tone of the service?

- Exodus 20:24: "In every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and bless you."

6. What does God promise as his people call on his name?

## **Confession and Absolution**

Purpose: We acknowledge our sinfulness before God. We receive his forgiveness. This is how we prepare to receive both Word and Sacrament.

Scripture:

- 1 John 1:8-9: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

- Psalm 32:5: "I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' and you forgave the iniquity of my sin."

7. What is the practice of confessing our sins rooted in?

- John 20:22-23: "And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.'"

8. In The Service we see the public use of the Keys. What is happening in the absolution?

## **Kyrie ("Lord, Have Mercy")**

Purpose: We cry out for God's mercy, acknowledging our desperate need while also trusting his grace.

Scripture:

- Mark 10:47-48: "And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'"

9. Can you think of other instances where people cried out for God's mercy? What do cries for mercy like these express?

- Psalm 51:1: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions."

10. What is our cry for mercy rooted in?

- Matthew 15:22: "And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, 'Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David.'"

11. What does crying out for mercy prepare us for?

### **Gloria in Excelsis or Hymn of Praise**

Purpose: We respond to God's mercy by praising him for his salvation. His glory is his bringing salvation to us through Christ.

Scripture:

- Luke 2:14: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

12. The Gloria echoes the angels' song at Christ's birth. What does it praise him for?

- Revelation 5:12-13: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"

13. What else does this song of praise reflect?

- Psalm 145:3: "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable."

14. Praising God's greatness is a regular response to his mercy in Scripture. What is the significance of his greatness being unsearchable?

## **Prayer of the Day**

Purpose: This prayer summarizes the theme of the day's readings, uniting the congregation in petition and praise.

Scripture:

- 1 Timothy 2:1-2: "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions."
- Psalm 141:2: "May my prayer linger before you like incense, the lifting up of my hands like an evening offering."
- Philippians 4:6: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

This prayer focuses our petitions as a body of believers. Why are they pleasing to the Lord?

Reminder: In any liturgy we seek to do the following?

1. Let the Gospel predominate
2. Let the people participate
3. Let the experience of the Church be honored
4. Let all of God's best gifts be used.

How do you see these things happening in the Service elements above?