

Worshiping
with
Angels
and
Archangels
*An Introduction
to the Divine Service*

SCOT A. KINNAMAN
ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR KIRCHHOFF
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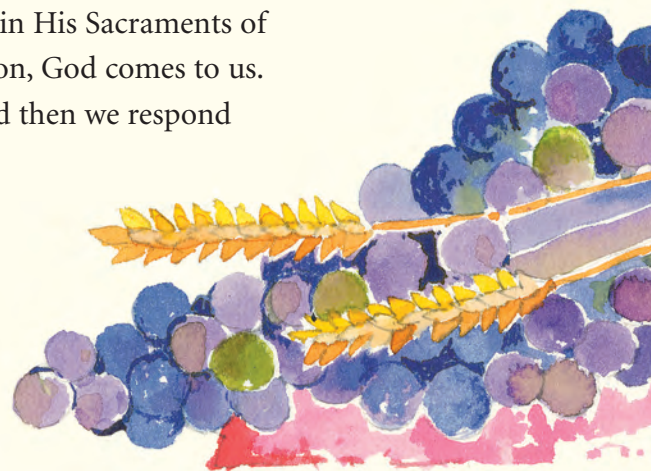
What Is Worship?

Although much about worship seems similar throughout Christianity, Lutherans have a unique perspective on the question “What is worship?” The Lutheran understanding of worship is expressed in the **Divine Service**.

The Athanasian Creed teaches us that true Christian worship can be recognized in two ways. First, we worship the God who is triune, that is, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The second way we recognize Christian worship is that it is centered on Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God. Our worship is “divine” because it is Christ-centered.

The Lutheran Confessions teach us about the “service” of the Divine Service: “So the worship and divine service of the Gospel is to receive gifts from God” (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article V, paragraph 189). In the Divine Service, God, who calls, gathers, and enlightens the whole Christian Church on earth, comes to serve us with His gracious gifts of Word and Sacrament.

People often think that worship is about what we do for or toward God. The reality is quite different. In the Divine Service, God is providing His service for us. In the reading, the preaching, and the proclamation of His Word and in His Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, God comes to us. In worship, God gives His grace and then we respond with thanks and praise.



Our Lord is the Lord who serves. Jesus Christ came into the flesh not to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. On the cross He offered Himself as a spotless sacrifice for the sin of the whole world. . . . Our Lord serves us today through His holy Word and Sacraments. Through these means He comes among us to deliver His forgiveness and salvation, freeing us from our sins and strengthening us for service to one another and to the world. . . . Having been called, gathered, enlightened, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, we receive His gifts with thankfulness and praise. With psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs we joyfully confess all that God has done for us, declaring the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Lutheran Service Book, page viii



A watercolor illustration on the left side of the page depicts a church window. The window is divided into several panes of different colors: blue, green, and white. The word "PENTECOST" is written in red, stylized letters across the green panes. Below the word, the numbers 1 through 30 are written in red, indicating the days of the Pentecost season. The background of the illustration is a soft, blue watercolor wash.

The Divine Service

The Lutheran Church has retained a historic order for the Divine Service. We follow this order not because we believe it is the only right way but because we believe this ancient pattern of worship most clearly and beautifully serves the purpose of the Divine Service, which is to deliver the gracious gifts of God.

The Divine Service uses two distinct elements that create a framework for our worship each time we gather together. Those parts of the liturgy that do not change each week are called the Ordinary because they are ordinarily present each week in the Divine Service. The Ordinary reflects the changeless and timeless texts of the liturgy, some of which have been in continuous use for more than 1,500 years. The second element of our worship consists of the changeable texts, known as the Propers. The Propers bring variety as they follow the seasons of the Church Year and the associated Scripture readings. The Propers carry the message or theme for the day, which is often taken from the Holy Gospel.

Directions are included as part of the service. These directions are called **rubrics**. Following the rubrics gives us a better idea of what we are to do next.

RUBRIC: Latin for “red”; instructions for conducting the service, often written in red.

One of the first rubrics in the liturgy directs the congregation to experience **Silence for reflection on God’s Word and for self-examination**. Everyone knows what silence is, but few are comfortable with it. This rubric in effect says: “Stop and examine your life according to God’s Word.” This is the time to bring to mind the sins you have committed this week and lay them before the Lord in the Confession of Sins that follows.

*Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD:
though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.*

ISAIAH 1:18

For us who stand before God as His baptized and redeemed children, this is not a fearful silence, but a time to remember our fallen, sinful nature and examine our actions in light of the Ten Commandments. It is also a time to reflect on our total dependence on God’s mercy for our salvation. Observe the time of **Silence for reflection on God’s Word and for self-examination**, and then be ready to hear His freeing Word and Absolution, forgiving you for all your sins.



Ordering
Our Days
in His
Peace
*An Introduction
to the Christian
Church Year*

H. R. CURTIS

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And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years. . . . And God saw that it was good.”

GENESIS 1:14–18

God made everything we see. He made the land and the oceans and the stars in the sky. He made you. The Bible tells us that God made everything in the whole universe for the good of humanity—His special and beloved creation. One of the things God made is time. Time helps us make sense of, or order, God’s creation. Minutes and hours order our days. The days help us order our weeks and months. And the months give order to our years.

Because we are creatures of time—we are born one day, then we grow in months and years until we die—telling the time and knowing the order of things is important. We cannot understand our own lives or any event in human history without noting what happened when. We could never understand the story of the United States without knowing that the American Revolution came before the Civil War. We could never understand a story’s end without first knowing its beginning and middle.

The same is true with the Church’s story—the story of God’s love for sinners in Jesus. This is the true story of just how much God loved the world: so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, into human history as a human being.

Preaching this Gospel, telling the story of Jesus, is the Church's purpose. Because it has a story to tell, and because that story has a beginning and an end, the Church uses the **Church Year** to tell the story of our salvation. The Christian Church Year helps the Church tell the story of Jesus in time, that is, in order.



The Christian Church Year

Three main sections make up the Church Year: the **Time of Christmas**, the **Time of Easter**, and the **Time of the Church**.

Each of these main sections of the Church Year tells a part of the salvation story. In the Time of Christmas, we hear the beginning of the story of Jesus, how the Father sent His Son to be born of the Virgin Mary in Nazareth. The Time of **Easter** tells us the story of what Jesus did for us: He died on the cross for our sins and rose again from the dead for our salvation. In the Time of the Church, we hear how the Spirit brings us into Jesus' story: in the Word, which creates the faith that believes in Jesus as our Savior; in Baptism, which places us as members of the family of God, the Church; and in the Lord's Supper, which strengthens us with the Word that forgives our sins. This is the story of how God loves us and desires us to live in peace with Him. This is how God orders our days in His peace.

Each part of the Church Year has something new to offer, some new piece of the story to tell. The tools the Church uses to tell us the story and draw us into it in the **Divine Service** are many: Scripture readings, specific colors, various prayers, songs, and customs. This book is designed to help you learn how to listen to the story the Church Year is telling. For this story is about God's love for you.





The Time of Christmas

*But when the fullness of time had come,
God sent forth His Son, born of woman.*

GALATIANS 4:4

The Time of Christmas invites us into the story of the Father sending His Son, Jesus, into the world to redeem us from the power of sin, death, and the devil.

Advent

*In those days Mary arose and went with haste into
the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of
Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.*

LUKE 1:39-40



The Church Year begins with **Advent**, the first part of the Time of Christmas. The word *Advent* is from the Latin, meaning “coming into.” The story of Jesus in Advent is the story of hope coming into the world. When the time was just right, God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world. Jesus came to save you and the whole world from the power of sin and death. Jesus is the world’s only hope of salvation from these enemies.

When Mary was pregnant with Jesus, she went to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who was pregnant with a son of her own. Elizabeth’s baby would later be named John. The baby jumped inside of Elizabeth when Mary greeted her. Even before he was born, John rejoiced at meeting the hope of world, Jesus Christ. John would grow up and be known as John the Baptist. John preached about Jesus to help other people prepare for His coming. During the Advent season we learn how to prepare to receive Jesus, the hope of the world.

“It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared, proclaiming Him the promised Messiah, the very Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, and calling sinners to repentance that they might escape from the wrath to be revealed when He comes again in glory.” **Proper Preface for Advent**





Behold The Lamb

*An Introduction
to the Signs and
Symbols of the Church*

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*An Introduction
to the Signs and
Symbols of the Church*

PAMELA J. NIELSEN

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What are Symbols?

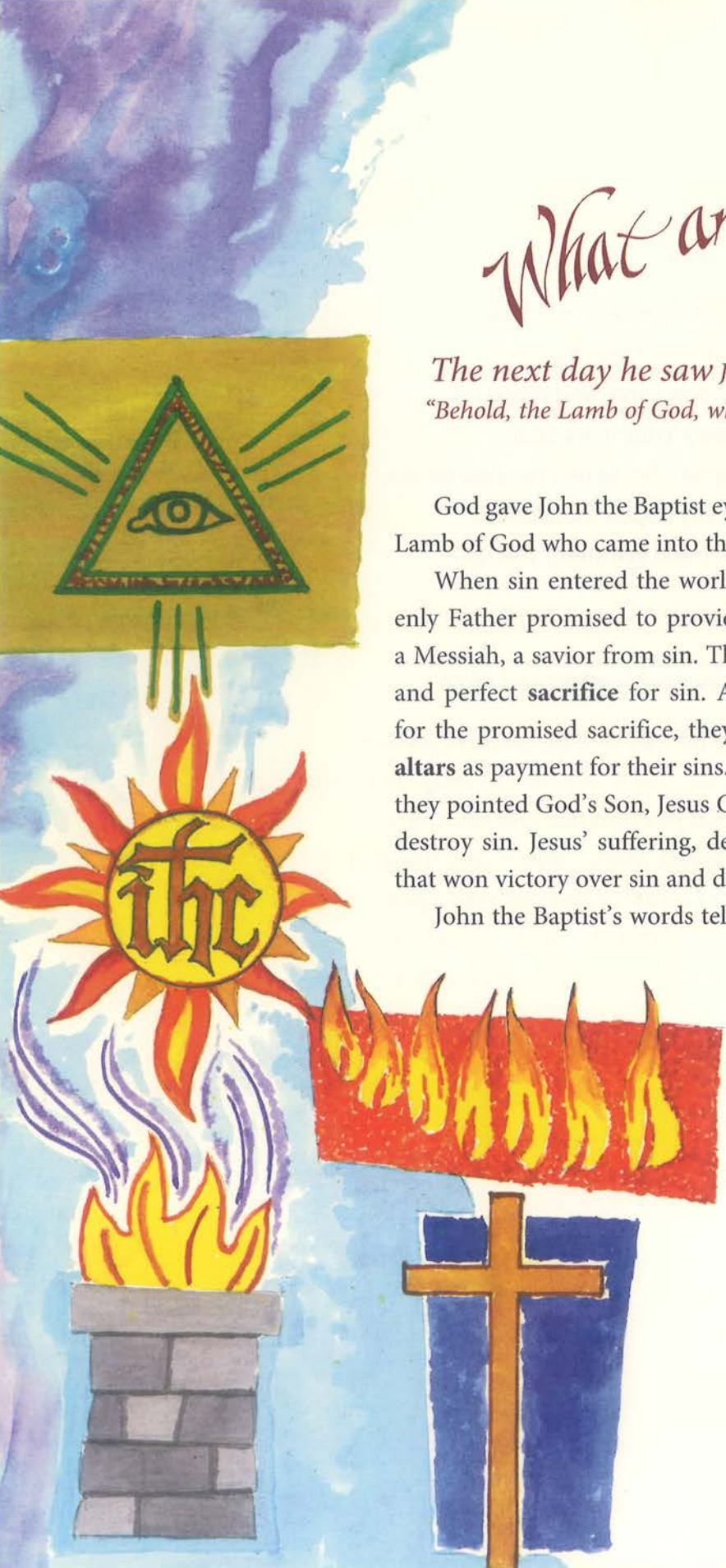
*The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said,
"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"*

JOHN 1:29

God gave John the Baptist eyes of faith to see that Jesus truly is the Lamb of God who came into this world to save all people.

When sin entered the world through Adam and Eve, our heavenly Father promised to provide forgiveness and salvation through a Messiah, a savior from sin. This Savior would become the ultimate and perfect **sacrifice** for sin. As God's people waited and watched for the promised sacrifice, they offered lamb and other animals on **altars** as payment for their sins. The value of these sacrifices was that they pointed God's Son, Jesus Christ, as the only sacrifice that would destroy sin. Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection is the sacrifice that won victory over sin and death for all people.

John the Baptist's words tell a story and give us images that help us understand what he is saying. From the beginning, God has used language, which forms pictures in our minds when He talks to us. The Christian Church, too, has used the language of pictures or **symbols** to point people to God, who is our only salvation from sin, death, and the devil.





Today, when God's people see an image of a lamb with a victory flag, they understand that this is a symbol of Jesus, who died on the cross to take away the sin of the world.

You may already know many of the symbols used to tell the Church's story of salvation because they are found many places in your church, such as on the walls, windows, banners, and altar. No matter which symbol you look at, all are part of the story of your salvation, each symbol pointing you to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!





Symbols about God

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, “You are My beloved Son; with You I am well pleased.”

LUKE 3:21–22

Our God, the only true God, is a **triune** God. Triune means “three in one.” The true God is three distinct persons in one divine being. How this is possible is a mystery that we cannot explain or understand.

The Holy **Trinity** is eternal, without beginning or end. At the creation of the world, God said, “Let *us* make man in *our* image” (Genesis 1:26). At Jesus’ Baptism in the Jordan River, God the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus as a dove, and God the Father’s voice proclaimed that Jesus is His Son. In the Church, Christians are baptized into the name of the triune God—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Long ago, in the days after Jesus ascended into heaven, there were false teachers who did not believe in the triune God. The first Christians defended the teaching of the Trinity by composing three **creeds** or confessions of faith: the **Apostles' Creed**, the **Nicene Creed**, and the **Athanasian Creed**. Some of the earliest hymns sung in churches teach about the Trinity. The Church also developed a number of symbols for the Trinity, which helped to speak the truth. Each symbol tells the story of one God in three persons.

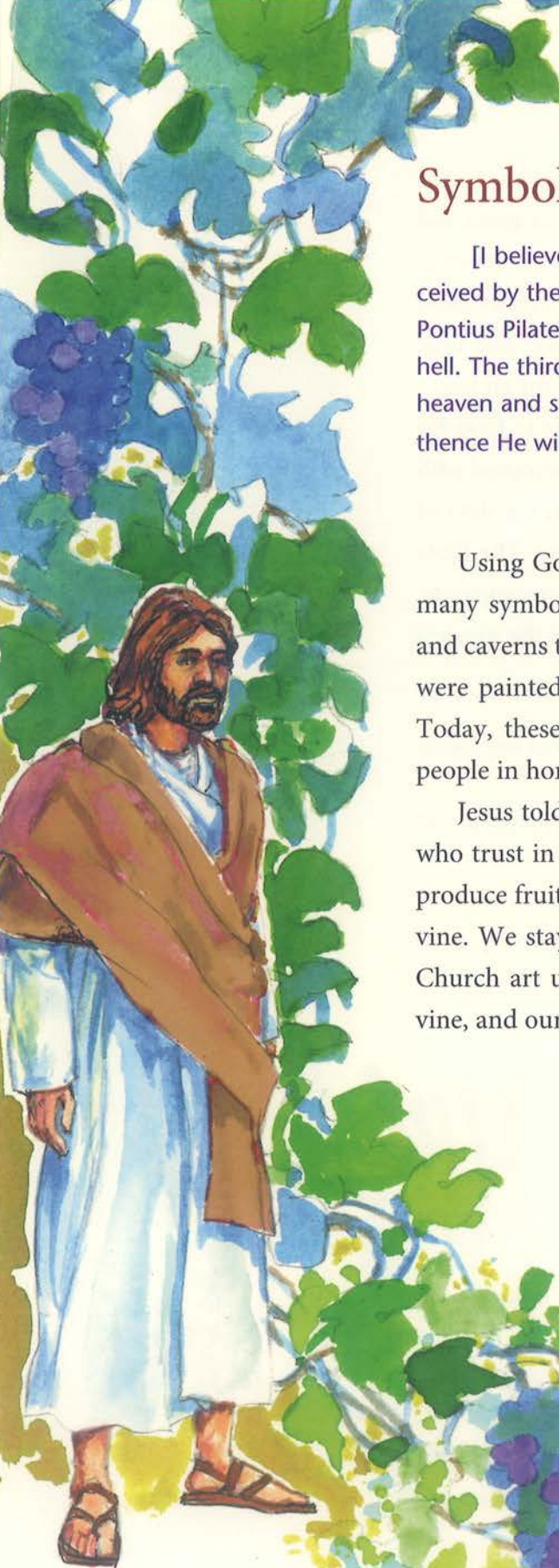
The first and most common symbol of the Holy Trinity combines three circles, one for each person of the Trinity: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The circles are intertwined to show that these three persons are joined as one. A trefoil, a leaf with three circle parts like a clover, is similar in meaning.

An equilateral triangle is one of the oldest symbols for the Holy Trinity. Its sides and angles are of equal length, none of them greater than the other. Sometimes the three circles and the triangle are combined along with the symbols for each person of the Holy Trinity.

The creeds lead us in confessing that God is three persons in one. The creeds, sometimes called **symbols**, help us understand what cannot be seen. The symbols like the triangle and the interlocking circle help us visualize the Holy Trinity.

Lord God Almighty, unto Thee be glory,
One in three persons, over all exalted!
Glory we offer, praise Thee and adore Thee,
Now and forever. *LSB 504:4*





Symbols of God the Son

[I believe] in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

—*The Apostles' Creed, Second Article*

Using God's Word as their guide, the first Christians developed many symbols for Jesus. They used symbols in underground caves and caverns to mark the graves of those who had died. Later, symbols were painted and carved on the walls and furnishings of churches. Today, these same symbols are recognized and repeated by God's people in homes and churches all over the world.

Jesus told His **disciples** that He was the true vine and that those who trust in Him for salvation are branches of the vine. In order to produce fruit and stay green, the branches need to be attached to the vine. We stay attached to Jesus through His Word and Sacraments. Church art uses the symbol of the vine to represent Jesus, the true vine, and our relationship with Him.

*Worthy are You, to take the scroll and to open its seals,
for You were slain, and by Your blood You ransomed
people for God from every tribe and language and people
and nation, and You have made them a kingdom and priests
to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.*

REVELATION 5:9-10

The **Agnus Dei**, the Lamb of God, is one of the most frequently used symbols for our Lord Jesus Christ. The lamb reminds us that payment for sin required a sacrifice, and that Jesus was the ultimate and final sacrifice for sin. Jesus is the Lamb of God foretold by Isaiah and John the Baptist. The Agnus Dei stands with a victor's flag and tells the story of Christ's victory over sin and death. The Agnus Dei is sometimes shown resting on a book with seven seals. This symbol comes from Revelation, where St. John tells us that the Lamb of God is the only one who can break these heavenly seals and open heaven to us.

At the Lamb's high feast we sing
Praise to our victorious King,
Who has washed us in the tide
Flowing from His side. *LSB 633:1*



Evangelists and Apostles

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of
the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded
you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

MATTHEW 28:18-20

When Jesus walked upon this earth, He gathered to Himself a group of men. The men left their work and their homes to follow Jesus. These companions of Jesus became His disciples. God used these men in special ways, working through them to establish the Christian Church and to preach and record God's Word.

The first of these men are the four **evangelists**—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Their symbols date to the early days of the Christian Church. An evangelist is one who proclaims the Word of God. Their symbols help us to understand what these men thought important to



write down about Jesus. Their writings are the first four books of the New Testament, known as the **Gospels**. In each of the four Gospel writers' symbols, the wings and the nimbus tell us that Jesus was true God.

The symbol of St. Matthew is the winged man that looks much like an angel. In His Gospel, Matthew wrote about Jesus' human family and His incarnation, the fact that Jesus is both true God and true man.

St. Mark's symbol is a winged lion because the beginning of Mark's Gospel is about John the Baptist, the voice of one crying in the wilderness. His preaching about Jesus was bold like a roaring lion.

A winged ox is the symbol for St. Luke. This symbol reminds us that Luke gave the fullest account of Jesus' suffering and death as the sacrifice for sin. An ox is an animal of sacrifice. Jesus is the final and complete sacrifice.

St. John's symbol is an eagle flying upward to the sky. The Gospel of St. John is written in such a way that its words seem to soar as if on eagles wings and thus reminds us of Christ's ascension to heaven after Easter.

Saints, see the cloud of witnesses surround us;
Their lives of faith encourage and astound us.
Hear how the Master praised their faith so fervent:
"Well done, My servant!" *LSB 667:1*



Glossary

Adonai. Hebrew for “Lord”; a name for Jesus.

Advent. From Latin *advenire*, meaning “to come unto.” The season of preparation marked by the four Sundays before Christmas. During this time the Church looks forward to Jesus coming into the world.

Agnus Dei. Latin for “Lamb of God”; designation given to Jesus by John the Baptist (John 1:29).

altar. A stone or wooden structure at the center of the chancel. Church altars provide focus of the congregation’s worship and the sacramental focus as the place from which God gives His gifts.

apostle. One sent directly by Christ into the world to carry out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16–20).

Apostles’ Creed. *See* Creed.

Athanasian Creed. *See* Creed.

Baptism, Holy. Sacrament by which the Holy Spirit creates faith through the application of water connected with God’s Word.

chalice. From the Latin for “cup”; traditionally a gold or silver cup lined with gold; used to distribute wine at Holy Communion; may be made of ceramic, glass, or even wood.

Christmas. The time of the Church Year that focuses on the Father sending the Son to save the world; includes the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany.

Church Year. The Church’s calendar organized to observe the events in the life of Christ and the Church.

Communion, Holy. *See* Sacrament of the Altar.

covenant. From the Hebrew word for “to fetter,” meaning “to bind or restrain.” A covenant is a binding agreement between two parties or a promise made by one party to another.

creed. From the Latin word *credo*, “I believe”; a summary of what the Church believes; refers to any of the three Ecumenical Creeds used in worship: the Apostles’ Creed, used at Baptisms, funerals, and non-Communion services; the Nicene Creed, often used at services with Holy Communion; the Athanasian Creed, often spoken on Trinity Sunday.

crucifix. A cross with the figure of the crucified Christ upon it.

disciple. A student or follower; one who follows Christ Jesus and His teachings.

Easter. The celebration of the Resurrection of Our Lord, the day when Jesus rose from the tomb. The date of Easter is determined by the date of the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox.

Emmanuel. Hebrew for “God with us”; a name for Jesus.

Epiphany. The day celebrating Jesus’ “revealing” as God in the flesh to the Gentile Magi; the eighth day after Christmas, January 6.

Eucharist. *See* Sacrament of the Altar.

evangelist. From the Greek words for “Gospel” and “messenger.” One whom the Church has sent to preach the Gospel. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are the four evangelists in Scripture.

fair linen. Long, fine linen cloth placed over the altar and draping nearly to the floor; usually has five crosses representing the wounds of Jesus, symbolic of Christ’s burial cloth.

font. Large basin or pool that holds water for Baptism.

Gospel. The Good News of God’s gracious love in Christ for the redemption of the world; the first four books of the New Testament.

host. Latin for “sacrifice or victim”; individual Communion wafers; Christ Himself, who serves His gathered guests.

ICHTHUS. The Greek word for “fish”, ICHTHUS is an acronym from the first letters of the Greek words “Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Savior.”

Lent. From the Latin for “spring”; a season of forty weekdays before Easter; a time of preparation and repentance before the celebration of the Resurrection of Our Lord.

Lord’s Supper. *See* Sacrament of the Altar.

Manus Dei. Latin for “the hand of God.”

martyr. From the Greek word for “witness”; someone who voluntarily suffers the penalty of death for witnessing about the Savior.

nave. Latin for “ship”; the main portion of a church building where people gather to worship and pray.

Nicene Creed. *See* creed.

nimbus. Latin for “cloud”; the round shape with a cross in it that often accompanies pictures or symbols of God the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit.

Office of the Keys. The authority given to the Church by God to forgive the sins of repentant sinners and to bind the sins to unrepentant sinners.

paraments. The colored cloths that are used to decorate the altar, pulpit, and lectern according to the seasons of the Church Year.

Glossary

Passion of our Lord. The time of Jesus' suffering and death as recorded in the Gospels.

Pentecost. From the Greek meaning "fifty." The day when the Holy Spirit gave the apostles the ability to preach the Gospel in many different languages, celebrated on the fiftieth day of Easter.

Sacrament of the Altar. The celebration of Christ's true body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine; Christians eat and drink this sacrament for the forgiveness of sin; also called the Eucharist, the Lord's Supper, and Holy Communion.

Sacrament. From the Greek word "mystery"; a sacred act instituted by God in which God Himself has joined His Word of promise to a visible element and by which He offers, gives, and seals the forgiveness of sins earned by Christ.

sacrifice. To give up or destroy something, often in exchange for something else (verb); something offered to God (noun).

sign/symbol. A visual image that points to or represents something else, a greater reality.

Trinity, triune. One true God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

vestments. The special clothing that the pastor wears during the Divine Service. The various vestments have symbolic meanings that teach us about the pastoral office. For example, the alb is the white robe the pastor wears at the Divine Service: it symbolizes the white robe of Christ's righteousness, which covers our sins and thus "covers up" the individual person of the pastor who stands in the stead of Christ when he preaches God's Word, forgives sins, and conducts the Sacraments.

Words of our Lord. The words spoken by Christ when He instituted the Sacrament of the Altar (Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–25); the pastor speaks these very words of Christ in the Service of the Sacrament at the consecration of the bread and wine.