

A HISTORICAL
INTRODUCTION
—— *to the* ——
DIVINE SERVICE

A HISTORICAL
INTRODUCTION
— *to the* —
DIVINE SERVICE

THOMAS M. WINGER

CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE • SAINT LOUIS



Copyright © 2026 Concordia Publishing House
3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63118-3968
1-800-325-3040 · cph.org

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of Concordia Publishing House.

This material originally published in *Lutheran Service Book: Companion to the Services*
© 2022 Concordia Publishing House.

Manufactured in the United States of America

CONTENTS

Foreword	vii
Frequently Cited Sources	xi

A HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE DIVINE SERVICE 1

The Divine Service in and from the Old Testament	2
Jesus: Teaching and Breaking Bread	7
The Apostolic Service	9
The Early Church	12
The Constantinian Revolution	25
The Roman Rite in Development	33
The Reformation	45
The Anglican Rite	77
The Post-Reformation Roman Rite: From Trent to the Present ...	82
The Lutheran Rite in Decline and Recovery	87
The Divine Service in Outline (Western/Lutheran Rite)	126
Appendix 1: Early Patristic Witnesses	128
Appendix 2: The Anaphora of John Chrysostom.	130
Appendix 3: The Medieval Roman Offertory	132
Appendix 4: The Medieval Roman Canon.	133
Appendix 5: Luther's Latin and German Rites Compared	135
Appendix 6: Roman Rite in Historical Development (Lutheran Branch)	137
Appendix 7: Roman Rite in Historical Development (Roman Branch)	139
Appendix 8: Walther's Absolution (1856)	141

Appendix 9: Preface to the Common Service (1888). 141

Appendix 10: *Service Book and Hymnal* (1958),
The Prayer of Thanksgiving 145

Appendix 11: *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978),
Great Thanksgiving I (#31) 146

Appendix 12: *Lutheran Worship* (1982),
Post-Sanctus Prayer of Thanksgiving 147

THE LITURGY:
LUTHERAN CONFESSIONAL THEOLOGY,
PRESUPPOSITIONS, AND DEFINITIONS 149

Faith as Worship 151

Sacrament and Sacrifice 153

What Is “Liturgy”? 159

Liturgy, Rite, and Ceremony 163

lex orandi, lex credendi 181

Real Presence 182

Heaven on Earth 184

The Nature of Praise 185

Index 189

FOREWORD

STARTING IN EARNEST in the 1980s, “Liturgical Theology” became a growth area and something of a coat hanger on which to showcase the importance of liturgy. As important as this has been to liturgical studies, it is frequently prone to making grand, sweeping theological claims about liturgy that are very difficult to substantiate in actual liturgical texts and in historically grounded liturgical studies. In the Anglican Church, the slogan *lex orandi, lex credendi* has been tossed into the arena, claiming that although Anglicans have neither a teaching magisterium nor a binding confession of faith (the Thirty-Nine Articles are regarded as a “historic” document), Anglican doctrines are expressed in the liturgy. Quite apart from a total decontextualization of the original dictum of Prosper of Aquitaine, the slogan can be a useful cover for lack of theological reflection in liturgical compilations. I cite “Liturgical Theology” and *lex orandi, lex credendi* in order to stress the importance of the work that is presented here by Tom Winger. Clear reflection on how a particular liturgy came to be, and the theological rationale behind it, is a crucial corrective to blind appeals to those two common mantras.

Part of the evolution of liturgical texts entails being “incarnate” culturally and theologically in time. The idea that there is some ideal, eternal liturgy that floats above the space-time continuum is pious humbug. A liturgy evolves from and is composed by Christian persons who respond to how they perceive the Gospel in their *Sitz im Leben*. The Roman *Canon missae* remains something of an enigma, but, given that parts of it find a parallel in Ambrose of Milan, it is not a late-medieval “popish” text. It seems to reflect a particular understanding of the epistle to the Hebrews at a particular point in the West, and it clothed an understanding of the Eucharist with votive

offering language of Roman religion. Its language was never drawn up either to teach the later defined doctrine of transubstantiation or to teach a specific doctrine of eucharistic sacrifice. It was popular and prestigious, and it became the sole Eucharistic Prayer of the West—mostly by popular choice rather than imposition.

Its interpretation in the sixteenth century was challenged by the new learning and the Renaissance to return to original texts of Scripture. More importantly, the new learning had a different interpretation of Scripture from the immediate medieval traditions, and certainly different from the fourth- or fifth-century understanding of the letter to the Hebrews. Luther's reforms are a testimony to revision of a liturgical text in the light of a very different understanding of Scripture. However, just as Luther's forms were a sixteenth-century reinterpretation, those forms, which certainly have a "Lutheran" identity, reflect sixteenth-century Germany, and just as the Roman *Canon missae* was not some heavenly composition floating above the cosmos, the same is true of Luther's forms. Every age has its own understanding of Scripture, and this plays into how liturgy is understood and then reformed or reformulated. That is how liturgy evolves and mutates. All Western churches, whether they loved or hated the Liturgical Movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, were affected in some way by it and have produced several revised liturgies that take account of their particular ecclesial tradition, as well as contemporary studies in liturgy and, perhaps more importantly, Scripture-based doctrine. What is perhaps most useful for liturgical revisers is the past and immediate history and context of their worship, because it is usually helpful to know how we got to where we are, with some idea as to where we might and might not venture in the future.

In terms of the Lutheran tradition, students and scholars can be grateful for the work of Tom Winger on the Divine Service in the Lutheran tradition. He details how the church got to where it is and lays the foundation for questions of where it might wish to go in the future. A common experience for pastors is being told that

something is “traditional,” with the unstated assumption that nothing will change. That, of course, is not the meaning and reality of the word *tradition*. The handing over or handing on rarely means that nothing is changed and that everything is frozen in time. An elephant is not a woolly mammoth with no hair, and when, like creation itself, a liturgy is unable to adapt and change, then, like the woolly mammoth, it is destined for extinction and preserved only in ice. In the nineteenth century, Robert Lee, the minister of Greyfriars, Edinburgh, wrote,

We cannot make *yesterday to-day*, however we may cherish its memory or value its lessons. It is gone, dead and buried, and we inherit only the legacy it has bequeathed to us. . . . Change is the order of the universe, the normal condition of all things mundane and human. Man may modify, he cannot prevent or arrest it; he may use it to his own benefit, but he can no more abrogate this than any other of the laws of nature. The chariot of Divine Providence still moves on in its glorious course, but it crushes those who stand in its way.¹

Those words are apropos liturgy. Tom Winger has provided the data and basis for self-understanding, and how we got to where we are, and where we might want to go tomorrow—accompanying the chariot of Divine Providence rather than stubbornly standing in its way.

BRYAN D. SPINKS

BISHOP F. PERCY GODDARD PROFESSOR EMERITUS
OF LITURGICAL STUDIES AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY
YALE INSTITUTE OF SACRED MUSIC AND YALE DIVINITY SCHOOL

1 Robert Lee, *The Reform of the Church of Scotland in Worship, Government, and Doctrine*, Part 1, *Worship* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1864), 3.

FREQUENTLY CITED SOURCES

AC	Augsburg Confession
AE	<i>Luther's Works: American Edition</i> . Vols. 1–30: Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–76. Vols. 31–55: Edited by Helmut T. Lehmann. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press/Fortress Press, 1957–86. Vols. 56–82: Edited by Christopher Boyd Brown and Benjamin T. G. Mayes. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009–.
ANF	<i>The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325</i> . Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Revised by A. Cleveland Coxe. 10 vols. Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885–96. Reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.
Ap	Apology of the Augsburg Confession
Brunner	Brunner, Peter. <i>Worship in the Name of Jesus</i> . Translated by M. H. Bertram. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968.
Church Liturgy	<i>Church Liturgy for Evangelical Lutheran Congregations of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession</i> . St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1881.
ELHB	<i>Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book with Tunes</i> . St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1912.
FC SD	Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord
<i>First and Second</i>	<i>The First and Second Prayer Books of Edward VI</i> . Introduction by E. C. S. Gibson. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1910.
Herl	Herl, Joseph. <i>Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism: Choir, Congregation, and Three Centuries of Conflict</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
Holmes	Holmes, Michael W., ed. <i>The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations</i> . 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2007.
HS98	<i>Hymnal Supplement 98</i> . Prepared by the Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1998.
Jasper and Cuming	Jasper, R. C. D., and G. J. Cuming. <i>Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed</i> . 3rd ed. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990. 4th ed. Edited by Paul F. Bradshaw and Maxwell E. Johnson. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2019.

FREQUENTLY CITED SOURCES

Johnson	Johnson, Lawrence J. <i>Worship in the Early Church: An Anthology of Historical Sources</i> . 4 vols. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009.
Jungmann	Jungmann, Josef A. <i>The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development</i> . Translated by Francis A. Brunner. 2 vols. New York: Benziger Brothers, 1951/1955. Reprint, Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1986.
<i>Kirchen-Agende</i>	<i>Kirchen-Agende für evangelisch-lutherische Gemeinden ungeänderter Augsburgischer Confession</i> . Published by the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States. St. Louis: Druckerei der Deutschen Ev.-Luth. Synode v. Missouri, O. u. a. St., 1856.
<i>LBW</i>	<i>Lutheran Book of Worship</i> . Prepared by the churches participating in the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House and Philadelphia: Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, 1978.
LC	Large Catechism
Lochner	Lochner, Friedrich. <i>The Chief Divine Service of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church</i> . Edited by Jon D. Viker, Kevin J. Hildebrand, and Nathaniel S. Jensen. Translated by Matthew Carver. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2020.
Löhe	Löhe, Wilhelm. <i>Agende für christliche Gemeinden des lutherischen Bekenntnisses</i> . Nördlingen: C. H. Beck, 1844. 2nd ed., 2 parts, 1853/1859.
<i>LSB</i>	<i>Lutheran Service Book</i> . Prepared by the Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006.
<i>LW</i>	<i>Lutheran Worship</i> . Prepared by the Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982.
LXX	Septuagint
Pfatteicher	Pfatteicher, Philip H. <i>Commentary on the Lutheran Book of Worship: Lutheran Liturgy in Its Ecumenical Context</i> . Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990.
Precht	Precht, Fred L., ed. <i>Lutheran Worship: History and Practice</i> . St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993.
Reed	Reed, Luther D. <i>The Lutheran Liturgy: A Study of the Common Liturgy of the Lutheran Church in America</i> . Rev. ed. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960.
SA	Smalcald Articles
<i>SBH</i>	<i>Service Book and Hymnal of the Lutheran Church in America</i> . Authorized by the churches cooperating in the Commission on the Liturgy and the Commission on the Hymnal. Music ed. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House and five other publishers, 1958.

FREQUENTLY CITED SOURCES

SC	Small Catechism
Senn	Senn, Frank C. <i>Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical</i> . Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997.
TLH	<i>The Lutheran Hymnal</i> . Authorized by the synods constituting the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941.
WS	<i>Worship Supplement</i> . Authorized by the Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1969.
Zeeden	Zeeden, Ernst Walter. <i>Faith and Act: The Survival of Medieval Ceremonies in the Lutheran Reformation</i> . Translated by Kevin G. Walker. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2012.



A HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE DIVINE SERVICE

The Lutheran rite of the Divine Service has its roots firmly planted in Western soil; it is a carefully pruned cultivar grown from a cutting of the medieval Roman rite.¹ But how much deeper do its roots run? Liturgical botanists of a previous era sought an elusive mother plant among the great rites of the fourth century. From the murky period prior to the Constantinian establishment in the fourth century, few written sources giving witness to liturgical orders have survived. Occasional claims, nonetheless, have been made for the apostolic origin of this or that rite.² But was there a single rite (whether Eastern or Western or a mother of both) from which all others derived? The present generation of liturgical botanists are decidedly skeptical. Paul Bradshaw, when he divides scholars into two camps (lumpers and splitters), leaves the reader with no doubt that he believes there is no “original” rite of the Divine Service.³

¹ See Arthur Carl Piepkorn’s sober warning in *What the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church Have to Say about Worship and the Sacraments* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1952), 11: “The Reformers are familiar with the Greek rite and with the liturgical pronouncements of the Fathers of the undivided Church, and they cite both in support of their doctrinal position where appropriate. The basis of their liturgical rites and ceremonies, however, is the medieval Western rite as the Church in northern Europe observed it at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Unlike the Anglican Reformers, the Lutheran Reformers are not concerned about conforming their rite either to the Eastern or to the Primitive Church.”

² See, for example, John Edward Field, *The Apostolic Liturgy and the Epistle to the Hebrews: Being a Commentary on the Epistle in Its Relation to the Holy Eucharist, with Appendices on the Liturgy of the Primitive Church*, ATLA Monograph Preservation Program (London: Rivingtons, 1882), who argues that the New Testament Epistle to the Hebrews quotes the rite of St. James.

³ Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), ix. “Lumpers” is his term for those “who have tried to arrange the evidence so as to suggest that a single coherent line of

See p. 163 for more
on this distinction.

A careful presentation of the history of the Divine Service must avoid oversimplifying its lineage. Yet legitimate skepticism about discovering a single mother rite is often accompanied by an illegitimate belief that very little in the Divine Service is traceable to Jesus Christ or His apostles. Here the distinction between liturgy, rite, and ceremony may be helpful. One need not postulate that Jesus or Paul left the Church a fully detailed order of the Divine Service (rite) to confess that its essential content (liturgy) is divinely instituted. Those who harbor doubts that the Gospels accurately record the things of Jesus, who believe they tell us more about the creativity of the post-apostolic Church in their *Sitz im Leben*, may be unwilling to grant that the Lord's Supper, for example, was instituted by our Lord Himself in the context of the Passover on the night when He was betrayed. But those who stand with St. Paul prefer, like him, to listen to the men who walked with Jesus and to receive the tradition they handed down (1 Corinthians 11:23; 15:1–3; cf. Hebrews 2:3). A narrow focus on human activity in ordering the rite can blind us to what is divine. The heart of the liturgy is what Christ delivered and still gives.

The Divine Service in and from the Old Testament

IN THE GARDEN

Focusing on the divine aspect of the Divine Service prompts us to begin with Scripture, even to go back to the very beginning. God's original purpose for mankind was revealed in Eden: to walk and talk with God and to draw life from eating the food He provided through the tree of life (Genesis 2:9; 3:8a, 22). This was the first worship, the first "Divine Service," for by their heeding His command and accepting His gifts, God was most pleased (cf. Ap IV 49, 59). God's earnest desire to enjoy this earthly communion with His most intimate creaturely companions was frustrated by Adam and Eve's choice of a false worship—to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil so that they might become like God, thus rejecting His way of caring for them. This was the way of death (Genesis 2:17); it led to fear of God's presence and His divine conversation (Genesis 3:8–10). God's decision to expel them from Eden was, on the one hand, an expression of His wrath at their disobedience. It was, on the other hand, an act of grace that protected them from eating from the tree of life and living forever in sin (Genesis 3:22–24). That expulsion was also a poignant, prophetic moment that looked forward to the restoration of full communion with God in eternity. In the closing pages of Scripture, Eden is reopened to mankind as God restores access to the tree of life for those who conquer through Baptism into His Son (Revelation 2:7; 22:2, 14, 19).

Thus, the story of Eden not only explains the entry of sin into the world but also sets the stage for the coming Messiah with its protevangelium (Genesis 3:15). It also

liturgical evolution can be traced from the apostolic age to the fourth century"; "splitters" (among whom he numbers himself) are the skeptical opposition, who try to find fault lines in the lumps and who believe that the diverse early rites arose rather independently.

establishes and discloses God's will for eternal fellowship with Him through the Divine Service. Hospitality alone does not sufficiently explain the Old Testament's repeated concern with talking and eating. When the three angelic visitors appear at Abraham's tent door, he instinctively desires to sit at table with them. As he feeds them bread and meat, curds and milk, one of the three reveals Himself as an "incarnation" of God Himself. From the table, God speaks to Abraham, repeating the promise of a child (Genesis 18:1–16).

ON THE MOUNTAIN AND IN THE TENT

This speaking with God "face to face" is most often in the Old Testament granted to Moses, whose unique experiences of God speaking to him "as a man speaks to his friend" appear as brief but glorious incursions of the eternal Eden into this world (Exodus 33:11; Deuteronomy 34:10). His divine experiences took place first on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:3, 20; Ecclesiasticus 45:5) and then in the tabernacle (the tent of meeting), the place of God's dwelling with His people on earth (Numbers 14:14). Through Moses as intermediary, all Israel was privileged to speak with God face to face as God spoke to them from the mountain (Deuteronomy 5:4). But the event that most spectacularly illustrated and established the Divine Service, the restoration of Eden, was the meal on the mountaintop to which Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel were called:

And they saw the God of Israel. There was under His feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. And He did not lay His hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank. (Exodus 24:10–11)⁴

This experience of heaven on earth expresses the glorious benefits of the covenant that have just been given: the restoration of Eden, communion with God. This, too, reaches its fulfillment in John's vision of heaven, where sapphire adorns the new Jerusalem, whose temple is no longer made of stones but consists of the central presence of "God the Almighty and the Lamb" (Revelation 21:22).

The heavenly banquet of Exodus 24 forms a crucial pivot point between the giving of the covenant (Exodus 19–23) and the instructions for building the tabernacle and establishing its worship (Exodus 25–30). It gives, as it were, a behind-the-scenes exposé of what will happen in the tabernacle, a one-off extraordinary experience meant to explain Israel's regular worship.

A SACRIFICIAL BANQUET

Lutherans have sometimes been reluctant to seek the origins of the New Testament Divine Service in the worship of the tabernacle/temple. This reluctance arises understandably from the fundamental Reformation dispute over the sacrifice of the mass. The Roman opponents had argued that since the Church has "priests" (Hebrews 5:1), such priests must have a sacrifice to offer for sins (Ap XXIV 52–53). Since the New Testament Church has an "altar" (Hebrews 13:10), there must be something to sacrifice upon it (Ap XXIV 84). Hence, the Lord's Supper must be

⁴ Note that on this occasion, Moses threw on the gathered people of Israel "the blood of the covenant" (Exodus 24:8). Jesus is likely referring back to this event when He declares the wine in His Supper to be "My blood of the covenant" (Matthew 26:28) or "the new covenant in My blood" (Luke 22:20), thus establishing continuity between these two meals that take place in God's presence.

that sacrifice, the priest offering up the body and blood of Christ to the Father at each celebration in an unbloody repetition of Christ's atoning work. Article XXIV of the Augsburg Confession and its Apology tackles this theology head on.

In the twentieth century, there has been considerable rapprochement between Lutherans and Roman Catholics on the question of eucharistic sacrifice. Roman Catholics now more keenly stress that there is only *one* sacrifice, that the Lord's Supper collapses time in such a way that we participate in that one sacrifice, and that Jesus Christ Himself is the true celebrant offering up His own sacrificed body and blood to the Father. While Lutheran liturgical theologians have sometimes been too quick to declare the Reformation debate resolved, there has been a legitimate recognition that the Lord's Supper is indeed a sacrificial banquet in the sense that it is a delivery to God's people of the body and blood of Christ, which were sacrificed once for all.⁵ It is a meal held in God's house in which He joins His people to Himself by giving them the fruits and benefits of the sacrifice.⁶ It is therefore not entirely unlike the Old Testament sacrifices in which the priests and/or people of Israel ate in the tabernacle/temple courtyards some of the meat that had been sacrificed, as well as loaves made from some of the flour and oil offered, and sometimes also the wine from the drink offerings.⁷ St. Paul himself compares the Lord's Supper to these sacrificial banquets while warning the Corinthians not to participate in the pagan equivalent (1 Corinthians 10:16–21). And it is most certainly like the Passover, in which the family gathered to eat the lamb/goat that had been sacrificed, together with unleavened bread (Exodus 12) and, in later times, cups of wine. Not only did Jesus institute it in that context, transforming Passover into Eucharist, but St. Paul exhorted us to celebrate this transformed festival, calling Christ the Passover Lamb that has been sacrificed (1 Corinthians 5:7–8).

Melanchthon's treatment of eucharistic sacrifice in Apology XXIV acknowledges both aspects. While rejecting the notion that the Lord's Supper is a *propitiatory* sacrifice or a repetition of Calvary (Ap XXIV 21–59), he speaks quite positively of the connection between the Sacrament and the Divine Service of the tabernacle/temple as a whole:

We readily allow the Mass to be understood as a daily sacrifice, as long as that includes the entire Mass: the ceremony with the preaching of the Gospel, faith, invocation, and thanksgiving. Joined together, these are a daily sacrifice of the New Testament because the ceremony <of the Mass, or the Lord's Supper,> was set up because of these things. The Mass is not to be separated from them. So Paul says, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26). But it cannot be shown from

⁵ It may be helpful here to distinguish between an active and passive sense of sacrifice. The Lord's Supper is not an *active* sacrifice, that is, an activity in which Christ's body and blood are still being offered up. But it is a *passive* sacrifice, that is, the body and blood of Christ are received as what has been sacrificed. The Pomeranian dogmatician David Hollaz made a similar distinction between the material and the form of the sacrifice, accepting that the former is present in the Lord's Supper but not the latter. See David Hollaz, *Examen Theologicum*, 1134–35; quoted in John R. Stephenson, *The Lord's Supper*, Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics (St. Louis: The Luther Academy, 2003), 114–15.

⁶ See John W. Kleinig, "The Lord's Supper as a Sacrificial Banquet," *Logia* 12, no. 1 (Epiphany 2003): 11–16.

⁷ Exodus 29:32–33; Leviticus 2:3, 10; 6:16–18, 26; 7:6, 19–21; 8:31; 10:12–13, 17; 19:5–8; 23:12–20; 24:9; Numbers 18:10–13; Deuteronomy 12:17–18, 27; Ezekiel 42:13; 44:29–30; cf. 1 Corinthians 9:13; 10:18.

this Levitical type that a ceremony justifying by the outward work (*ex opere operato*) is necessary, or should be applied on behalf of others, that it may merit the forgiveness of sins for them. (Ap XXIV 35)

He understands that the sacrificial system was prophetic of Christ and New Testament worship, not antithetical to it:

In Numbers 28:4–8, three parts of that daily sacrifice are represented: the burning of the lamb, the drink offering, and the offering of wheat flour. The Law had pictures or shadows of future things [Colossians 2:17]. So Christ and the entire worship of the New Testament are shown in this picture. (Ap XXIV 36; cf. 56)

Melanchthon's intriguing final words suggest that he discerned in the offering of flesh, bread, and wine, with the sacrificial banquet that followed, a real foretaste of the Lord's Supper. Indeed, he saw the Christian Divine Service as the true fulfillment of this "daily sacrifice," so long as the preaching of the Gospel is included in its definition:

These things should make it clear that the type of the daily sacrifice declares nothing against us, but rather for us, because we look for all the parts illustrated by the daily sacrifice. The adversaries falsely imagine that the ceremony alone is meant, and not also the preaching of the Gospel, putting the flesh to death, and enlivening of heart, and so forth. Now, good people, it can easily be determined that the complaint against us—that we abolish the daily sacrifice—is entirely false. (Ap XXIV 40–41)

The daily sacrifice is described succinctly in Exodus 29:38–46 (cf. Numbers 28:4–10).⁸ It consisted of one lamb offered in the morning and another at night. The blood of the lamb was poured out on the altar to cleanse the people and forgive their sins; the fat portions were burnt, together with offerings of flour mixed with oil (thus making bread!) and wine. When these things were offered before the entrance to the tent of meeting, God promised to come and speak to His people, to sanctify them, and to dwell among them. The remaining meat, bread, and wine were eaten by the priests in the courts of the Lord's house (Leviticus 6:14–18; 7:6–10, 29–36; 24:5–9). The daily service thus consisted of God's Word, offerings, and a sacrificial banquet in His presence. It furthermore included incense burned to ascend with the prayers to heaven (Psalm 141:2). It was accompanied by Levites making music on instruments and singing psalms (1 Chronicles 23:5, 30; 2 Chronicles 29:27–28). The priests pronounced the Lord's blessing (Numbers 6:22–26). Later rabbinic texts fill in the gaps, indicating the use of the *Shema* as a creed (Deuteronomy 6:4) and perhaps also the recitation of the Ten Commandments.

The expansion of this service each week on the Sabbath and at major yearly festivals did not change its basic structure and elements, even though there was a remarkable diversity in sacrificial detail. On certain occasions, the "priesthood

⁸ On the theology and ritual of Old Testament worship, see John W. Kleinig, *Leviticus*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2003); and Robert D. Macina, *The LORD's Service: A Ritual Analysis of the Order, Function, and Purpose of the Daily Divine Service in the Pentateuch* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2019).

of all Israel” were given the great privilege of bringing their offerings to the Lord personally and participating in the sacrificial meals in the temple courts (Leviticus 7:11–27; 19:5–8; Deuteronomy 12:5–7, 17–18, 27; cf. Nehemiah 8:10). “The festivals were therefore times of feasting for them, occasions where they lived like royalty at God’s expense, for he retained but a portion of their rent for his land. He gave the rest back to them, sanctified for their enjoyment.”⁹

The Old Testament liturgy had its “Church Year,” consisting of the weekly Sabbath and the three great festivals: Passover (Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits), Pentecost (Weeks), and the Seventh Month (Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Booths). Each had a threefold function: to remember God’s gracious saving deeds in the past, to give thanks for His ongoing provision and care in the present, and to encourage faith in the future redemption promised in the Messiah. As these festivals reached their fulfillment in Jesus Christ, this threefold function was renewed in the Church’s Divine Service. It remembers His sacrifice on the cross (1 Corinthians 1:23; 11:24), gives thanks for the delivery of the benefits of life and salvation in Word and Sacrament (1 Corinthians 10:30; 14:16), and looks forward to the return of Christ on the Last Day (1 Corinthians 11:26; 16:22).

The Letter to the Hebrews is the most extensive meditation on the New Testament Divine Service’s connection to the old covenant. In the context of Christians being tempted to apostatize to Judaism, Hebrews warns of the significant superiority of Christ’s priestly sacrifice over the sacrifices of the Old Testament. Christ, being a perfect high priest, did not need to cleanse Himself before offering His sacrifice for the sins of the people. He offered His sacrifice once for all. His blood obtains an eternal redemption because it carries divine power through the union of God and man in His one person. Having completed His sacrifice, He sat down at the right hand of God, where He continues to intercede for His people. The sacrificial banquet that ensues is no longer restricted to Jerusalem but occurs before the throne of God in heaven, to which the Christian Divine Service connects people across the world by the power of the Word. This epistle is the most powerful antidote to any theology that would make of the Lord’s Supper a repetition or re-presentation of Christ’s sacrifice to the Father. And yet these emphatic points of superiority only make sense because Hebrews sees Christ’s work as the crown, the goal, the telos of the tabernacle’s worship. The Lord’s Supper is the ultimate and surpassing sacrificial banquet.

FROM THE SYNAGOGUE

Because of the theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and flowing out of confessional strife over the sacrifice of the mass (see above), Protestant liturgiologists have more often turned to the synagogue to find the roots of the Christian Divine Service.¹⁰ While this can be a fruitful path to tread, certain cautions must be sounded. First, the synagogue has no Divine Service, as it was not divinely instituted. While the origins of the synagogue are obscure (it is not found in the Old Testament), it most likely arose in the context of the Babylonian exile, when God’s people sought to devote themselves to God’s Word and prayer in the absence of the temple’s worship. They gathered at least on the Sabbath, possibly also on Mondays and Thursdays. But much of what went on in the synagogue was also carried out in

⁹ Kleinig, “The Lord’s Supper as a Sacrificial Banquet,” 13.

¹⁰ Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, 23, finds the first assertion of the synagogue’s influence on the Christian liturgy in a seventeenth-century Dutch Protestant writer.

outside influence. There are two Old Testament and two New Testament readings. The rite approves only three anaphoras, giving priority to Addai and Mari. The **Malabar** rite is used in southwest India by churches that trace their roots to the apostle Thomas's missionary work. Since the sixteenth century, both the Persian and Malabar rites have been somewhat Latinized under the influence of Roman missionaries. The institution narrative was added to the anaphora of Addai and Mari, for example (see above). The Malabar churches adopted unleavened bread and Communion in one kind, and their rite was purged of Nestorian elements.

Because it is the most widespread and comprehensive of the Eastern rites, the Byzantine rite best serves as an example of their character for Westerners unfamiliar with them. Not all of these elements, of course, came into the rite at the same time, but this outline represents its mature form by the ninth century:⁶¹

FIRST ENTRANCE RITE	
Prothesis	Prayers for the preparation of the eucharistic elements and the clergy in the sacristy before the service.
Enarxis (Entrance Rite)	1. Blessing: "Blessed is the kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit now forever and to the ages of ages. Amen." 2. Great Litany (with "Lord, have mercy"), collect, Psalm antiphon. 3. Short Litany (with "Lord, have mercy"), collect, Psalm antiphon. 4. Hymn: "Only Begotten Son." 5. Short Litany (with "Lord, have mercy"), collect, Psalm antiphon. (These may reflect stational rites in processions to the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.)
Little Entrance	Prayers with the procession of the Gospel book through the iconostasis. (This was perhaps the original beginning of the service on non-festival occasions.)
Trisagion	"Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us" (3x). Gloria Patri. "Holy God . . ." (1x).

⁶¹ Based on Senn, *Christian Liturgy*, 125–33, and Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies*, 141–79. Divisions into four major sections are provided to aid comparison with the Western rite.

Elements shaded in gray are held in common with most Western rites.

SERVICE OF THE WORD	
Epistle Reading	
Psalm/Alleluia	
Gospel Reading	
Sermon	
Dismissal of Catechumens	With prayers for the catechumens.
Prayer of the Faithful	Brief. The rest of the prayers have been included earlier in the litanies.

SECOND ENTRANCE RITE	
Great Entrance	The priests and deacons bring the elements from the table of <i>prothesis</i> in the sacristy by procession with candles and incense through the nave to the doors of the iconostasis, pause for commemorations and prayers, sing the Cherubic Hymn, and proceed to the altar.
Ektene	Extended litany with "Lord, have mercy."
Proskomide	Offertory prayer.

See full text in Appendix 2, p. 130.

SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT	
Kiss of Peace	
Nicene Creed	
Anaphora	- Preface - Blessing of God the Father for creation - Sanctus - Blessing of God for redemption in Christ - Words of Institution - Anamnesis - Epiclesis - Intercessions The anaphora was usually prayed silently by the priest behind the iconostasis, though the Sanctus, institution narrative, and intercessions were sung aloud.
Lord's Prayer	
Prayer of Inclination	Prayer of worthy reception for those who "bow their heads" before God.
Prayer of Elevation	Prayer to Christ enthroned on high with the elevation of the elements.
Invitation	"The holy things for the holy people [τὰ ἅγια τοῖς ἁγίοις]." "One is holy, one is Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen."
Communion	The bread is broken (fraction), a portion is placed into the chalice (commixture), and hot water is added (<i>zeon</i>). Distribution under both kinds via intinction and a spoon.
Thanksgiving for Communion	Responsive post-Communion prayer.
Dismissal	With prayers, blessings, and distribution of the <i>antidoron</i> to all present.

Antidoron is blessed but not consecrated bread.

THE LITURGY

Lutheran Confessional Theology, Presuppositions, and Definitions

I am among you as one that serves.

These words of our Lord from Luke 22:27 are carved in stone on the plinth supporting and encircling the altar in Coventry Cathedral's Chapel of Christ the Servant. Christians approaching the altar to receive Christ's body and blood given there cannot evade the message as they bow their heads or bend their knees upon it.

When Christ settled His disciples' argument as to who was the greatest, He pointed to the priority of giving over receiving in the Messiah's work of salvation. This divine-man is so very unlike gods created by pagan imaginations who come seeking our devotion. In a similar context in the other Gospels, Jesus elaborates: "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45). John's account of Holy Thursday, when our Lord stripped and knelt to wash the disciples' feet, unfolds the old Adam's discomfort with this kind of savior. As Simon Peter



© Ian M Butterfield (UK) / Alamy Stock Photo

objects to Jesus' slave-like act—to Christ's touching his filth and kneeling in front of a mere disciple—he speaks for fallen humanity, “You shall never wash my feet,” to which his servant-Lord replies, “If I do not wash you, you have no share with Me” (John 13:8).

So while it is godly to emulate our Lord in service to our brothers and sisters, when it comes to our relationship to our Savior, the direction is reversed. Our Lord's words “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35) were quoted by Paul to the *pastors* of the Ephesian Church, who were to care for their flock as representatives of Christ (Acts 20:28). If Christ has come to *give*, then for us Christian sheep, it is more blessed to *receive*. To deny His self-offering is to put ourselves in the place of the Savior, to give way to that natural self-idolatry that thinks to offer filthy rags as righteous deeds (Isaiah 64:6). God is not pleased with human worship that says no to His gifts and offers instead our own inventions.

Francis Pieper's prolegomena offered the profound insight that there are really only two kinds of religion in the world:

the religion of the Law, that is, the endeavor to reconcile God through man's own works, and the religion of the Gospel, that is, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, belief wrought through the Gospel by the Holy Ghost that we have a gracious God through the reconciliation already effected by Christ, and not because of our own works.¹

As he divides religions along the lines of Law and Gospel, Pieper hints at a similar division into two kinds of worship. The worship of the Law is the addiction of the old Adam, who tries to please and magnify God by his prayer and praise. The worship of the Gospel gives way to Christ as the chief actor and giver.

As we probe the language of worship in the following pages, we shall notice again and again that the two kinds of worship are inseparable from the two kinds of religion. False worship is rooted in man's fallen heart. Jesus faced and condemned the worship of the Law in the Pharisees, applying Isaiah's words to them: “In vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9; cf. Isaiah 29:13). Fifteen hundred years later, the perpetual battle had not ended, as Luther's Reformation struck worship as much as doctrine. In Luther's mind, the chief service of the Church could not run in a different direction than the Gospel breakthrough itself would dictate:

For this is a true God who gives and does not receive, who helps and does not let himself be helped, who teaches and rules and does not let himself be taught or ruled. In short, he does and gives everything, and he has need of no one; he does all things freely out of pure grace without merit, for the unworthy and undeserving, yes, for the damned and lost.²

The old Adam's influence is so strong that this radical redefinition of worship has rarely been articulated clearly in Christian theology and has become almost uniquely characteristic of Lutheran thinking. Even among us, it easily becomes

¹ Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 3 vols., trans. Theodore Engelder et al. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 1:10.

² *Admonition concerning the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Our Lord* (1530), AE 38:107.

muddled. It is not natural for us to think of worship in the passive language of reception. The transition from German and Latin into English has saddled us with terms that do not easily carry the Lutheran confessional content. *Gottesdienst*, *ministerium*, and *cultus Dei* have given way to “worship” with its Anglo-Saxon baggage of homage and fealty. “The liturgy” (singular, God’s work) has become “liturgies” (man-made orders of service). Contact with alien traditions has brought in “prayer and praise” services, our “utmost for His highest.”

The classic introduction to *Lutheran Worship* swam against this theological tide and helped many readers head back toward Lutheran shores. It reintroduced the language of “gift” and gave us the vocabulary to confess that “the rhythm of our worship is from him to us, and then from us back to him.” The introduction to *Lutheran Service Book* lengthened the strokes as it swam farther in the same direction.

LW, p. 6

The refreshing language of those introductions was drawn from the well of the Book of Concord, whose very name means “the book that brings unity.” Philipp Melancthon first tapped out the beat of worship’s rhythm in the Apology, perhaps the most significant source for a Lutheran theology of worship:

First, his words say this: the name of the Lord will be great. This is accomplished by the preaching of the Gospel. Through this preaching, Christ’s name is made known and the Father’s mercy, promised in Christ, is recognized. The preaching of the Gospel produces faith in those who receive the Gospel [Romans 10:17]. They call upon God, give thanks to God, bear troubles for their confession, and produce good works for Christ’s glory.³

Ap XXIV 32

This chapter recognizes the need to draw on such confessional sources to develop our vocabulary. Our theology runs with the words we use. If we find disagreement over liturgical matters, it may be that we do not understand the word “liturgy”—or at least we are not using it the same way. We cannot speak clearly with one another unless we understand the words. Each generation seeks words that more clearly confess what is going on. Witness the verbal movement from *The Lutheran Hymnal*, to *Lutheran Worship*, to *Lutheran Service Book*: with each generation, the nature of the liturgy has become more clear.

FAITH AS WORSHIP

When Melancthon defines “faith” as “the foremost worship” (*praecipuo cultu*, Ap IV 59),⁴ the thoughtful reader may question him on both sides of the equation: What do you mean by “faith”? And what do you mean by “worship”? Indeed, it is possible to run both together as man’s offering to God. As self-contradictory as it is, some Christians view faith as a work (“fideism”). “Justification by faith alone” then means that all works are excluded except for the one work that God values: faith. Faith then achieves its goals insofar as it is strong enough, and Christians are exhorted to have more faith or chided for not having enough. “Faith healing”

³ Unless otherwise indicated, quotations from the Lutheran Confessions are from *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006).

⁴ The German version of the Apology effuses: “daß der Glaube für den allerhöchsten, edelsten, heiligsten, größten, angenehmsten, besten Gottesdienst gelobt und gepriesen wird [that faith is lauded and praised as the very highest, noblest, holiest, greatest, loveliest, best divine service].” *Concordia Triglotta* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921); author’s translation.

depends on the notion that faith in and of itself can have value. It may well be that Luther's Roman opponents scoffed at "justification by faith alone" because they viewed faith as a work far too weak to have such an effect!

Such a view of faith runs together with worship as a work. Melancthon can then be misunderstood as saying, "If you want to offer God something He really values, then believe in Him a lot (and He will reward you)." This is no theoretical error but a widespread misconception of both faith and worship. But Melancthon objects: "For faith justifies and saves, not because it is a worthy work in itself, but only because it receives the promised mercy" (Ap IV 56). This definition informs the meaning of "worship." Never straying far from the core Gospel matter of justification, Melancthon opposes any attempt to make worship into an act of man's righteousness toward God:

The difference between this faith and the righteousness of the Law can be easily discerned. Faith is the divine service (*latreia*) that receives the benefits offered by God. The righteousness of the Law is the divine service (*latreia*) that offers to God our merits. God wants to be worshiped through faith so that we receive from Him those things He promises and offers.

Ap IV 49

Here we see that the difficulties we have with the word "worship" are not entirely new. Struggling for vocabulary appropriate to the Gospel, Melancthon takes up an old Greek word (*λατρεία*) and feeds into it the needed meaning. Faith is not worship in the sense that it offers something to God. Rather, as "worship" is defined simply as what pleases God, Melancthon argues that the passive reception of God's gifts is the highest worship. And faith is nothing more than receiving.

Following Luther, we have become accustomed to calling this "passive righteousness," language that has opened Lutherans to the charge of "passivity," complacency, laziness. But when we speak of "passivity" in faith and worship, we are merely confessing that God is the actor, the source, the agent. This is "passive" in the grammatical sense of not running the verb but being run by it. The faith that receives God's gifts, while passive (that is, receptive) in the drama of salvation, is nonetheless "living and active" as God acts upon it and through it. Luther can confess both qualities of faith at the same time:

Faith, however, is a divine work in us that changes us and makes us to be born anew of God, John 1[:12–13]. It kills the old Adam and makes us altogether different men, in heart and spirit and mind and powers; it brings with it the Holy Spirit. O, it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith. It is impossible for it not to be doing good works incessantly.⁵

The rhythm of worship is beating again. God generates and nurtures faith with His Word-and-Sacrament giving, enlivening faith so that it rises up to meet the Giver with its thanks and praise and overflows the gifts toward the neighbor.

Faith is worship because worship begins with reception. This means that true worship occurs whenever God's gifts are received according to Christ's mandate and institution. "This [right] use of the sacrament, when faith gives life to terrified

⁵ FC SD IV 10, quoting Luther's *Preface to Romans*, AE 35:370.