**Worship Ways: *A Study Document for Students of Hymnody and Liturgics at Bethany Lutheran College and Seminary, Fall 2020***

**I. The Song of the Church and the Elements of Music**

Christians sing. Jesus sang. His relatives sang. His disciples sang. His bride, the holy Christian church, sings.

Paul encourages us in our singing when he writes to our brothers and sisters in the Colossian (3) church:

“Therefore, as God’s elect, holy and loved, clothe yourselves with heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with one another and forgive each other if anyone has a complaint against anyone else. Forgive, just as Christ forgave you. And, in addition to all these things, put on love, which ties things together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ control your hearts, to which you were also called, in one body. And be thankful.

Let the word of Christdwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, with gratitude in your hearts to God. And everything you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (EHV)

And, to the congregation in Ephesus (5), he writes:

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth. Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord, and do not participate in fruitless deeds of darkness. Instead, expose them. For it is shameful even to mention the things that are done by people in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes things visible. Therefore it is said, “Awake, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

Consider carefully, then, how you walk, not as unwise people, but as wise people. Make the most of your time, because the days are evil. For this reason, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk on wine, which causes you to lose control. Instead, be filled with the Spirit by speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (singing and making music with your hearts to the Lord), by always giving thanks for everything to God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,and by submitting to one another in reverence for Christ.”

Whenever the church uses music as an expression of faith she incorporates the musical ideas from the culture that surrounds her. And she tempers them by Pauline practicality and his high ideals: You are God’s holy and elect. Show those virtues in the way you worship, sing, and live.

At its best, the music of 2000 years of Christian culture reflected Paul’s idealism, and the example of Christ. In the church music of the west there are elements of folk music from the cultures of Judaica, Syria, Greece, Italy, Spain, North Africa, England, Scandinavia, Western and Middle Europe and Ireland that combined to create the music of the church and the European musical culture. The musical culture of Europe, and the culture of Christianity, did not exclude music from other cultures. They incorporated the multi-cultural experience of music into what became, what is, and what will continue to develop as Western music. In many cases the church was the place where many “tribal” musical styles and forms were preserved in combinations that produced a rich musical heritage. The church continues to do this according to Paul’s example, and Christ’s song, throughout the world, and in every generation.

What we consider to be the elements of music are present in the music of all cultures:

**Melody**: a collection or set of subsequently sounded pitches or tones

**Rhythm**: the division of time into recognizable units

**Harmony**: a collection or set of simultaneously sounding pitches

**Tone Color**: the characteristic or idiomatic sound produced by a specific instrument, and its combination with other instruments relative to pitch and “ensemble” (grouping)

**Form**: the construction of musical expressions into recognizable units.

These definitions are generic, and they may seem a bit complex, yet they are the basic building blocks that allow us to talk about music beyond the level of what preference (*I* like this) or experience (this is not how we sing in *my* congregation.)

Different cultures and different eras of music may emphasize one element of music over the other even though they are concerned about all of the elements. We see many illustrations of the different ideas about music through the ages in our hymnals.

The song of the church is bigger and broader than any of us can comprehend. We won’t understand it or sing it until we are in heaven. One example of the breadth of church song, based on ONLY 400 years of a narrow cultural development of music and Christian proclamation is the tune “Freu dich sehr”. A look at the index (p.919) reveals that this tune is used five times in the ELH (102, 256, 593, 596, 598).

The setting at 102 represents the original form of this popular tune (1551).

The 16th century (1500’s) was a time when the musical elements of melody and rhythm were at centerstage. These tunes are a treat to sing, especially when a congregation is led by an accompanist who understands the cheerful nuances of this Renaissance rhythmic style. (Read that last sentence again, please. This is the least we can expect of those who accompany the song of our congregation. Sigh.)

The setting at 596 (J.S. Bach) illustrates a shift in the use of the elements of music; harmony claims the spotlight, and the original rhythms have been rearranged to make room for the rich harmony. The setting at 593 (Ludvig Lindemann) is an example of a harmonic setting from the 19th century, a time in which the harmonic vocabulary was being stretched to the limit, even in congregational hymn settings.

When we pass judgment on the comparative worth of the different settings (harmonic or rhythmic) we should recognize that they were produced by distantly related musical cultures that emphasized different elements of music. In this way we can rise above a shallow preference based on what we are accustomed to, and may temper our preference with the knowledge that the music of the church reflects the age in which it was written. When old songs become new songs it is the Spirit of Christ that breathes through the words and witness of each generation to proclaim the truth of the Gospel. New generations are coming, and they will listen to Paul, and sing newly-created songs, even as they build on the sturdy foundation of those who have sung before them.

*On the Identification of Hymn Tunes*

Where the church is, there is music. This may seem to be an overstatement, but the history of the church, in both the OT and NT eras is marked by singing and other kinds of music making. Even though most of the melodies and instruments of the ancient tabernacle, temple, synagogue and early Christian worship have been lost through the passage of time, some of the melodies that appear in our worship bear witness to at least 1000 years of common usage in the church. There is a vast repertoire of liturgical music composed for instrumentalists, soloists and choirs, but when we study hymn tunes we are focusing our attention on works for the “unrehearsed” choir called the *congregation*. As we learn tune names for this course we will discover the variety and richness of the melodies that have been created for use in the “Western” church--those congregations which trace their lineage to the development of the Christian community as it proceeded from the Roman world to most of western Europe, and via missionaries, explorers and immigrants, to much of the world.

Some of our melodies were created for use in “congregations” where everyone was a singer: the religious and academic communities, the monasteries, schools, universities and colleges of the church. Others were created to invite the participation of the laity: the Lutheran chorale (1520-1750), the Calvinist psalm tune, the “mission melodies” of Methodism, the hymnody of the Second Vatican Council and all who continue the tradition of modern ecumenical hymnody. Some come from the sturdy tradition of the folk song and carol (a tradition which hardly exists in our modern American culture… do we have a common folk song repertoire or style today?), and have been passed down through the culture from generation to generation, adapted and retained as parents teach their children the truths of the faith in the memorized melodies from their own youth. There is a sense in which all congregational song is “folk song” because it is the song of the people.

Composers use hymn tunes to create instrumental music that “speaks” to the congregation, even when the associated words of a melody are not being sung. The great organ chorale preludes of Lutheranism are probably the best examples of this use of congregational melodies. Hymn tunes are a memorization device that allow the words of a hymn (rhyming scripture, rhyming teaching, rhyming prayer) to find a place in the conscious and subconscious mind of the singer and listener. The melodies of our hymns and chorales are important teachers, for through them God’s Word finds its way into our hearts and memories.

What words about God will you remember in times of need, on your death bed, as a loved one is ill, as you wait for the anesthesia to take effect in the pre-op room of the surgical center? It is likely that a hymn melody, and its Gospel text may come to you at that time with comfort and assurance.

Hymn tunes also teach us that the truths of Christianity have touched the lives of many individuals in many different situations throughout many different eras. They remind us that we are not alone in our faith. That is what gives this exercise a spiritual dimension. As you sensitize yourself to the tune name, please note the date of its composition. In this way you may cross a bridge of shared faith to the ones who created the melodies that we treasure.

*Tune Names*

Hymn tunes have been assigned names by hymnal editors and composers as a means of quick identification apart from the text that is assigned to them (many times a tune will be used with several texts, or with a text that has been assigned to it that is *different* from the text that the composer was thinking about when the tune was composed). You will discover that they come in a variety of languages; sometimes there is an interesting story about the tune name. ELH 555, “Stratford” was composed when the composer lived on Stratford Avenue. ELH 355, “Paschal Alleluias” received its name during a lunch break as the committee that compiled the hymnal discussed various options for the tune name!

Sometimes the tune bears the name of the text that was *originally* borne by the tune, see ELH 544 and ELH 537 and ELH 144. Sometimes there is a discrepancy in tune name from hymnal to hymnal, but in most cases the tune names are consistent among modern hymnals in denominations where hymnals are used (not all of Christendom uses hymnbooks, after all). This consistency is a great help to organists especially, since most often the hymn-based music that they play is identified by a tune name designation.

The foreign language tune names are a vibrant reminder that Christianity is bigger than our experiences of language, culture and situation. Once again, this adds a spiritual dimension to a learning task (tune memorization) that can seem to be somewhat mundane.

**II. Lutheran Hymnody**

In our Lutheran tradition hymnody is an art form and rhetorical tool that combines poetry and music to proclaim God’s word. As a poetic form it is unique in that it is designed to be memorable (shorter, predictable phrases and rhyme schemes) and as music it is unique in that it is designed to be sung by unrehearsed “choirs” (limited range, “self-teaching” phrases, rhythmic predictability, functional harmony which supports the melody) in various situations (sanctuary, school, home). It is nothing short of miraculous when a poet and a composer can create poems and melodies which become suitable and successful parts of our liturgical and didactic (teaching) tradition.

Lutheran hymnody confesses the faith. Consider how the Lutheran Confessions treat hymnody. “As the church sings…” is the same as “as the church believes, teaches and confesses”. Augsburg Confession, Article 20 on *Faith and Good Works* concludes: “For this reason Christ said, “Without Me you can do nothing,” and the Church sings: We know no dawn but Thine, Send forth Thy beams divine On our dark souls to shine and make us blest.” (ELH p. 14). In a similar way the confessions invoke one of the new Lutheran chorales in the Formula of Concord in their presentation of the doctrine of Original Sin, “As the church sings : Through Adam’s fall human nature and our essence are completely corrupted.” (Kolb-Wengert, 488-489), and “…one party contended [even as they were singing?!?DM] that because “through Adam’s fall the whole human nature and essence is corrupted” after the fall the corrupted creature’s nature, substance, essence, even the noblest, most important part of its essence… is original sin itself…” (Kolb-Wengert 531). You will note that this comforting hymn appears in its entire form at ELH 430… the only English hymnal to contain a translation of this hymn by Lazarus Spengler, a significant lay leader of the Reformation.

Confessional Lutheranism regards hymnody as a teacher of the faith. It is difficult to come up with a more succinct statement regarding the purpose of liturgical song than that which our Confessions have already given us. “All the usual ceremonies are also preserved, except that the parts sung in Latin are interspersed here and there with German hymns which have been added to teach the people. For ceremonies are needed for this reason alone: that the unlearned be taught.” (AC 24, ELH p. 16) It is interesting to note that this attitude, far from inhibiting the liturgical development of the Lutheran church, was the catalyst which produced one of the greatest flowerings of poetry and melody which the Christian church has ever seen.

Lutheran hymnody has been a powerful tool for the proclamation of the faith by the priesthood of believers. Luther identifies the song of the church as the voice of the church when he writes “Glad tidings of great joy I bring, Whereof I now will say and *sing*”, and, “with united heart and voice And holy rapture *singing*, Proclaim the wonders God hath done…” (ELH 123, 378). “Without doubt, you will offer up no more powerful incense or savor against the devil than to occupy yourself with God’s commandments and words and to speak, sing, or think about them.” (LC Preface, Kolb-Wengert 381).

Finally, our practice of hymnody (which includes not just the liturgical song but the song used in our various educational programs and homes) grows out of a loving response to Christ’s command to be “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19), and a faithful understanding of Paul’s exhortation to “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” (Col. 3:16).

**III: The Way of Faith and Prayer: Credendi/Orandi**

Worship is something that we do together, but even when we’re gathered together with others it is still a personal experience. Private prayer is something that we do alone, but even when we’re alone we are a part the continuous activity of the vast and invisible community known as the Christian Church, which stretches through time and space.

When we enter the sanctuary, for the chief service on Sunday, or for our daily worship, we come as a group of individuals who are in need of the comfort and assurance that has been won for us when Christ called out “it is finished.” In that cry the church is born. That anguished cry of triumph from the cross is the beginning and the basis for our liturgy.

Worship is central to the Christian life. In 2000 years the church at worship has come to represent the great diversity and the multi-faceted nature of the cultural and spiritual gem of Christianity. The differences in practice go beyond culture, taste and tradition. Why are there so many variations in the way Christians worship? There are different ways of worship in the church because there are different understandings of what the church is and what it should be doing in the world.

As we begin to study those differences I hope that we will begin to have a better understanding of what separates denomination from denomination, a bigger appreciation of what treasures of doctrine and practice many denominations share, and why the way we worship is an important witness in this life, and how it is a foretaste of the eternal worship that we will share with all the saints around the throne of the Lamb. That’s a big list.

There is an old Latin maxim, “Lex orandi, lex credenda,” that suggests that the law of prayer directs the way of faith. This pithy little phrase can be traced back to Prosper of Aquitaine (d. 455), a layman who corresponded with and was a student of Augustine. We don’t know if this phrase was original with him, or if it had been around for a while to describe the relationship between the way of worship and the belief of the Christian.

The way a Christian community worships has a significant impact on the belief of the individuals in that community. Christians cultivate their faith in many ways today, through their study of the Bible individually and in groups, through their private devotional practices, and through corporate (group) devotions. But the main way that the bulk of Christianity encounters God, in his word and sacrament ministry, is in the divine service. Prosper’s maxim reflects that understanding.

Isn’t there is a bit of the “chicken and the egg” circular logic in the maxim? How can we believe unless we have heard God’s word in the liturgy? How can the liturgy teach us unless it is shaped by the word that we’ve been taught? The Augsburg Confession (1530) of our Lutheran church weighs in on the relationship between orandi and credendi, and I paraphrase quite a bit, “The liturgy is needed for this reason alone: that those who don’t know the faith are taught the faith.” (AC24, The Mass, ELH p. 16)

Prosper of Aquitaine, and Philip Melanchthon the chief author of the Augsburg Confession, understood the importance of the liturgy in the Christian experience. They also understood that this was not just some abstract spiritualistic smoke floating through the air, a mystic experience that lets me conjure up God’s presence. Something concrete happens in the liturgy, because an eternal, just, merciful, loving and incarnate God comes to through concrete avenues. Our manger-God is there for us at the pulpit and the altar whenever two or three are gathered together in his name.

Christ is the center. There is no Christianity without His teaching and work. Yet from the very beginning this central figure was a source of discussion and disagreement. That’s why we shouldn’t be surprised when we study the story of our liturgy and its song we see episodes that remind us that there have been, and are, different understandings of what is happening and why those differences matter. By the way, when I use the word liturgy I tend to use it in its broadest sense. Preaching, praying, the sacraments, hymnody, ceremonies, and even the space where those things are practiced all combine in our understanding of and experience of God with us in worship.

Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” Jesus said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” And Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”(Matt. 16:13 ff) Day after day Christ comes to His church and asks this same question, “Who do you say that I am?” The church answers in her liturgy.

Every liturgy, every Divine Service, every hymn and every sermon gives an answer to that question. Sometimes the answer is clear and explicit, at other times it is implied in the words we speak and sing, and in the actions and space of our liturgy. It is in the variety of those answers that denominational differences have arisen, and will continue to arise, within the body of Christ. The way we answer those questions will also bring us to a community of a common confession.

“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”. This is the foundation; the cornerstone; the confession upon which all else depends. But in order that the building might rise up, Christ asks, not just once but THREE times, “Do you love Me?” (John 21:15 ff). The church answers “Lord, Thee I Love with all my heart” in its liturgy. The Bride obeys the Bridegroom’s command to “Feed my lambs and sheep,” and we are comforted by his promise that he will be with his bride until the end of the ages.

**IV: The Way of Faith and Worship: TO Life or OF Life. Stereopticon.**

Christianity is the way TO life and the way OF life. The two images of Christianity are correct, yet they are different. Essential question: Which is the *mos*t important and *most* worthy of emphasis?

The way the church has answered that question has charted the course of her history. The way we answer that question will determine how we worship. Understanding the reality of this stereoptic vision will help us to understand why there are different denominations, and why there are differences of practice and opinion within the same denomination and parish.

When we understand the subtle differences between the images of Christianity as the way TO life and Christianity as the way OF life we have a paradigm, or model, to survey the history of the church, the development of Christian worship, the variations in the liturgical practices and customs of the church, and our personal attitudes toward faith and its enactment in the liturgy of our lives. That’s another long list.

**V. Eternity in a Span: God and Time in the Calendar**

Time marches on. Events happen in time that change who and what we are. We remember, and in our own way we all create a calendar. Calendars give meaning to time. Without remembrance of time the passage of every moment and hour would become a drudgery or a life sentence. Think of the calendars in your life: the cycle of years and birthdays, anniversaries of special events, the academic calendar, the fiscal calendar, the sights, tastes and smells of the seasons-- all of these calendars free us from the inevitable clock ticking to make life a series of remembrances and anticipations that give worth to our every day, even days of sorrow and loss.

God does not need a calendar. He is eternal and therefore outside of the rule of time. But God subjects Himself to time, and in this way He shows that He is ultimately a God of grace. He did not need an evening or a morning to show forth His glory. He did not need the frosts of winter or the buds of spring to give meaning to His existence.

How do we know who God is? God reveals His nature whenever He limits Himself or subjects Himself to a law that has no dominion over His reality. He limits Himself for us; not so that He can be amused by our foolish uses of time, but so that we can see His timeless wisdom revealed in the foolishness of our moments. We are like the shepherds of Bethlehem. We know what we see, because the angels have told us. And we are caught up in the majestic wonder of this little baby who is eternity confining himself to a span of time. When Christ comes, everything is topsy-turvy. The crooked paths are straight, and the mountains and hills are brought low. This incarnation-limitation makes water, bread, wine, paper and ink, and our words and actions in the liturgy the new manger where we adore and the angels teach.

Every moment of all time was given meaning on a Friday afternoon around 3:00 when the undying God died. “It is finished” is the moment in time when everything is begun.

When did the Holy Trinity plan your salvation? When did it plan the creation of the world? When will Christ come again? All of these moments are shrouded in mystery. However that Good Friday moment when all was finished is a matter of public record, a matter of time and history (…under Pontius Pilate.) It gives purpose to every calendar, and it gives the church a calendar that is designed for teaching, for remembrance and for thanksgiving.

There is no record of a calendar of faith before the giving of the Mosaic law, but it seems reasonable to think that the ancient ones had a calendar, especially since they kept track of the years of lifespan (Genesis 5 and 11). It seems reasonable that Adam and Eve might have had a “marriage anniversary,” and they must have celebrated the births of their children and grandchildren, just as they might have had a solemn commemoration to remember the day of the fall into sin, the day on which the clock of death began to tick, the day on which time really began. It is a wild conjecture, but it seems to me that their “New Year” celebration was not so much a remembrance of the first day in paradise, but a remembrance of their first day in the bondage of time; the same day that they had been given a promise of One who would come to be their Savior from time, the One who would reopen the gates of paradise.

It is likely that the commemorations of time among the patriarchs was the same: birthdays, death days, days of special remembrance: the Fall, the birth of Seth, the death of Abel, the death of Adam, the command to build the Ark, the first day of the Flood, the day of the dove’s return, the landing of the Ark, etc. and so on until the time of Moses and the giving of the Law.

Do you take the seven-day week for granted? It is a part of our culture that is so basic that it is hard to imagine life without it. Yet we believe that the rhythm of the week--1 day of rest to 6 days of labor--was established by God in His creation. The day of rest was a special gift of grace, not only to give the people an opportunity to reflect upon the word of God, but as a temporal sign of God’s love and gracious attitude towards His creation. Work is work. God wanted us to have a day off! Weekdays and rest days were gathered together to form months and years. The children of Israel, the descendants of Abraham, used a calendar based on the phases of the moon to reckon time. It is this calendar that God uses to create the calendar of remembrance, commemoration and solemn observance in His institution of the Law given to Moses.

The festivals and seasons instituted by God for His people in the Old Testament were beautifully balanced between those rites that could be observed in the **home** among the intimate setting of the family (Sabbath, Passover) and those that needed the rituals of the **temple** with its highly developed priestly services of sacrifice and offering (Day of Atonement). The services of home and temple brought with them a liturgical ritual that was rich in symbolism. In both cases the services and the calendar were given to the people as a means of grace, not an exercise in legalistic observance by which they could gain favor with God. They were effective because God had promised to be among His people in, with and through them, not because the families or the priests were engaging in rote actions that worked like magic to appease God. The prophets of the OT regularly chastised many of the people (and the religious hierarchy) for their empty observance of the calendar. Even though God had created the calendar and the observances they could still be misused. Without repentance and faith in the saving God of Israel even the God-ordained observances were worthless.

The chief festival of the OT was the observance of Passover and Unleavened Bread. Passover celebrated the fact that God had preserved His people from the angel of death by the sign of the Lamb’s blood on their doorposts, their liberation from slavery in Egypt, the deliverance through the Red Sea and their passage (even though it took forty years) to the Promised Land. The events of the Passover story are dramatic, and important for us to know if we are to understand much of the symbolism and the richness of the NT celebration of Easter and the Christian liturgy (Exodus chapters 10-15). For those of us who have grown up in the church the images (in words and art) of the bleeding lamb, or the triumphant lamb with his banner of victory are understood immediately. One wonders how those who do not know the Passover (Paschal) story interpret those images when they first see or hear them. Many things in Christianity are foreign to the way the world thinks, and many of our images in worship and preaching are communicated in a language that is understandable, but not always immediately accessible.

*Passover images that are central to all of scripture and Christian worship:*

Death is a real threat, even to those who believe in God, and we are in bondage to death.

A lamb must die so that the people may live.

The blood of the lamb must mark the doorpost of each family.

Once death passes over the people have a new identity.

They are now a nation, a people chosen by God.

They pass through the Red Sea, and the water that saves them destroys their enemy.

Once they have passed through the water they are literally in a new physical place, and have the promise of a new life.

The religion of the Bible is a bloody religion. The sacrifices of the temple and tabernacle were made to pay for (atone for) sin. Sin brings death, not just to the sacrifice, but to all people, and a price must be paid. Even though God is gracious and loving, He is also just. The Passover Lamb is the archetype, or primary image, of all the sacrifices. We believe that it was the power of the Passover Lamb who died on the cross that gave actual forgiveness to the believers of old, even as it is the actual power that brings forgiveness and life to us.

Everything about the OT calendar and liturgy revolves around the symbol of the Passover Lamb. When the people of Israel remembered what the lamb brought to them, they prospered in faith. When they forgot about the lamb and substituted their own ideas about power and prosperity they faltered, and eventually were conquered and carried away into captivity and the temple was destroyed.

There are powerful and significant lessons for us to learn about ourselves and about our worship when we study the history of the OT. It is significant that the main worship document of the OT, the book of Psalms, remains the greatest source of worship texts for the church today. The Psalms are an intense proclamation of God’s work among His children and they can be intensely personal for us today. How this can be after thousands of years is a testimony to the power of God’s word.

The fully developed calendar (by the time of Christ) had twelve months. Each month began with the new moon, and the first month began at the first new moon after the spring equinox (end of March, beginning of April).

1. Passover and Unleavened Bread

2.

3. Pentecost, or Weeks 7 weeks or 50 days after the beginning of Passover, commemorates the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai.

4. Fast in remembrance of the fall(s) of Jerusalem

5. Fast in remembrance of the destruction(s) of the temple

6.

7. New Year’s Feast; Day of Atonement; Feast of Tabernacles

8.

9. Feast of the Dedication of the Temple, or of Candles (Lights)

10. Fast in remembrance of the siege of Jerusalem

11.

12. Fast of Esther; Feast of Purim or Haman

(13th Month added in Leap Years; usually every third year)

*(See A. Edersheim, “The Temple—Its Ministry and Services;* <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/edersheim/temple.html>*)*

After the twelve tribes of Israel left their bondage in Egypt they spent forty years in the wilderness. Forty. Remember that number. During that time God had commanded the construction of a portable temple, or tabernacle, that would stand at the center of the immense camp. The ark of the covenant, the mercy seat of God, was in the tabernacle, and the priests from the tribe of Levi were in constant devotion and sacrificial duty in the courts surrounding the holy place and the most holy place. The people of Israel were physically gathered together around the sanctuary.

When they entered the Promised Land the tribes were scattered throughout the country so that the tabernacle was no longer within earshot or eyesight of most of the people. At this early time the devotional life of the household and smaller communities within the country developed into what would become known in much later days as a synagogue *(please note that this name is Greek in origin, a sign that the commonly accepted title of today was put in place when the Greek language held sway as a principal language of the realm)*.

By the time Solomon’s glorious temple was constructed there was already a worship life that had grown up in the communities of Israel that understood the temple, and the holy city of Jerusalem, to be the ideal place for worship. Yet many did not have the opportunity to present themselves in Jerusalem for every Sabbath, and certainly at that time there were some within Israel who were not able to make the great pilgrimage to the Holy City, even though that was the heartfelt desire of every child of the promise (see Psalm 122, ELH p. 192).

Eventually the kingdom was divided, and due to the wicked political ideals of so many of the kings the people were carried off into exile, and the temple was destroyed. The *community* form of worship grew into a daily and sabbath gathering that fulfilled what a non-existent temple could not. Teaching and praying replaced the bloody sacrifices, and leadership was not limited to the members of the tribe of Levi.

This synagogue worship was firmly established at the time of Christ, and not just in the “holy” land, but throughout the civilized world wherever the Jewish community had been scattered *(diaspora).* Synagogue worship took place in little Nazareth, and in the imperial city of Rome. One of the fruits of the bitter sufferings of God’s people in the OT era was that His word was planted throughout much of the world. The way was paved for the teachings of Jesus to spread through a first century “internet” of synagogue communities in the world of the Mediterranean Sea *(the Pentecost miracle)*.

The synagogue service consisted of psalms, prayers, lessons from the books of Moses, the books of history, the wisdom literature and the prophets, teaching from the rabbis, prayers and blessings. The outline of synagogue worship had an impact on the services of the early Christians, and we can see elements of synagogue worship in today’s Divine Service of Word and Sacrament, as well as in the Office services of Matins and Vespers.

The temple rites were rich in choral and instrumental music. In the synagogue the music was soloistic (the cantillation, or chanting of scripture and prayers) or unaccompanied choral/congregational singing. The colorful instrumental music belonged to the liturgy of the temple.

In the time of the apostles the church still observed some of the rites of Judaism. The Christian community in Jerusalem attended temple. Christian Jews continued to be present in the synagogues, to the extent that they had become something of a menace (that was why Saul was so eager to purify the synagogue communities). The first Christians began to separate themselves from the synagogue, and the Sabbath. They gathered for worship on the *first* day of the week, the Lord’s Day, the day commemorating His resurrection. Christians celebrated the Lord’s Supper, proclaimed the words of the Gospel, prayed, and supported one another with their offerings on this transformed Sabbath.

The Sunday after Sunday observance of Christ’s resurrection culminated in a **yearly remembrance of the Paschal Festival**, the Christian Passover, what we call Easter. This festival still retained the ancient lunar calendar for its observance, and that is why the date of Easter is different every year.

There was a calendar clash when Christianity spread from the eastern lunar world to the Roman solar world. The Jewish calendar was based on the moon, the Roman calendar was based on the sun. Missionaries in later centuries may have converted calendar events associated with the mid-winter re-birth of the sun into **festivals celebrating the birth of the Sun of Righteousness**, God’s Son, Jesus Christ. That may be why our Christmas celebrations happen in midwinter (at least in the northern hemisphere). If this hypothesis is true it is an interesting example of missionary zeal and cross-cultural adaptation. Another theory is that the date of Christ’s birth was established because of an earlier tradition that placed the date of his conception in March which correlates with the beginning of the Jewish year (see the calendar above). Annunciation Day is frequently close to Passover, and nine months from March 25 is December 25.

Christians memorialized the death dates of their leaders and heroes of the faith, so that a rich **calendar of commemorations** was established to remember the saints who had gone before.

In this way the present (and constantly evolving) calendar of Christianity came into being. It may be confusing to memorize the order of the calendar, but that confusion may be due to the fact that our calendar represents the “sandwiching” effect of **three** different calendars:

**1. The Easter (Lunar) Calendar**

**2. The Christmas (Solar) Calendar**

**3. The Calendar of the Saints and Commemorations (Sanctoral Calendar).**

Many of the parts of the liturgy change with every season and observance (literally, every day!) These changing parts of the liturgy, or *proper* texts, are drawn from the Bible (Lessons, Gradual verse, etc.) liturgical poetry (the collects or prayers, the communion preface, the hymns) or are written for the day (the sermon). There are also many *proper* customs that help us observe the church year, such as the colors of paraments, and other chancel and sanctuary decorations. Many of these observances can spill over from the sanctuary into the home or classroom to help make the church year an important part of the lives of all the faithful. These customs can be great fun, especially for the children.

Katherine Hankey, 1834-1911, *alt.* 77. 77 *ORIENTIS PARTIBUS*

Advent tells us Christ is near; Christmas tells us Christ is here.

In Epiphany we trace All the glory of His grace.

Then three Sundays will prepare For the time of faithful prayer,

That, with hearts made penitent, We may keep a faithful Lent.

Holy Week and Easter then Tell who died and rose again:

O that happy Paschal day!“Christ is ris’n indeed,” we say.

Yes, and Christ ascended, too, To prepare a place for you;

So we give Him special praise after those great forty days.

Then He sent the Holy Ghost On the day of Pentecost,

With us ever to abide: God, our Comfort, by our side.

Last of all, by grace we sing Glory to our God and King,

Glory to the One in Three, Glory to the Trinity.

See ELH for a listing of the Seasons, Sundays and Festivals of the Church Year (p. 5-6), and memorize the following, and know what events/themes are commemorated in each!

**ACE**

**GLHWEA**

**PT**

**VI. The “Blueprints” of the Worship Rite: Mass, Office, Prone and Devotion**

The Christian calendar is tied to the calendar of the OT through the “Paschal Window”, but beyond that it is quite a new creation. In a similar way the service forms (liturgies) of Christianity owe a debt of gratitude to their OT predecessors of synagogue, Sabbath prayers in the home, and the rites of the temple. But even though there is a link it is clear that the way of Christian worship has an identity all its own.

**“**They (those who accepted the Gospel and were baptized) continued to hold firmly to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of the bread, and to the prayers… Day after day, with one mind, they were devoted to meeting in the temple area, as they continued to break bread in their homes. They shared their food with glad and sincere hearts, as they continued praising God and being viewed favorably by all the people.” Acts 2:42, 46-47 EHV

In a general sense the Church uses the following **four forms** of worship (**blueprints!**)

1. the Divine Service of Word and Sacrament (the Mass)

2. the Daily Office, or worship at various times of the day, in the religious community, the academic community, and individually *(MLPTSNVC)*

3. the “free” forms of worship, usually instructive services, outside the realm of the clearly defined and regulated liturgical services of 1 and 2. *(the Prone; the Catechism Office, the Service of the Word, the Revival...*)

4. the ecstatic, or mystical meditations of the soul, highly personal and meditative.

 1. The Divine Service of Word and Sacrament (the Mass) is the chief service of the church. It is the service in which Christ comes to his beloved bride with His gift of absolution (forgiveness) and eternal life in the means of grace, namely Word and Sacrament. In these means Christ unites Himself spiritually, mentally and physically with His bride.

What do we know about the form of the service in the earliest days of the church? It may have included elements of the Jewish Sabbath prayer of home and synagogue; it certainly included Psalms, scripture, instruction, prayer, the Words of Institution and the Lord’s Prayer, as well as words of benediction and dismissal. This simple structure developed over the centuries into the rich form of the Mass (from the word dis**missa**l?) that is used in one form or another throughout much of Christendom. Please note that there is very little “hymnody” in the historic Mass blueprint, even though there is a lot of music. The liturgical texts came from scripture, for the most part. Poetry that did not come from the Bible was not really a part of the Mass order until later centuries. But when those hymnic texts (Sequence hymns) started to appear around the place in the blueprint where the “Alleluia and verse” were sung, it was hard to stop the poets and musicians. By the fourteenth century (1300’s) carol-type hymns were allowed, and beloved, on certain festivals. At the time of the Reformation Luther retained the historic form of the choral Mass (with a bit of strategic cleaning) and added hymns in the vernacular, here and there, where they were appropriate to the blueprint. He created a Mass order called the “Deutsche Messe” in which all of the music (both the ordinary and proper) could have been sung by the congregational “choir”. This was an important beginning of modern congregational hymnody, and in time hymn singing was accepted in many of the other denominational traditions.

The Mass form may be divided into three parts (PWS):

*I. Preparation*

Confession

Introit (Entrance Psalm) w/ Gloria Patri..(Glory be to the Father, Son, HS, etc)

Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy)

Gloria in excelsis (The Christmas song of the Angels; greater Gloria)

The Greeting (The Angelic Salutation: The Lord be with you!)

Collect, or Prayer for the Day

*II. Word*

The OT Lesson *(recent addition to the mass order; 1960’s)*

The Psalm or Gradual

The Epistle

The Alleluia Verse (or Tract, during Lent), or Sequence Hymn (*Luther suggested an epiclesis hymn here, “We Now Implore God the Holy Ghost” to prepare for the Gospel which was sung according to the same melodic rules as the Words of Institution.)*

The Holy Gospel, with acclamations

The Creed

The Sermon

The Prayer for the Church (the Litany)

The Offertory Verse

*III. Sacrament*

The Salutation, Preface and Proper Preface Hymn: (Anaphora)

The Lord be with you...

Lift Up...Let us give thanks...It is good and right that we should...

The Sanctus and Benedictus qui venit (Holy, holy, holy...Blessed is He that comes ...)

The Proclamation of Thanks/ Eucharistic Prayer

The Canon (in Roman Catholic rites; this prayer transformed the sacrament into a sacrifice. Classic Roman Catholic theology taught that Christ’s death on the cross paid the price for the original sin for everyone. But that was only a part of the sin problem. They also taught that Christ, by his grace, had given the church sacraments and sacramental gifts that could be used and dispensed to take care of the active and passive sins of all people. All people were encouraged to use the sacraments in order to put away the guilt of their individual sins. But how can we pay the price for sin, even in these godly practices? The Canon, and the idea behind it, was the centerpiece of the Roman system. It gave rise to the idea of purgatory, sainthood and the treasury of merits, the priesthood, vows and indulgences.)

The Exhortation (in some Lutheran rites which really replaced the old Canon)

Our Father

The Words of Institution

The Agnus Dei (O Christ, Lamb of God..)

The Communion (Distribution)

The Collect, and in some traditions a canticle of dismissal (Nunc Dimittis)

The Blessing and Dismissal

This chief service was celebrated throughout Christendom, in one form or another, from the earliest days. In most traditions it was observed as the chief service on every Sunday or Festival Day; in many it was observed daily, and was considered the normal public confession of the church, and as such it was celebrated frequently.

This beautiful blueprint contains some texts that change with every observance, and others that remain the same. The unchanging texts are called the **Ordinary** of the Mass, and the texts that change to reflect the theme and the lessons of the day are called the **Proper** of the Mass. The choral ordinary, especially, gave thousands of composers textual inspiration for their compositions. Through the centuries music of all styles and compositional disciplines have been used to set the words of the choral ordinary *(kids get crabby sitting beside ants.)*

The Choral Ordinary of the Mass includes the following songs/texts:

Kyrie eleison (Lord, have mercy)

Gloria in excelsis Deo (Glory to God in the highest)

Credo (We believe in one God...)

Sanctus and Benedictus qui venit (Holy, holy, holy...Blessed is He...)

Agnus Dei (Lamb of God).

Themes for the Masses throughout the year were drawn from scripture assigned to the day that addressed the idea/theme of the day, the season or festival of the year. Pericopes (pair-ICK-oh-pee), or chunks of scripture, were then organized into a year-long cycle of readings called a Lectionary. Various pericopal systems came to be used in the church, and today there are several lectionaries that are in common use.

In the nineteenth century (1800’s) a Lutheran pastor in Bavaria, Germany (Wilhelm Loehe), wrote a beautiful description of the Lutheran Mass. Even though he was writing for AMERICAN Lutherans in the 1800’s, his words would have resonated with Christians of many ages and many different confessions. The image of the waves and the rock are a powerful description of what happens in the divine service. He identifies the sermon/homily and supper as the two mountaintops of the liturgy, and that imagery is memorable and accurate.

“The Christian congregation feels closest to its Lord during worship; there, in the closest proximity to the Bridegroom, it lives a heavenly life on earth, an earthly life in heaven. Worship is the most beautiful blossom of all temporal life.

In the inner life and in the worship services of the congregation stand *word* and *sacrament* like a rock in the sea. As the sea flows around the rock, so the sacred forms of the liturgy move about the center of word and sacrament. As the sea breaks on the rock, as its waves and roaring are dependent on the rock, so the liturgical life also is not arbitrary; rather, its waves concentrically circle around the innermost circle of the spiritual life which surrounds the core of word and sacrament.

Word and sacrament determine the *order of salvation*, and the latter determines the *order of the worship service*. As spiritual life is unthinkable without the order of salvation, so is a worship service without order, *without a scriptural progress of salutary thoughts*.

This is especially true of the congregation’s main services for Sundays and festivals. There is something of *regular change and diversity* about them, depending on whether they take place in this or that festal cycle of the church year. For the cycle of the church year gives to all and every main service its peculiar character.

Yet there is also something permanent in all the main services, something that always returns and this is just the *progress of holy thoughts by which the life of faith is carried in the change of time*.

I would like to compare the liturgy’s progress of thought to a double-peaked mountain, whose one peak, as in the case of Mt. Horeb and Mt. Sinai, is lower than the other. The first peak is the *sermon*, the second the *sacrament of the altar*, without which I cannot imagine a *consummate* worship service on earth. One is always rising in the main service until one reaches the table of the Lord, above which there is nothing except heaven; this is why one finds only in the *Nunc Dimittis* an adequate expression for one’s faith and hope.

Let us once follow as briefly as possible the thought process of the communion service in detail.

I. The Service of Preparation

One week lies behind you; a new one lies ahead of you; between both lies the *day of communion*, Sunday. You wish to approach the Lord with the congregation. What is it that you, whether you are shepherd or sheep, will have to do first? You do what all religions symbolize in their washings, that is, you wash your feet that have become dusty from daily life in other words, you prepare for worship by confession of sins and holy absolution. Your first devotion is thus the *Confiteor* which cannot have a more beautiful form than that in which pastor and congregation comfort each other.

The *heaviest* burden is laid down in the Confiteor. The introit psalm begins, and with it the peculiar character of the Sunday or festival enters into the consciousness of the celebrating Christian.

The *peace* of forgiveness is joined by *festive joy*. It will feel to you like Sunday, Easter, etc. during the introit that certainly is most fittingly sung by alternating choirs of men and women, of the young and the old, school and congregation, etc.

Cleansed from sins, relieved of the heaviest burden, you enter into the celebration of the Sunday and the feast. Yet on earth there are still *other* burdens and pains, present and future ones. Life, death, eternity with all the bitter fruits and consequences of sin block your way to the sanctuary, and they continue to threaten you. Cares rise and return *again and again*. This is why the Kyrie is a permanent part which commends all pains of time and eternity to God’s mercy

In the Confiteor (confession) and Kyrie, humanity, as it was before Christmas and as it is and will be without Christ, stands before God. It stands before God *in need of help*. Without further ado, the Lord of these needy ones draws near under angelic songs of praise. As in the manger, so the Lord comes to the congregation during the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*. The adoration of the angels sounds forth *whenever* the Lord comes to the place where he has established the remembrance of his name.

He comes. He is received and praised as the Triune who is approached in Christ Jesus.“We praise you, we bless you, we worship you” etc. There is probably no man-made prayer that is more sublime than this adoration of the Lord who comes down to the praises of Israel.

His gracious face shines, but he is still *silent*; he still *listens* to the words of the congregation. This is why the congregation once more summarizes all its needs, joins its requests, and enunciates them in the *collect* in one sentence and breath. In the collect the changing thought of the feast or Sunday permeates the general needs of the souls more clearly than in the introit. In one lucid thought this is at least how it is supposed to be the soul rises up and then, with a believing Amen, prostrates itself and waits patiently before him to whom all flesh comes because he hears prayer.

II. The Service of the Word

The congregation is silent. Then he breaks the silence and grants the grace of his word to the congregation. His Spirit bears witness through the mouth of the apostles in the *apostolic* word. (Epistle)

A jubilant hallelujah responds to him who stoops down to his people. The hallelujah falls silent. Yet he continues speaking. One hears *ipsissima verba* in the gospel. The Lord draws *closer and closer* to his people. *Glory be to you, O Lord!*

Again a jubilant hallelujah responds. *Praise be to you, O Christ!*Yet this is not all. The hearts are set aflame by virtue of the gospel in *faith*. Adoration becomes the most blessed union with the Lord in the *creed*. No more do the pangs of sin, no more does the fear of evil, no more do longing groans fill the souls; now they are filled with joyous confidence.

One takes a seat before his face, and in the sermon begins the blessed discourse, *homilein*, with the communion of saints who here rejoice in the Lord before the Lord.

Here one has reached the first peak of the service, as it were, like on Mt. Horeb. Now the congregation unanimously goes higher to the sacrament.

It feels like the bride of the Lord, rich in him and through him, but also rich through others. In its fullness it remembers all specific needs and the plight that exists on earth, not begrudging anyone anything that is good, it approaches the altar with *petition, prayer, and intercession*. Blessing all, it worthily steps to the throne of the richest blessing. In this our heart is enlarged for the great thought, namely, that the Church here and there is only one; that the pilgrims here are agreed and united in their prayers with all the saints in heaven; that they, praying *with them*, hasten the coming of the day of eternal glory.

III. The Service of Holy Communion

From petitions the congregation transitions to *thanksgiving* in the *preface*, just as the apostle lets *thanksgiving* follow *petition, prayer*, and *intercession* cf. Phil. 4:6. The thanksgiving, however, melts into the *Sanctus*, the *thrice-holy of all heavens*. Caught up in the Sanctus, the congregation already sees the Lord of the armies of heaven coming to it the sacrament and the blissful *Hosanna* sounds forth to greet him.

*It cannot* rise any higher. A brief but deep silence occurs that is filled with expectation.

Without transition, immediately the wonderful *Verba Testamenti* begin. He comes in the name of the Lord. God is present and the Lamb. In the dust, on their knees the congregation lies prostrate before the Lord. Not cast down from the height of the Sanctus but thoroughly permeated by the Sanctus, indeed, elevated to the present Lord, it humbles itself, prays in the choir of angels in the *Agnus Dei* and Lord’s Prayer it commends everything we need in time and eternity to the gracious hearing of the Lord.

Now all the trembling, all anxiety that is awakened anew by the coming of the Lord is fully overcome when the Lord offers *peace* to his guests. Each proclaims God’s peace to his neighbor *osculum pacis*. Intimate bliss, heartfelt longing permeates the souls and now *one receives the sacrament*.

From faith, in faith, one has progressed from one step to the next. One has arrived at the most blessed experience. One cannot rise any higher except through death *Nunc Dimittis*. “Lord, now you let your servant depart in peace.”

One goes down from the mountaintop to the customary ending of the service. In *Benediction* one seeks the transition to what God has laid upon each in the earthly vocation in preparation for heaven.”

2. The Office

The Chief Service of Word and Sacrament was generally the main PUBLIC service of the church. A secondary but no less important liturgical blueprint is apparent in the service that is less public, like our chapel services, and was restricted to the religious communities (monasteries, abbeys) and the academic communities. In the early days of Christianity it was a service that marked the times of days for the whole community (the cathedral office). Confused yet? Don’t be.

Asceticism, or the withdrawal from public life for the purpose of solitary meditation, prayer and spiritual cleansing, was present in the Jewish world centuries before the birth of Christ. Those who were called to devote themselves to such a life (John the Baptist) created an amazing impression in the mind of the public. Extreme discipline was a characteristic of their lives. As Christianity spread, the ideal of asceticism also developed, and an idea of “communities set apart” offered an existence for those who felt called forth from the world.

The various structures for communal religious life were called **orders** (think of them like our dormitory rules.) One of the most enduring figures from this tradition is Benedict of Nursia. In his rule, or order, he teaches that the primary work of the ordered community is prayer. In order to facilitate this work all members of the order were called to community prayer eight times a day (Martin Luther Prayed to St. Nicholas Very Courteously; Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, Compline.) Each of these praise/prayer services joined together create the Daily Office. In our Lutheran tradition at least two “parts” of the office--Matins and Vespers-- remained in use after the Reformation. (ELH presents 4 of the services from the office “blueprint”, PMVC)).

The Daily Office tended to be more in tune with the time of the day rather than the season of the Church Year. The Office was a “Choral Service”, meaning that it was observed by a community without the need for a priest. Many parts of the service were sung back and forth (antiphonally) between a divided choir of participants, while a member of the community functioned as a “leader” for the lessons, etc. Hymnody found a home in the Office, and some of our oldest hymn texts are Office hymns. These hymns tended to emphasize the time of the day, rather than the Church Year. As time went on the thematic ideas of the the Church Year themes and the themes of the Sanctoral Cycle became more important for the themes of the Office.

The structure of the Office services included:

Psalmody (the Psalter was divided up so that all 150 would be sung every week. Wait a minute, HOW MANY PSALMS???)

Lection (Lessons)

Responsories to the Lection

Hymnody (texts usually referred to the time of day rather than Church Year)

Homily

Canticle. Canticles are songs from the Bible that are NOT found in the book of Psalms.

The most frequently used are:

Benedictus-Song of Zechariah;

Magnificat-Song of Mary;

Nunc Dimittis-Song of Simeon, and

Te Deum Laudamus- We Praise You, O God

Kyrie eleison (Litany)

Prayers

Our Father

Blessing

This community prayer service remains a significant catalyst for the cultivated musical traditions of Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism and Anglicanism.

3. Between the fourth and ninth century the forms of the Mass and the Office became more uniform throughout the Western church, so that even with local customs and adaptations the blueprint of the liturgy was fairly recognizable from place to place. (Remember that genuine “uniformity” would not really be possible until a certain technology was developed in the fifteenth century….what technology would that be?)

There were other types of worship that were free from the domain of the rules of the Mass and the Office, however. These services outside of the formal liturgy were used especially in connection with festival teaching and preaching as well as pilgrimage prayer. Things like the liturgical drama and the mystery plays told the stories of scripture in a way that was quite different from what was allowed within the realm of the standard liturgical forms. A preaching service, sometimes call the Prone, included elements such as the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, and hymns in the language of the people, something that was more and more important as the language of the people grew away from the language of the church (Latin). Many of the forms of modern “evangelical” churches are similar in spirit and shape to the old services of Prone. They are also tied to the tradition of “stational preaching” typical of the classic Methodist and American *frontier and revival traditions*.

4. There is also a place for private devotion in the Christian life. Many of the Latin hymns were produced as devotional poetry, not necessarily for use in the context of the services (we know one of them as “O Sacred Head Now Wounded”). Private prayer blueprints such as the Rosary and the Stations of the Cross in the Roman Catholic Church are representative of what would have been the sort of personal devotional exercises used through the ages. We remember that private devotion is also a part of the church’s life, and it is also important for us to realize that some of the hymns that we now enjoy singing in corporate worship grew out of a spirit of private devotion.

There may be a tension between worship that is individualistic and worship that is public, however. The classic example of this tension caused a lot of anxiety for the early church, and for St. Paul especially. An extraordinary gift of the spirit, the glosso***la***lia, or speaking in tongues, was a special mark of the church on the day of Pentecost. Thanks to the gift of tongues many visitors to Jerusalem heard the Gospel in their own language, preached by individuals who had no previous knowledge of that tongue. The purpose was clear: the story of Christ was proclaimed to as many as possible on that day. The gift of tongues had a very specific purpose on that day, and it may be that the gift appeared again in the time of the apostles as the need arose, especially for the proclamation of the gospel in a contemporary language.

There were those who claimed the gift of tongues as proof of a larger outpouring of the Spirit. They spoke in languages that were unknown to anyone in the congregation. This preaching had the opposite effect of that on the day of Pentecost. Instead of bringing people to Christ this ecstatic speaking scattered the congregation, and became a divisive activity. Paul instructed and instructs the church clearly on this matter in I Corinthians, and commands us that all of our laws about worship are to be subject to the law of Christian charity, or love (I Cor. 12: 27- 13:13). Paul acknowledged that those who used tongues may have used it as a private prayer language directed towards God, but he was careful to remind those who used this private gift that it was not edifying or helpful to the worship of the community. Some of the practices that are appropriate for private worship may not be appropriate for public worship. Today public worship involves those who are rooted in the faith ***and*** those who are newcomers. (Although newcomers were not allowed in the service at all during the early centuries; even those under instruction had to go through a period of catechetical “probation” before they could attend the first part of the service… the service of Holy Communion, part 3 of the Mass, was closed to all but the communicant members of the congregation; those who were not in communion were not even allowed to stay and watch!!!)

Private prayer usually uses an “in-group” language that automatically seems to exclude neophytes in the faith; worship that is built completely on in-group language assumes that all participants have an intimate and exclusive relationship with God. The creedal communication of the Chief Service and the Office provide a didactic substitute for this type of worship language. It is tempting to mark a division between the forms of worship that are corporate (we- centered) and those that are private (me-centered), but we discover elements of both in all four blueprints of worship. This we-me delineation is present in the psalms, the canticles, and throughout the scripture. All forms of worship that are used in the church today include elements of either *we* or *me* devotion, and the most pleasing forms of worship are those that balance elements of both. Christian worship also exhibits attitudes of the objective and subjective throughout its forms and texts.

**VII. Space and Symbol in Worship**

After the Children of Israel left their slavery in Egypt, God commanded that they should worship Him by obedience to His Law (The Ten Commandments, ELH p. 31-32). These commands preserved domestic peace and happiness, and they encouraged an attitude of worship that would permeate every aspect of life. The same God provided for the liturgical apprehensions of His presence through commands concerning the Levitical priesthood, the tabernacle, the ark of the covenant, the sacrifices, the furniture for the service and the vestments for those who would be in attendance at the services God also provided a blueprint for the architecture of the chief worship space that included the outer courts, the holy place, and the holy of holies.

God had already given plenty of presence to the world. He was the Author of creation. His Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, made all things. Every mountain, lake, ocean and star praised Him in its glory. There was no need for a tabernacle.

But God showed His ability to reveal His *strength in weakness* when He made commands for the construction of the tabernacle, the ark of the covenant, the sacrificial vessels and the priestly vestments in order to remind the congregation of His beauty, perfection and holiness; they also reminded the congregation that He was God of the senses, and that all of the beauty of His creation was concentrated in the liturgy of color, space, art, music and word that revealed His grace and forgiveness, given through His covenant, and last will and testament.

In the time of the early church the architectural plan of the temple was an inspiration for the floorplans of the of the private (house) church and, in later years, for the large public space of the basilican church.

Many churches of Christendom were built with upon a model plan that had the East, the rising Son, as its focal point. (Even when the main axis of the church faces another direction the “chief” end of the church is called the East End.)

E

N + S

W

This plan was in the form of a Greek cross (cruciform), and allowed for the placement of the altar at the center of the cross.

The cruciform-centrum plan of the house church gave way to the form derived from the Roman basilica in order to create a public space that was worthy of the pageantry, procession and pilgrimage that was the character of the many of the churches constructed during the eras that we now call the Romanesque and the Gothic.

E

N + S

W

W

As the liturgy of the church became more regulated and more complex an additional space was added to the East End of the church that was called the Choir. This space allowed for a choir to sing back and forth along the aisle that ran from the east end to the west end. Here was where the Office was sung, and here was where the choir sang for the Chief Service.

E

+

C C

C C

~~~~ + ~~~~

NNN + SSSS

W

W

W

By the time of the great Romanesque churches the ideas of the monstrous cruciform church had come into existence, partly out of necessity (so many people) and partly out of a longing for granduer. Aisles and ambulatory altars were built around the central cruciform shape so that pilgrims could wander (amble) through the church and say their prayers of pilgrimage even as the Chief Service, or Office, was conducted inside the main church. The great churches were “holy malls” where many things religious were happening at the same time.

A A

A A

A + A

A A

A C C A

A C C A

A C C A

A C C A

A C C A

~~+~~

A NNNNN SSSSS A

A NNNNN SSSSS A

A NNNNN SSSSS A

A W W A

A W W A

A W W A

A W W A

A W W A

A W W A

A W W A

A W W A

A W W A

A W W A

Most of the plans used in Christianity today invoke one of three designs, namely the centrum (Greek cross), the aisle-ambulatory (Latin cross), and the auditorium plan, derived from the amphitheater. Each plan suggests degrees of involvement by the participants and the ritual direction.

The centrum plan suggests that all are involved equally in the liturgy. The aisle-ambulatory plan suggests that there are significant leaders in the liturgy who assist and lead the attending congregation. The amphitheater plan invites an audience to observe and react to what is happening on the stage.

The space for the liturgy is frequently adorned by many colors, shapes and symbols. All of these details call upon the participants to PAUSE and REMEMBER. The communicative word is the essential to all of Christian worship, but Christ commanded and blessed the addition of the material word (sacraments, preaching, clergy, laity) until the end of time:

Go and baptize...

Go and teach and preach...

This is My Body/Blood..Do This...

When you absolve, they are absolved...

Our worship spaces speak to what we believe about our religion. Are we observers or participants? How does the space encourage/discourage our participation, especially our musical participation? Do we do something for God, or is God the main “actor” in the liturgy? God has not commanded any architecture or calendar or vestments or forms for Christian worship. We are free from condemnation in these matters; yet we are free to gather in places and spaces and to use forms and symbols that give a quiet but clear testimony to what it is that we believe and teach.