

Order of Worship

Each service has four sections: *Gathering, Proclamation, Response and Sending Forth*

Gathering

We gather as the people of God coming into the Presence of God in the sanctuary.

Welcome: The pastor welcomes all who come to worship in the name and Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Voluntary: This music, most often played on the church organ, is played as worshippers enter the sanctuary. Together with the beauty of the architecture and the stained glass windows, the music helps us focus on and prepare to worship God.

Introit: The choir sings a selection from the narthex of the church to invoke the presence of God and to call us to worship.

Processional Hymn: Following the cross and torches that symbolize the entrance of God into our midst, the choir and worship liturgy leaders process toward the front of the sanctuary while all worshippers stand and join in singing a hymn of praise.

Greeting: The liturgist (worship leader) and congregation (gathered people of God) respond to each other with words of greeting, often adapted from scripture and in keeping with the themes of worship for that day.

Prayer of Confession: In the presence of the Infinite God, we confess our shortcomings with a common prayer printed in the bulletin, followed by a time of silence for personal confession. Sometimes rather than a confession, we offer a prayer with a special emphasis for that particular service of worship.

Words of Assurance: The liturgist will offer some words of comfort, often from scripture, which assure us of the forgiving, restorative nature of God.

Anthem: (11 a.m. service) A choral piece sung by the choir, often reflecting something of the scriptures or other emphasis for the day or season.

Proclamation

Worshippers listen for the Word of God through the reading of scriptures and the message of the sermon and occasionally other words of witness.

Prayer for Illumination: In preparation for hearing the Word of God, we pray that God will shed light on what we are about to hear.

Lesson(s): One or more scriptures are most often taken from the Common Lectionary, which prescribes four readings each week of the Christian year (usually one each from the Old Testament, Psalms, a Gospel and an Epistle). Many Protestant congregations draw from this common resource to shape worship. We often only read one or two of the four, but additional use of these may be made in music and prayers of the day.

Response to the Lesson: The liturgist and congregation affirm what we have just heard as the Word of God.

Gloria Patri: (8:45 a.m. service) Latin for "Glory to the Father," this traditional song is sung by the whole congregation.

Hymn: (11 a.m.) A song to further enrich our understanding of the scripture or day's worship focus.

Sermon: Words offered by one of the clergy to interpret and apply scripture to the lives of the faith community.

Response

The Word of God is active and evokes active response from those who hear it. That response begins immediately and extends beyond the worship service into every aspect of our living.

Affirmation of Faith: We respond to the Word proclaimed by standing together to affirm what we believe, using an historic or contemporary creed from either our hymnal or other sources.

Joys and Concerns: The liturgist invites the congregation to rejoice in the presence of all worshippers, to celebrate births and support those who mourn the deaths of loved ones, and to use the cards in the pew racks to communicate thoughts, contact information and prayer requests to the staff.

Salutation: The liturgist and congregation invoke God's blessing on each other before the Prayers of the People: A prayer offered by the liturgist on behalf of the gathered community for ourselves, the church, the broader community and God's world.

The Lord's Prayer: All worshippers pray together the traditional version of the prayer Jesus taught his first disciples.

Offering: In grateful response to all the good gifts of God, worshippers place financial gifts, tithes and offerings in the offering plates passed by ushers throughout the congregation.

Offertory Anthem: A musical response offered during the collection of the offering sung by soloists or the choir that reflect the church season or worship focus of the day.

Doxology: As the offering is presented to God, the congregation stands and sings a traditional doxology, which is simply a song of praise.

Sending Forth

In response to the Word of God, we are prepared to be sent out of the sanctuary and into the world as active disciples of Jesus Christ!

Recessional Hymn: All sing as the choir and worship leaders follow the cross and torch bearers out of the sanctuary, symbolizing God's spirit leading us out and into the world.

Benediction: From the Latin meaning "good word," this final prayer invokes God's blessing on the worshippers as they are sent forth to bear God's love and peace.

Benediction Response: A closing musical response sung by the choir, usually from the narthex (sanctuary lobby).

Voluntary: A musical offering usually on the organ, during which worshippers are encouraged to reflect how they may witness to the loving light of Christ in the world.