

Worship Guide

We are glad to have you here at Trinity today. Please use this document to guide you through your worship experience. While each service has its own style or feel, the following elements will be used in all of them. God's blessings to you.

Invocation: The most ancient phrase that describes worship, mentioned first in association with Adam's grandson Enosh in Genesis 4, is "to call upon the name of the LORD." Worship in ancient Israel (and in most Jewish synagogues today) begins with what is called the "Shema," "Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one." When we begin our worship, following the example of two millennia of Christians, we "call upon the name of the LORD" using the words Jesus gave us for baptism, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." With these words we ask God to be present, we proclaim the name of the God we worship, and we remember that He has claimed us as his own dear children in our Baptisms. Because most of us had the sign of the cross made over our heads and hearts when we were baptized, many will make the sign of the cross whenever this Baptismal Invocation is spoken.

Confession and Absolution: There's a little "stutter-step" upon arriving at the beginning of worship. We call on God to be here—and then we realize He has, in fact, shown up! The thought is, "Who am I to enter into the presence of the Holy God? How dare I walk in off the streets of Orlando, perhaps having already argued with a family member or been angry with another driver this morning (not to mention all the other sins of the past week), and just glibly say, 'Hi, God!'" So as we begin to approach Him in prayer and worship, we first hesitate for a moment to admit who we are, what we've been doing, and ask for His pardon. When we do, thank God, we know what His answer will be! Jesus always pardons repentant sinners. At the conclusion of our words of confession (often we use words with a long history, sometimes not), the pastor unhesitatingly announces, in very bold words, Jesus' answer, something like this, "Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God to all of you, and in the stead, and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." You are invited to picture that Jesus, who specifically did command the disciples on Easter evening to do exactly what the pastor has just done, is using our pastor to speak directly to you. The goal is that you will now feel free to worship, unembarrassed by your failings of the past week, and confident that God will accept your praises. In earlier times this little "stutter-step" actually was a separate service, completed before the beginning of the actual worship.

Entrance Hymn: Once we've confessed and been absolved, the pastor symbolizes our confident access to the Lord by moving inside the altar rail and right up to the altar. We sing a song of joyful entry into worship.

Kyrie: This is the Greek word for "Lord," and is shorthand for "Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy." The Church has used this cry for mercy for nearly two thousand years in worship, and indeed draws it from the Bible story of the blind man beside the Jericho road, loudly asking Jesus to give him his sight. Because we are about to begin a series of prayers that will stretch throughout the service, we cry out asking to be heard and answered. This is not a cry for forgiveness—we've just received that! Rather it is a cry for attention.

During some of our worship services the Lord's Prayer is sung:

Our Father

Wayne Schwanke



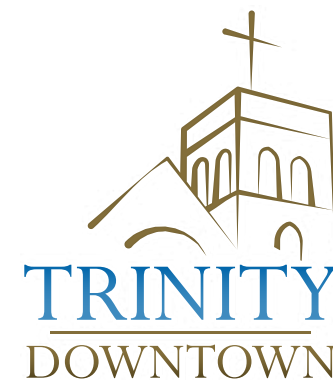
Our Fa - ther in heav - en, ho - ly be Your name. Your
king - dom come, Your will be done on earth as in Heav - en.
Give us to-day our dai - ly bread and for - give us our sins as
we for - give those who sin a - gainst us.
Lead us not in - to temp - ta - tion de - liv - er us from e - vil. For
Yours is the king - dom, pow - er, and glo - ry now and for - ev - er.
A - men A - men A - - - - men.

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If you have any questions about worship this day or would like to know more about our Trinity Family, please don't hesitate to speak to one of our Elders or Pastors today or contact us. We hope to see you again soon in worship and ministry.



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Song of Praise: At this point we just can't hold back any longer; we just need to sing praises to the God who has forgiven us and hears our prayers. God's people have always used metrical words and music to give voice to their praises. Sometimes we use the song of the angels at Christmas, "Glory to God in the Highest," or "Gloria in Excelsis." Sometimes we use a favorite, "This is the Feast of Victory," and yet other times we simply use some Christian song that accents praises.

Collect of the Day: The origin of the term "Collect" (pronounced with the accent on the first syllable) is lost in history, but it seems to simply imply that the prayers of the people are collected into a short but very powerful prayer. These collects are assigned to particular days in the Church Year, so on Christmas they refer to Jesus' birth, on Easter His resurrection, etc. Collects have a set five-part form, starting with a particular name for God (Father, Lord, Creator, etc.), a statement of something He has done for us, a request, the goal of the request, and the formulaic ending, "through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever." These prayers always ask for something really big, like peace, or protection, though they are very short in number of words used.

Readings: From the beginning, the worship of God's people has included readings from the Bible, even in the days when much of the Bible hadn't yet been written. Because the Bible is seen as the actual Word of God, telling us what He personally wants us to know, we take it very seriously. We generally use one reading from the Old Testament, one from the letters of the New Testament (Epistles), and one from the four Gospels. During the Easter season a reading from the book of Acts replaces the Old Testament reading. Trinity uses lay readers for the first two readings, but the Gospels, following our tradition, are read by the pastor. We also set the Gospel apart by standing to hear it, out of respect for the fact that these are the stories of Jesus' life, and often directly quote Him. During festival times we highlight the Gospel with a procession into the middle of the congregation, with the processional cross preceding and special music accompanying the Gospel.

Sermon: From Biblical times God's people have taken the time to closely examine his teachings, and the sermon has been the number one expression of this. The pastor takes a text of the Bible, studies it, prays over it, and then preaches a sermon to explain and proclaim it. The sermon's goal is to persuade; specifically, to persuade the hearers that God, out of pure love and grace, forgives their sins and welcomes them into His heavenly family. That's the same goal as all the rest of the service, but here the mind is more directly engaged. In the Lutheran church the pastors seek to present the Law of God, with its strict demands, in all its severity and harshness, and the Gospel, with its promises, in all its sweetness.

Sermon Response: Having heard God's Word preached, we respond with a song that essentially says, "We get it—we know that we are sinners, but we are sinners whom God loves and forgives. We want to take what we've heard out into our world and serve Him. Thanks be to God!"

Creed: From the very earliest days of the Church it has been considered important that we confess (literally, speak together) our beliefs, a statement to the world and an encouragement to each other. The Apostles' Creed is a summary of the teaching of the apostles that developed as a way for new converts to express their faith as they were being baptized, with roots in the second century. The Nicene Creed comes from the fourth century, when various heresies were plaguing the church. The framework of the Apostles' Creed was expanded in order to make clear the Church's stand against such heresies as Arianism, which denied that Jesus is truly God, or Gnosticism, which imagined a good and a bad god. We still use these two creeds regularly in our worship, along with the Athanasian Creed, used once a year on Trinity Sunday to emphasize our teachings concerning the Trinity and the two natures of Christ.

Baptism: If there is a baptism in the service, it happens where the Creed would normally occur, and we all join to confess the faith and welcome the new member into the Body of Christ.

Prayers: The Prayer of the Church is intended to be the prayer of all of us, though only a couple of voices may lead it. When the pastor offers up requests about healing the sick, comforting the grieving, blessing our school, protecting our troops, and granting us faithful and just leaders and judges, he usually terminates each request with, "Lord, in your mercy," to which the congregation replies, "Hear our prayer." Similarly, when the elder prays for the people whose names have been collected on the prayer request cards, the congregation asks God to hear our prayers. In this way we make these the requests of all of us, not just the pastor or elder, relying on the Biblical promises that God hears and grants our requests when we gather as a group to ask them.

Offerings: This section of the worship service has been repurposed in recent centuries. In the ancient Church the only gifts brought forward were gifts of bread and wine for communion. Money was such a small part of the economy that the day to day operations of the church weren't really supported with money, but with gifts in kind. Someone would provide a sack of potatoes for the pastor, someone else would provide coal for the furnace, etc. As money grew in importance, the offerings began to include an offering plate and gifts of cash, until in many places, like Trinity, the gifts of bread and wine were purchased with the money and not brought forward to the altar any more. Today the offering in the worship service is the primary method of funding the mission of the congregation.

Holy Communion: The Communion liturgy has traditionally been thought of as the setting of a jewel. The jewel, of course, is the offering of the Body and Blood of Jesus to the members for the forgiveness of their sins. The setting consists of words, music, and prayers that set this time apart as very special and holy. At the center of the celebration the pastor speaks the Words of Institution, narrating the events of Jesus' last supper, and quoting His words, which to this day bring his Body and Blood together with the bread and wine for us to eat, drink, and be forgiven. It is the word of Jesus, not the word of the pastor, that brings Jesus to us here in, with, and under the bread and the wine.

Benediction: The worship service concludes with words of thanks for the gift of Holy Communion, and then words of blessing from God. Three thousand five hundred years ago God told Aaron, the first high priest, to use these words to dismiss the congregation of Israel, and we still use the same words, "The LORD bless you and keep you, the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious unto you, the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace." Since God commanded that these words be spoken to his people, we believe they have power, God's power, and that therefore we really go out into the world blessed, joyful, and peaceful to face the new week.

Music: Scattered throughout the service are songs, hymns, and spiritual songs. Usually there is a song right before the sermon that is connected with the theme of the sermon. We sing as Holy Communion is distributed, usually a song that connects up with the blessing of forgiveness being offered there. We normally sing one more song as we prepare to leave, a song that reminds us of the treasure we carry out with us.

Visuals: Our service takes place in a building rich with visuals—stained glass windows, candles, crosses, banners, etc. The interplay of light and shadow in this high-ceilinged room has proven helpful to generations of Christians as they desire to have a worshipful state of mind. While it's easy to take these things for granted, it's always a good idea to take some time to study one of the windows or focus on the wounds depicted in the statue of Jesus. It's OK to linger and meditate.

Side Chapel: To the right of the altar area is the East Transept, with its own side altar. We encourage the use of this side chapel as a place of personal prayer, especially prayer for healing. An elder is normally standing by to join in prayer if anyone would like that.