

The Episcopal Church of Saints Andrew and Matthew

Unfolding the Liturgy at SsAM - The Season of Pentecost

On the following pages you will find a sample liturgy (worship service) with commentary to help you see the various components of our Sunday service and their connections to each other and, more importantly, to us. This is one aspect of our “Lifelong Learning” at SsAM, through which we answer some of the “why do we do that” types of questions. Some of the comments that follow might jog your memory and remind you about what you learned awhile ago. Others might provide an “aha” moment and others might seem quite revolutionary!

The overall shape of our liturgy is not unique to the Episcopal Church and traces its roots to the very early church (300-400 A.D.). Our worship experience at SsAM is unique and is intentional in how we balance church tradition and the world we live in today. Such is the case in our use of inclusive language and in the various forms of music in our liturgy.

If you have questions about the vestments (what is worn), the hangings (the colorful fabric on the altar, pulpit and lectern), or the items used during Holy Communion, please let us know. We welcome your thoughts and questions.

OPENING COMMENTARY: Our liturgy – the “work of the people” – is not just the work of the priest; it is what we do together, when we maintain our bond with Jesus Christ and with each other. We are a community, not an audience. We stand together at the procession to remind us that we are all participants in the Eucharist...we will offer God our prayers and we will praise together as one community.

We gather to encounter God in the Word (the scripture readings, prayers) and sacrament (bread and wine) as signs of the presence and grace of Christ. There are two large parts to the liturgy – the Liturgy of the Word, based on ancient forms of synagogue worship, and the Liturgy of the Table, with the Eucharist (“thanksgiving”) or the Lord’s Supper. In this part of our liturgy, we follow Jesus’ actions at the Last Supper and call Him into our presence. In the Eucharist, we offer our thanks to God for the great gifts we have received. Our liturgy is taken from the *Book of Common Prayer* whose common words keep us connected to our traditions and allow us to actively participate and be more than just listeners. We are not a group of spectators watching a group of performers, but we are people of God acting together.

During our 10:30 liturgy, we begin with an Organ Voluntary. Our organ music, including the hymns, reflect the theme of the day or the season of the Church year. We hope you will listen to how the scriptures, prayers, and music fit together to enhance our expression of our relationship with God.

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COMMENTARY

Holy Eucharist

As the candles are lighted, please enter into prayerful silence until the liturgy begins.

*BCP refers to the **Book of Common Prayer**.
Hymns marked # and service music marked S are found in the **Hymnal 1982**.
Hymns marked (LEVAS II) are found in **Lift Every Voice and Sing**.*

VOLUNTARY

GREETING

WE GATHER IN THE LORD'S NAME

PROCESSION

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!
OR

**Blessed be the One Holy and Living God,
And blessed be God's kingdom, now
and for ever. Amen.**
OR

**The earth belongs to God and all that is in it.
The world and all who dwell therein.
Let everything that has breath praise God.
Hallelujah!**

Before the liturgy begins, it is appropriate to spend time in quiet preparation for worship. We provide a rubric (instruction) that reminds us to enter into prayerful silence when the candles, which represent Christ in the world, are lit. You may want to read the prayers in the service leaflet or the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Silence is used throughout the service so we can reflect on what we have heard, offer silent prayers and prepare to encounter the living God, so don't panic if there is silence after the readings, the sermon or the prayers. Liturgist David Philippart says, "We are silent together, actively quiet, purposely still." Liturgical silence is purposeful, although it may (at first) be a bit uncomfortable. Silence is an integral part of our worship and should be savored and allowed to enhance our worship experience.

The procession (crucifer/torch bearers, choir, Eucharistic Ministers/Liturgical Assistant, clergy) allows us to begin the liturgy on a note of dignity and reverence. The priest in charge of the liturgy (called the Celebrant or Presider) begins with a dialogue of praise with the congregation responding.

COLLECT FOR PURITY (all in unison)

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father; receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

COLLECT OF THE DAY

WE PROCLAIM AND RESPOND TO THE WORD OF GOD

At the conclusion of each Reading:

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's People.

Thanks be to God.

FIRST READING

PSALM

SECOND READING

CHANT OR HYMN

THE HOLY GOSPEL

Before the Gospel: Congregational Response:

Glory to you, Lord Christ

After the Gospel: Congregational Response:

Praise to you, Lord Christ

SERMON

The Collect (prayer) for purity, based on Psalm 51, prepares us for entering the presence of God. Originally said privately by the priest, this preparation for worship has been said by the whole congregation since 1549. **The Gloria**, an ancient song of praise, allows us to glorify God and to communicate his peace to His people. You will hear the Kyrie (*Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy*) during Advent and Lent instead of the Gloria. The Collect of the Day focuses us on the themes to be found in the scriptures of the day.

The Celebrant formerly greets us with an ancient Jewish type of salutation, "*The Lord be with you*" through which we are calling God into our presence.

The reading of **Scripture** in public is rooted in the practices of the Jewish Synagogue and was adapted by the early Church. The fixed pattern of readings of scripture (from the lectionary) allow us to hear most of the Bible over a three year period. The **first reading** is traditionally from the Hebrew Bible and tells the story of God's relationship with his chosen people of Israel, our spiritual ancestors. The **Psalms** are the ancient hymns of the Jews linking us to worship going back thousands of years. Including the Jewish scriptures reminds us that the roots of Christianity are in Judaism and that the God of the Jewish scriptures is the same God as in the Christian scriptures. The **second reading** is often from one of the letters attributed to Paul, the apostle who helped found the early church, or from the Book of Acts .

The final reading is from one of the four **Gospels**, read by a member of the clergy, through which we hear the words and actions of Jesus Christ. In Year A - Matthew, Year B-Mark, Year C- Luke. John is read in each year during the major seasons of Christmas, Lent and Easter. The church year changes with Advent I. We are currently in year A.

The **Gospel Procession** reminds us that it is our responsibility to carry the Good News of Jesus Christ into all the world. We stand, as we are able, to listen to this reading. Some Episcopalians will trace a cross with their thumb over their forehead, lips and heart. This "enacted prayer" asks that the Gospel be inscribed in our minds, spoken with our lips and loved in our hearts.

Listening to the scripture, rather than reading them, opens you up to hearing the stories differently, no matter how many times you have heard them. We encourage you to put your service leaflet down and give it a try. We hope you will take the service leaflet with you so you can pray the prayers and read the scripture during the week.

The **sermon** (or homily if it is a shorter teaching) breaks open the readings and helps us explore their meaning and application in our daily lives.

A LITURGICAL AFFIRMATION OR THE NICENE CREED

*You, O God are supreme and holy,
You create our world and give us life.
Your purpose overarches everything we do.
You have always been with us.
You are God.
Infinitely generous, good beyond all measure.
You came to us before we came to you.
You have revealed and proved your love for us in
Jesus Christ,
Who lived and died and rose again.
You are with us now.
You are God.
You, O God, are Holy Spirit.
You empower us to be your Gospel in the world.
You reconcile and heal;
You overcome death.
You are God.
We worship you.*

(From the New Zealand Prayer Book)

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let Us, God's People, Pray

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be always with you.
And also with you.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

OFFERTORY and HYMN

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give God thanks and praise.

The Creed (belief) or Affirmation expresses the faith of the whole Church. The Creed (in whatever form) affirms God as Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In the **prayers of the people**, we pray together for the Church, world leaders, ourselves, the ill and the departed. We, as part of the whole church, are united in prayer. There are several forms in the *Book of Common Prayer*, but Christina Lee composes our PoTP. Our lectors (readers) strive to *pray* the prayers and not just read them. You are encouraged to put the service leaflet down, to listen and to pray.

During some church seasons, we will pray a confession, beginning with "*Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor*" after which the celebrant declares God's forgiveness (Absolution).

We exchange **the Peace** in the spirit of friendship and reconciliation and in the love of God. This is part of our preparation for the Holy Eucharist so we can approach God's table in love and charity with one another. It is a time for welcoming the stranger, for reconciliation and friendship, but is not a time to catch up with the latest news. Save that for coffee hour! Some consider the exchange of the Peace as the hinge between the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Table. In the first part of the service, we have been re-made into new people; the Peace expresses this and then we are ready to go to the Table to celebrate the sacrament of communion. You will note that the Celebrant moves to the Table (altar), focusing us on the meal which we will share.

There are four actions in the Liturgy of the Table, each mirroring the Lord's actions at the Last Supper: Our Lord **took** bread and wine; He **gave** thanks; He **broke** the bread; and He **gave** the bread and wine to his disciples. During the Offertory, we take by gathering gifts (bread, wine, and monetary) and presenting them to God and the Church at the Altar.

During the hymn, the Liturgical Assistant (or Celebrant) prepares the Table including pouring wine (and a little water) into the chalices, reminding us of the blood and the water that appeared when Jesus was pierced by a spear at the crucifixion.

Part of the preparation includes the acolyte pouring a little water over the fingers of the Celebrant (and Eucharistic Ministers), recalling Psalm 26: "I will wash my hands in innocence before I go unto the altar of the Lord," and the custom for the head of the Jewish household to wash his hands before the prayers at the Passover meal.

We give thanks with the Great Thanksgiving (Eucharistic Prayer or Prayer of Consecration) which begins with the ancient greeting, "the Lord be with you."

SANCTUS -

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of
power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.***

THE LORD'S PRAYER (contemporary)

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray:

***Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth
as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those
who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the
power, and the glory are yours, now and for
ever. Amen.***

COMMUNION *Everyone is invited to Holy Communion*

SENDING FORTH OF THE EUCHARISTIC VISITORS

In the name of God and of this congregation,
we send you forth bearing these holy gifts,
that those to whom you go may share with us
in Christ's body and blood.

***We who are many are one body, because we all
share one bread, one cup.***

The Celebrant's hands are outstretched and uplifted in the orans position during the Eucharistic Prayer. This is believed to be the most ancient form of prayer, the one that Jesus knew. Reflecting openness and acceptance towards God, it is not limited to priests! Give it a try. You may be surprised at the affect the position of your hands has on your spirit. You may notice that some people kneel while others stand after the Sanctus. While standing is the more ancient posture of prayer, either is acceptable.

There are four primary "forms" for the Eucharistic Prayer, some are ancient (B,D), two are new (A, C) and D is drawn from the Eastern Orthodox tradition. Regardless of which form of the Eucharistic Prayer is used, it includes the invocation that God sends the Spirit to bless the bread and wine and make Christ truly present among us. It is through the prayers of all who are present (not just the Celebrant) and God's blessings that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ. The prayer is offered on behalf of the entire congregation, whose members corporately are the celebrant ("*On the night before he died for us...*")

The Lord's Prayer, a prayer of community, is the only recorded prayer Jesus taught his disciples. It brings us back to the basics.

The Celebrant *breaks* the bread (the Fraction), reminding us of the Last Supper and that Christ's body was broken on the Cross for us. Following The Eucharistic Prayer, the bread and wine are *given* as all are invited to come forward to receive the body and blood of Christ. The more ancient posture for receiving communion is standing, which also is symbolic of resurrection, but kneeling is acceptable. It is proper to receive the bread (wafer) in open hands and to take the chalice into your own hands. (While some people intinct due to a concern about germs, we use potent wine and "fingering" the wafer and then intincting can be counter productive). You may choose to receive in one kind by receiving only the bread (wafer). At SsAM, gluten free wafers and wine (untouched by wheat wafers) are available at the center of the altar railing.

The ablutions ("cleaning up") takes place once communion is administered to all. This includes the reverent consumption of the remaining wine and the cleansing of the vessels. The consecrated wafers that remain are kept for Pastoral visits.

After communion, the Eucharistic Visitors come forward to receive the Consecrated Bread and Wine to take to members unable to attend the liturgy. Since they cannot come to church, we take church to them.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER *(said by all)*

Almighty God, may we who share Christ's body live his risen life; we who drink his cup bring life to others; we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world. Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us, so we and all your children shall be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name. AMEN.

BLESSING

THE DISMISSAL

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord (or Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit) or something similar.

Congregational Response: ***Thanks be to God***

VOLUNTARY

The post communion prayer is not only a thanksgiving for making us part of Christ's body and feeding us, but also proclaims our readiness to go out into the world to love and to serve.

The Blessing has been a part of the service since the 4th century and takes different forms, depending on the church season.

If one is present, the Deacon dismisses us, sending us out to the world to do the work we are called to do. The dismissal should be proclaimed boldly followed by our declarative response, "*Thanks be to God.*" After Easter through the Day of Pentecost, "Alleluia, alleluia" may be added to any of the dismissals.

During the Voluntary, it is appropriate to sit quietly with God and to pray that what we have heard and experienced may carry us to truly go forth to spread the Good News.

D-L Casson thanks the following people and churches for their resource materials:

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