

# WORSHIP IS CELEBRATING AS LUTHERANS

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by Walter M. Schoedel & David W. Christian



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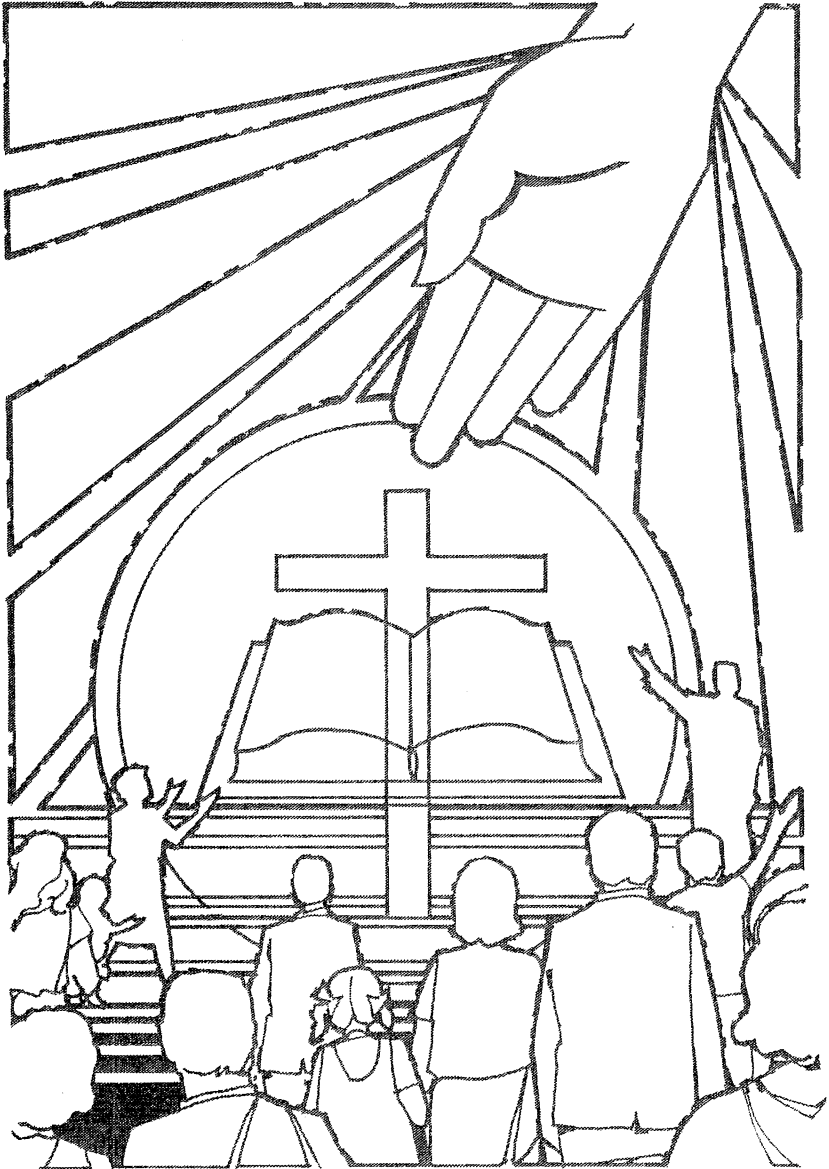
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WORSHIP

# WORSHIP IS . . .

# 1

- a word that is not easy to describe; we need to walk around it and view it from different perspectives. It takes more than just study and talk to understand worship. We need to experience worship and become immersed in it. Worship is something that must be done.
- a word that comes from an old English root meaning to show honor and worth.
- a word that translates a number of different Hebrew and Greek words from the Old and New Testaments. The Hebrew word most often used for worship means “to bow down.” The Greek term for worship conveys two ideas: “showing reverence” and “practicing service.”
- a noun which describes an encounter with God.
- a verb which expresses an active response in mind, emotions, will, and body to all that God is, says, and does for us in Jesus Christ.
- a drama. God himself has written the script and initiated the response of the participants. He has gathered us so that we might honor Him with our prayers, our proclamations of His word, and our praise of His name.
- a two-way interaction. Through it God becomes involved in the lives of the members of His church, so that we may be empowered to respond to Him.
- a holy conversation between God and His people. He speaks to us, and we in turn voice our prayers and praise.

# WORSHIP IS . . .

**To Us**  
Isaiah 43:1

**IN LOVE**  
1 John 3:1; 4:10

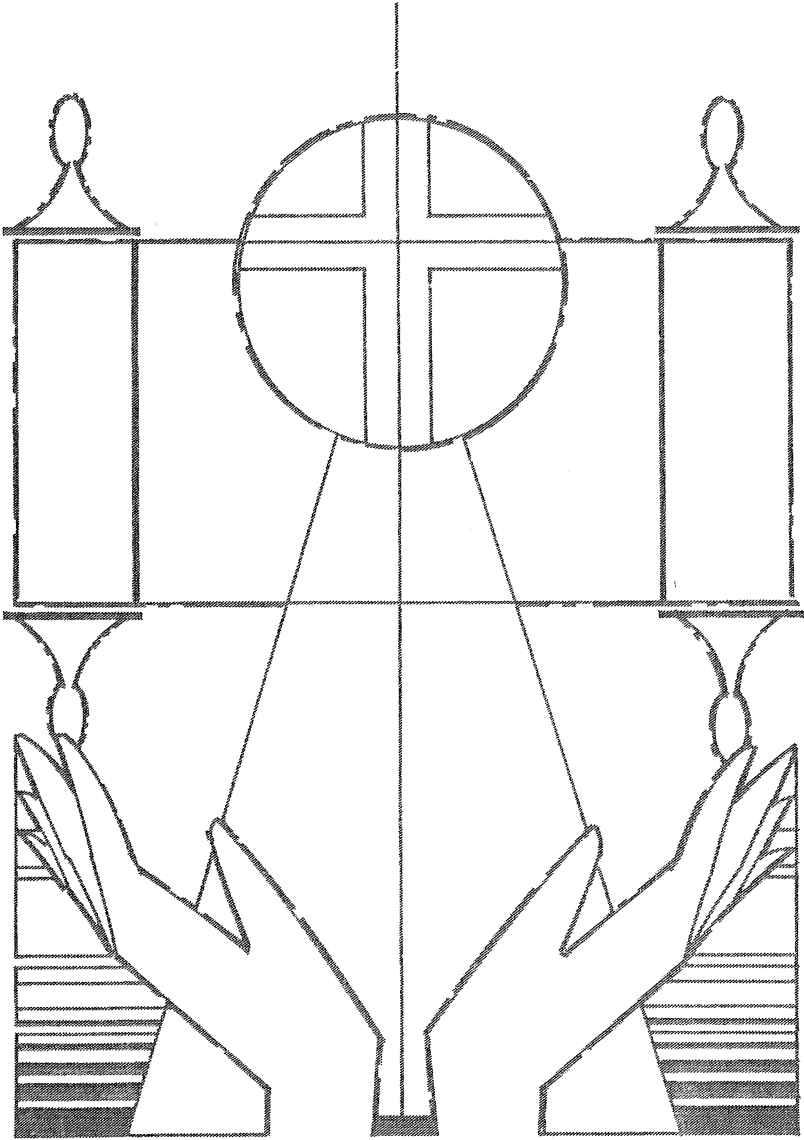


**GOD'S REACH**

**FROM HIS HEART**  
Isaiah 51:16

**THROUGH JESUS CHRIST**  
In Word and Sacrament  
1 John 2:1–2; 4:9

All worship begins with God. He created us and wants us to be with Him. He reaches out His hand to us, and, in worship, draws us ever more closely to Himself. Jesus, whom we come to know through Word and Sacrament, is the way God is revealed to us, and it is in His name that we approach the throne of the Almighty.



RESPONSE

# WORSHIP IS RESPONSE

# 3

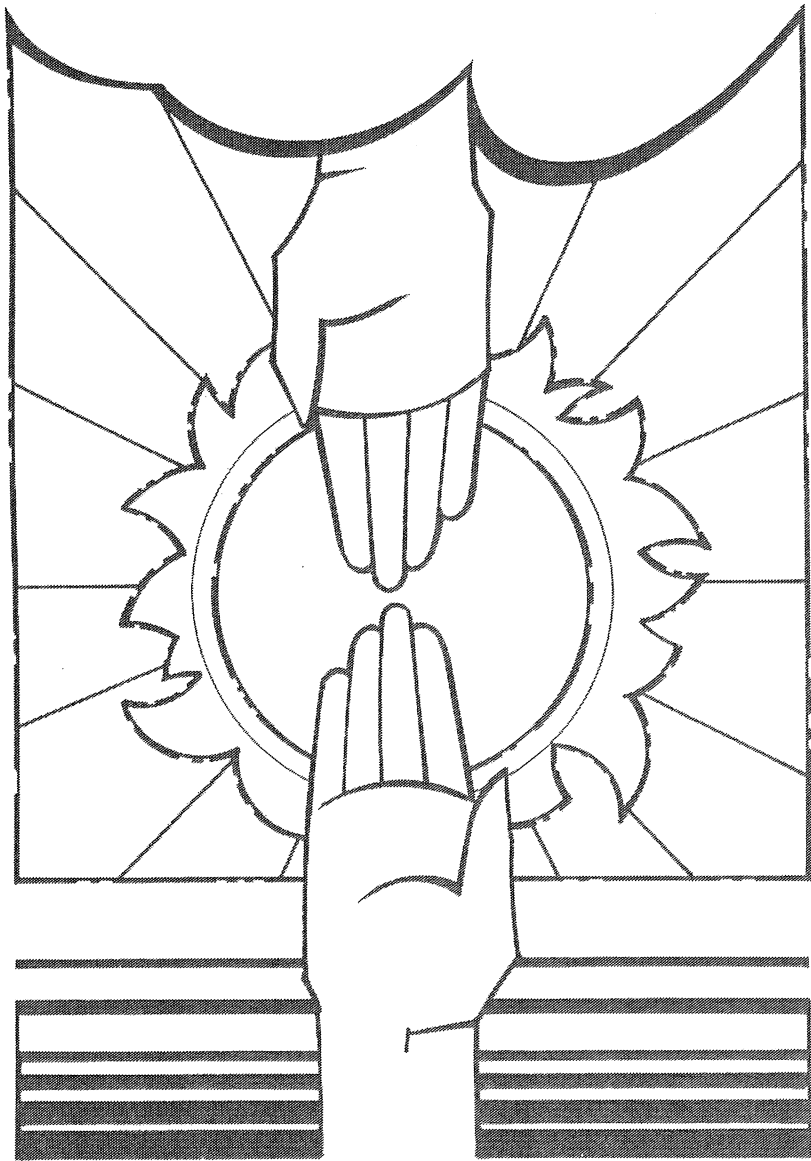
What do these statements from the introduction to *Lutheran Worship* suggest about who begins the worship act?

- Our Lord speaks and we listen.
- Saying back to Him what He has said to us, we repeat what is most true and sure.
- The rhythm of our worship is from Him to us, and then from us back to Him.

Whenever someone makes an aggressive movement toward us, we respond in some way. Very often we move away from the person. We may flinch, duck, or even run in the opposite direction. Through His Word and Sacraments, God makes a powerful move toward us. However, God does not intend to hurt or intimidate us, but to enfold us in His loving arms and make us a part of His family. He is the Prime Mover in our worship experience. Think through this statement from Martin Luther's explanation to the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed:

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him; but the Holy Spirit . . . calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies . . . (Luther's Small Catechism)

The apostle John put it this way: "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Our worship is a response to God's gracious move toward us in Jesus Christ. Although our natural reaction might be to run away from God, hide from His presence, and ignore his call, he does not give up on us easily. Not only does He make the first move toward us, but He actually teaches us how to respond to Him. Through the Scriptures, He gives us the ideas and even the words to speak back to Him. Our liturgy, developed over the centuries, gives us a way of organizing our encounter with God, and it serves as a medium



HALLELUJAH

# WORSHIP IS HALLELUJAH

# 5

Language is perhaps the most important element of any relationship. People find out about each other by talking and listening. We initially make decisions about our relationships with others based on our conversations with them. We continue and deepen those relationships by various forms of communication. We talk together—in person, over the phone, and in letters or cards—to maintain our relationship. When we have an argument, when our feelings are hurt, or when a misunderstanding occurs, we must talk to each other to repair the damage to our friendship, and new levels of understanding and care are reached as we communicate on deeper and deeper levels.

Communication is also an important part of our relationship with God. From the beginning of time, the people of God have used language to express and celebrate their relationship with Him. Our worship is a process of voicing in external words and phrases our inner experience with God. The language of our worship, then, is extremely important. What is true of our relationships with others is even more true of our relationship with God. In worship that relationship is  
established,  
maintained,  
repaired, and  
transformed.

A crowd at a ball game gathers to cheer the mighty works of their team. They are there to honor the players, to praise their good qualities, to get the players' autographs, and to learn about their favorite players as they watch them in action. We hear special cheers that honor the team and describe certain actions of the game. There seems to be a special "ritual language" that surrounds sporting events.

## GROWING IN WORSHIP

1. Here is an exercise to challenge your imagination. Read the story of David and Goliath in 1 Samuel 17. Then compare it to Martin Luther's hymn, A Mighty Fortress Is Our God. How does the hymn capture the message and emotion of the Bible passage?

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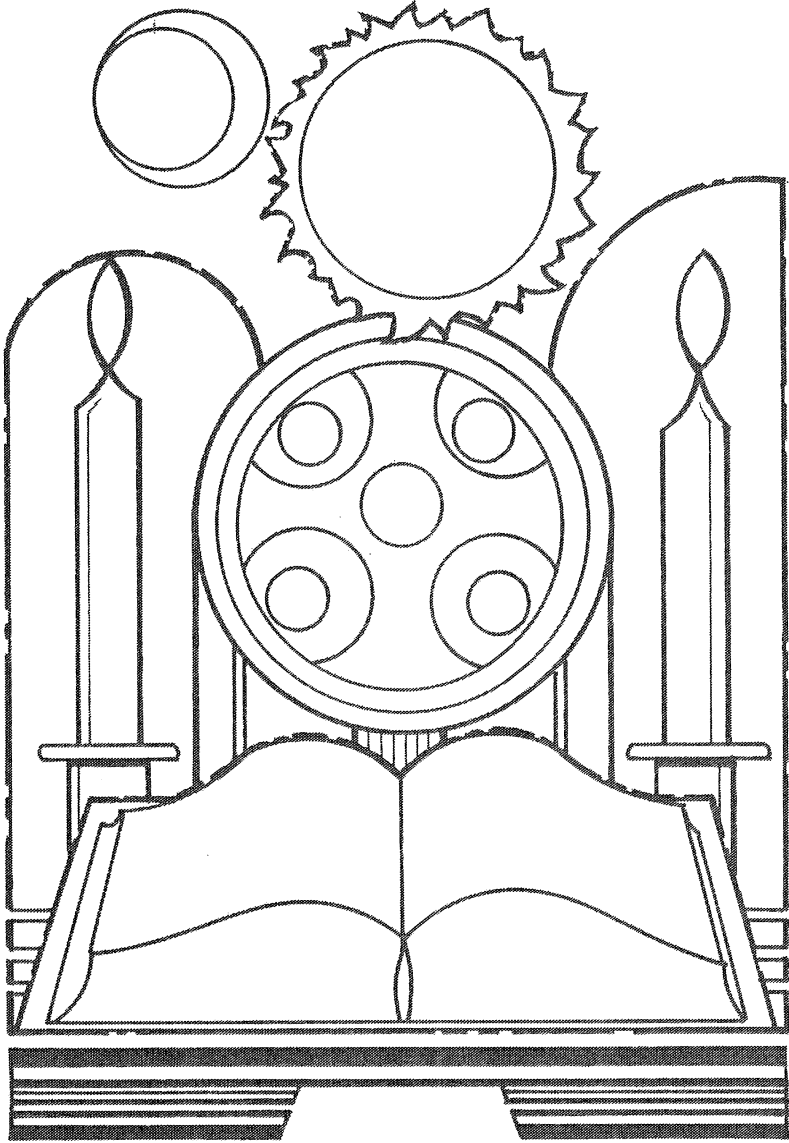
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2. Devise some creative ways of singing (or speaking) the five songs of the "ordinary" discussed earlier in this chapter. Perhaps a music teacher, choir director, or organist could give some advice.



INNOVATION

# WORSHIP IS INNOVATION

# 6

Worship is order, but with this order comes a built-in opportunity for changes and additions that provide for variety and keep our response to God fresh and contemporary. In this chapter we want to look at some of the innovations that can be included in the worship life of the congregation.

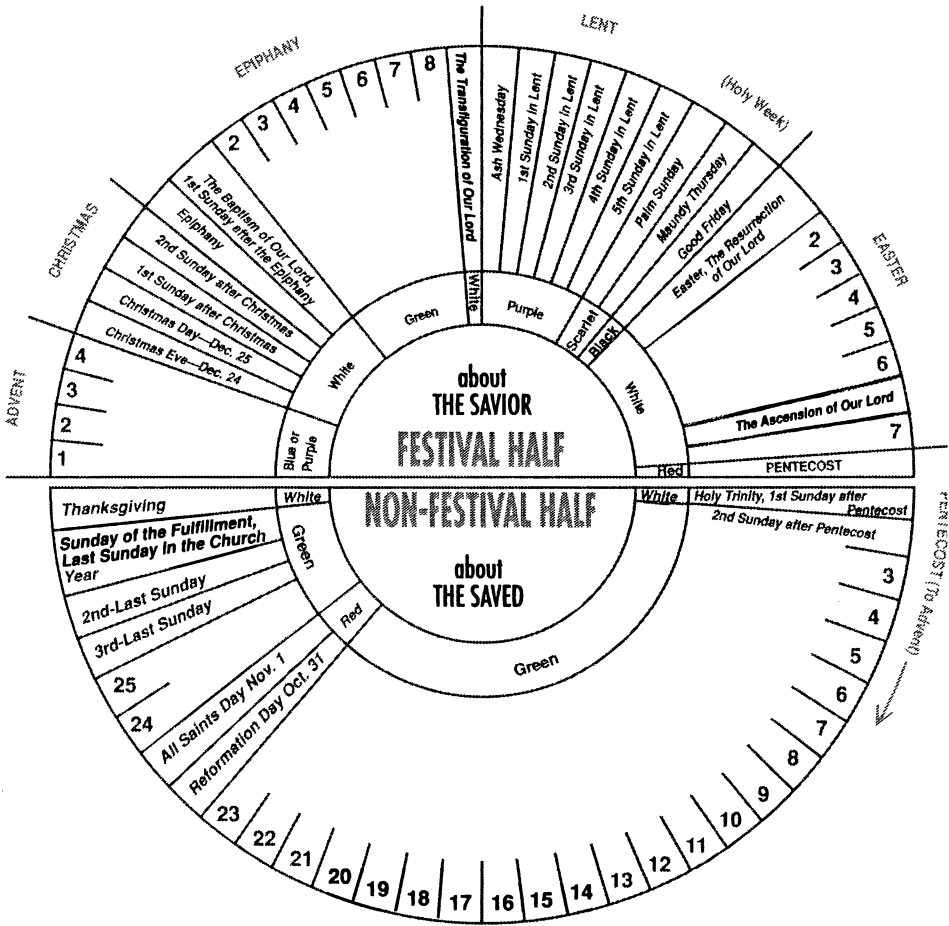
The weekly worship celebration, the **Divine Service**, contains variety because it follows a **two-fold pattern**: in the first part of the liturgy we concentrate on the **Word of God**, and in the second part the focus is on the celebration of the **Sacrament**. Within the service, there are certain parts—called “**the Ordinary**”—which remain unchanged from week to week, and other parts—called “**the Propers**”—which are different every Sunday.

## THE ORDINARY

**Invocation**  
**Confession and Absolution**  
**Kyrie**  
**Hymn of Praise**  
**Creed**  
**Preface**  
**Sanctus**  
**Lord's Prayer**  
**Words of Institution**  
**Peace**  
**Agnus Dei**  
**Post-Communion Cantic**  
**Post-Communion Prayer**  
**Benediction**

These **unchanging** parts of the service give stability, shape, and structure to our prayer life. They remind us of the tremendous scope of God's grace and teach us to come into his presence with the boldness and confidence that comes with being members of God's family—his redeemed sons and daughters—princes and princesses of heaven.

# THE CHURCH YEAR



**Note:** More than 52 weeks are shown because there can be up to 28 Sundays after Pentecost and up to 9 Sundays after the Epiphany, but never both in the same year. Some festivals also fall during the week.

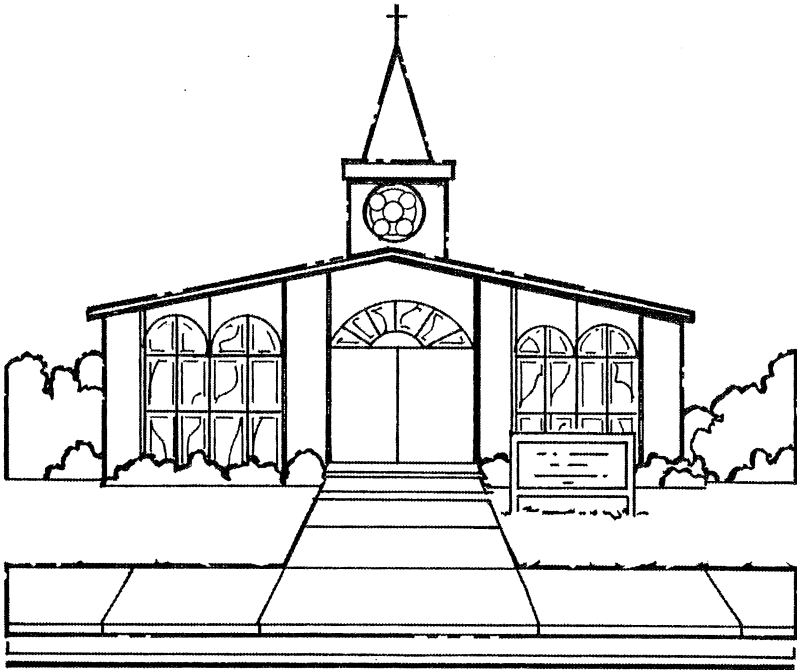
## THE CHURCH BUILDING

Throughout this study we have been reminding ourselves that we don't just "go to church," but that **we are the church**. However, if we worship faithfully, we will spend a considerable amount of time in church buildings over the course of our lives. Church buildings can say a lot about a community's understanding of worship. What are the most outstanding features of your church building? What would you change to make the building better reflect your growing understanding of worship?

What features of your church building encourage the **PERSONAL** aspects of worship?

What features of your church building encourage the **COMMUNITY** aspects of worship?

Let's consider three categories of church architecture.



<b>Liturgy</b>	Greek word meaning “ <b>service.</b> ” It is the order of worship followed by the congregation.
<b>Liturgical Color</b>	The colors used in the church according to the season of the church year. The colors are white, black, red, violet, blue, green, scarlet, and gold. See page 8 of <i>Lutheran Worship</i> .
<b>Lord’s Supper</b>	One of the oldest names for the Sacrament which Jesus instituted at His Last Supper (1 Corinthians 11:20). It is also called Holy Communion.
<b>Magnificat</b>	Latin word meaning “ <b>magnify, praise.</b> ” The first word of the song of Mary (Luke 1:46–55), sung as the canticle at the services of Evening Prayer and Vespers.
<b>Maundy Thursday</b>	The Thursday in Holy Week when the Lord’s Supper was instituted. “ <b>Maundy</b> ” is Latin for “ <b>command,</b> ” referring to Jesus’ “new commandment of love” (John 13:34).
<b>Minor Services</b>	The worship service orders other than the main service of Holy Communion, such as Matins, Vespers, Morning Prayer, the litany, the suffrages, etc.
<b>Nicene Creed</b>	The statement of faith adopted by the Council of Nicaea (A. D. 325), confessed in the service when the Lord’s Supper is celebrated.
<b>Nunc Dimittis</b>	Latin for meaning “ <b>now let you servant depart</b> ” based on Simeon’s song (Luke 2:29–32); may be sung after the distribution of Holy Communion or as the canticle at Vespers.
<b>Offertory</b>	Music sung when the offering is received and presented at the altar.
<b>Ordinary</b>	The parts of the service that are the same every week.
<b>Pall</b>	The cloth used to cover the coffin at a funeral.
<b>Paraments</b>	The cloth decorations in the chancel on the altar, pulpit, lectern, etc. The paraments are changed to match the color for the season of the church year.

# APPENDIX 2

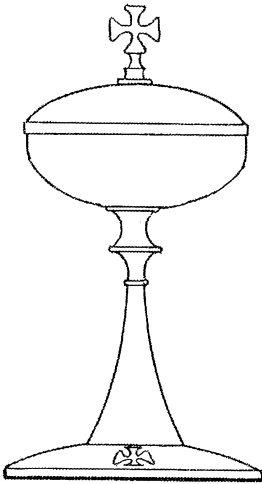
## CHURCH BUILDING TERMS

<b>Altar</b>	Usually made of marble or wood, it is located in the center of the chancel. Since sacrifices in the Old Testament were made on an altar, it reminds us of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for us. It also serves as the “ <b>table</b> ” for the Lord’s Supper. The altar is the holiest place of God’s presence in the church building and the focus of much of the service.
<b>Chancel</b>	The front part of the church where the pastor stands during the service. It is often raised slightly. The altar, pulpit, lectern, and communion rail are all in the chancel.
<b>Gallery</b>	The area for the choir and the organ. In Gothic-style churches this is often a balcony in the back of the church.
<b>Lectern</b>	The stand from which the lessons are read.
<b>Narthex</b>	The room or hall at the entrance of the church building.
<b>Nave</b>	The main part of the church where the congregation is seated during worship. Comes from Latin for “ <b>ship</b> .”
<b>Prie-Dieu</b>	A small desk for kneeling and prayer in the chancel. French, meaning “ <b>pray to God</b> .”
<b>Pulpit</b>	The place where the pastor preaches the sermon. It usually is raised and enclosed on three sides.
<b>Sacristy</b>	A small room, usually with a door to the chancel, where the elements are prepared for the sacraments. The vessels, paraments, and candles are often kept there.

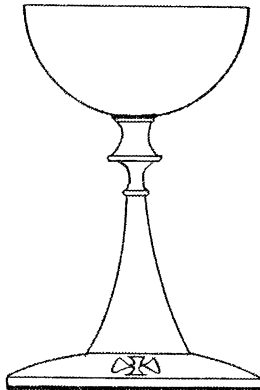
# APPENDIX 3

## VESSELS USED FOR HOLY COMMUNION

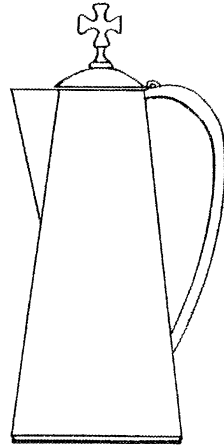
- Chalice** A large cup used to administer the wine.
- Ciborium** A cup-like vessel in which the wafers are kept.
- Corporal** A square white linen placed on the altar, on which the vessels for the Lord's Supper are set.
- Flagon** A pitcher containing the wine to be poured into the chalice.
- Paten** A plate used to carry the wafers.
- Veil** A cloth placed over the vessels while they are on the altar.



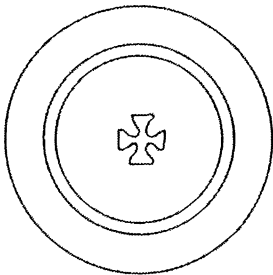
Ciborium



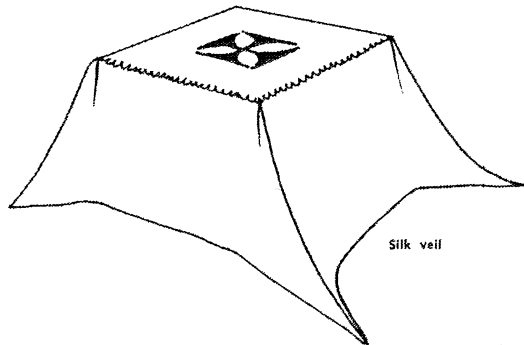
Chalice



Flagon



Paten



Silk veil