

What is Liturgy?



Our way of worshipping God here at Grace may seem different. Our kind of worship is called liturgical, referring to our use of a set written texts and ritual actions.

Liturgy means “work of the people,” and it is our belief that the whole congregation should participate in as many aspects of worship as possible.

The liturgy is comprised of set prayers from the *Book of Common Prayer*, as well as historical rituals and actions. They provide a framework by which human beings and God may connect. Our way of worshipping is ancient, rooted in the ways Christians have worshipped God for over two thousands years. The liturgy has two major parts.

The Liturgy of the Word



The first part of the service is oriented around the Word of God: the Bible. Beginning with the first hymn and the opening sentences, the first half of the service is designed to focus us on God’s presence and to place all of our thoughts and feelings into the present moment of worship.

The Liturgy of the Altar



The second and most important part of the service is centered around the altar: Holy Communion or as it is more frequently called in the Anglican Tradition, the Holy Eucharist. Eucharist means “Thanksgiving,” and so the Eucharist is the place in the service where we offer up to God thanks for all that is good in our lives.

The Eucharist is also an opportunity for worshippers to experience Christ personally through the receiving of the bread and wine.

We celebrate Eucharist weekly because

- 1) this was the practice of the first Christians,
- 2) the Eucharist is an opportunity to meet Jesus personally,
- 3) we believe we need to receive spiritual food regularly to live the kind of life God wants us to live.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do you stand, sit, and kneel at different times in the service?

We believe that worshipping God should involve every aspect of who we are, including the physical. For centuries Christians have stood to praise God in song, sat to listen to God’s Word, and knelt to pray and receive Christ in Holy Communion.

Why do you use robes, stain glass windows, and ritual?

These practices enhance our worship, because they help us to stay focused on Christ. Since God is the creator of beauty, the use of sacred vestments (robes), art (stained glass), and symbolic actions (rituals) can all be used to bring God worship and glory.

FAQ Continued

Why do you use written prayers?

We believe in both spontaneous prayer, as well as liturgical prayers. Written prayers connect us with the generations of Christians who prayed them before us, they allow us to pray using beautiful language, and they challenge us to pray in ways that we would not if we only prayed extemporaneous prayers on our own. In addition, we believe worship should be offered to God by the entire congregation, and liturgical (written) prayers provide a way for dozens of people to pray with one voice.

Why music and singing in church?

We believe music is both a gift from God and a gift we can offer to God in worship. Music in worship is not about performance, but is intended to help us raise our hearts and minds to God. A key difference regarding music in church and music in other settings is that in worship the audience is God. We strive as we sing to direct our thoughts and attentions to God, for this reason singing in church does not require a good voice, merely a desire to honor and praise God. Also, the hymns and sung portions of the service often convey timeless truths about Christian beliefs and living.

How long does it take to learn how to worship using liturgy?

Worshipping God with dignity and awe takes practice and effort. It usually takes people a few Sundays to get use to worshipping in a liturgical style. It's like learning to ride a bike, early on it's difficult, but once you learn you it the liturgy becomes natural and comfortable to you. The liturgy provides a natural rhythm that we can settle into every Sunday to encounter God in beauty, truth, and goodness.

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Looking for Something Less Traditional?

Check out



Sunday Night Praise

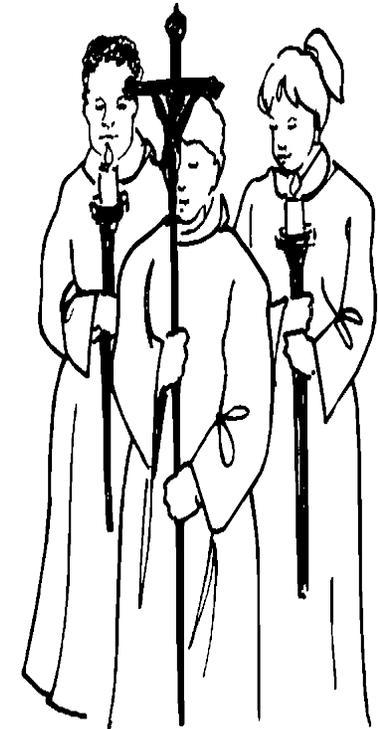
This service is offered every Sunday at 5pm in the parish hall.. The atmosphere of the service is informal, less liturgical, and features contemporary music with guitar. A home cooked meal follows the service.



Grace Episcopal
Church

Understanding The Service

An introduction to liturgical worship



"Lift up your Hearts"