

WE MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE

A NARRATIVE EUCHARIST FOR CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
IN KOKOMO, INDIANA

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CELEBRATED ON NOVEMBER 29, 2009

PREFACE

The purpose of a narrative Eucharist is tutorial.

Those who were reared in the Lutheran tradition should be reminded, and, those who have come to us from other backgrounds want to understand why it is we Lutherans do what we do on Sunday mornings!

This year at the start of a new church year it seemed fitting that we review for all who want to know just what the service is all about.

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

You can attend almost any Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) church, on any Sunday morning, and find many of the rituals to be like you have in your home parish. During the years since the death of Pope John Paul II, many churches that were very formal in their style of worship have become more 'friendly' in their language and their service overall. Other churches have moved from a casual construct to one that is considered more formal.

Christ Lutheran Church in Kokomo is not the most formal of ELCA parishes, nor is it one of the more casual. It is somewhere in between. We strive to use language and song that all can understand. Our hope is that all, no matter their background, can come to Christ Lutheran in Kokomo and hear the good news of Jesus and know the Grace of God.

My experience with Lutheran services comes from serving on the worship ministry of three Lutheran churches over the years. The sources for this narrative came from my background in this particular ministry and the following:

"A Narrative Eucharist", used at Faith Lutheran Church in Cockeysville, Maryland, some twenty years ago.

"With One Voice", a Lutheran Resource for Worship published by Augsburg Fortress.

"The Evangelical Lutheran Worship Book", published by Augsburg Fortress.

"Sunday Morning", a slim book for children.

I also used material suggested in discussions with Pastors Mark Sloss and Karen Martin Kepner.

Judy Kepner

NARRATIVE EUCHARIST

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Narrator: GOOD MORNING! We used a bell as 'the call to worship' this morning for two specific reasons: 1) To gather and seat you inside, 2) To help you turn your hearts to prayer. We are going to do the worship service in a special way called a narrative Eucharist. Narrative because of the running commentary throughout and Eucharist because we will celebrate the Lord's Supper.

Between the different parts of the service there will be a narration explaining how each part of the liturgy relates to our everyday lives. Any announcements that need to be made will be postponed until just before the assisting minister sends us out to do God's will.

Before we begin, let us pause to note the inner structure of our worship service. We are known as a liturgical church. The word LITURGY means the work of the people. All of the people taking part in the service help to make our worship whole. The congregation, therefore, is as important to our worship as the pastor, music, choir, or assisting minister. You could liken the service to a book with four chapters:

- THE GATHERING
- THE WORD
- THE MEAL
- THE SENDING

There are several parts under each of these "chapters" and we will be explaining them as we continue. All of the parts of our service are important.

The liturgy of the WORD takes place at a reading desk called a lectern. The liturgy of the MEAL takes place around a table known as the altar. The liturgy of baptism takes place at the baptismal font. These furnishings are each made from the bounty given us by a gracious God.

It is the meaning and significance of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus that is the focus of every Sunday service. At the same time each Sunday has a particular emphasis. This emphasis is established through biblical texts, prayers,

and hymns. Today is the first Sunday of Advent. It is also the beginning of the church year. The various rituals of our lives change with the seasons, as do the colors of the world around us. It is natural for our worship setting to change also. It has changed to Number Four in the ELW. You'll note the color for Advent is blue.

At the start of our service, there is a time set aside for preparation. It is a time when we can calm down from the stresses of our everyday lives. This preparation consists of a musical meditation, called a PRELUDE, and is usually followed by our corporate confession of sins. Music is an important meaningful element of our worship that helps us respond to the Word. We shall now begin our preparation for worship with the PRELUDE.

Organist: *Prelude*

Narrator: This past week we probably did some things that we know we should not have done; and we probably failed in doing some things that we should have done. As a result, we no doubt carry with us the guilt and memory of wrong doing. While we cannot go back and relive the past, we can get a fresh start from within. The confession of sins gives us the opportunity to be honest with ourselves before God, to seek the gift of forgiveness and be renewed, to begin again.

PRESIDER: *the Order for Confession and Forgiveness*

Narrator: We have heard the music of meditation and together we have confessed our sins. We are now ready to enter into our service of worship. Figuratively, the congregation enters into the spirit of worship with the singing of an entrance hymn called THE GATHERING SONG. In our service on festival Sundays the worship leaders and choir enter at this time and take their places so that the main parts of the service may begin.

Let us now join together and sing the GATHERING SONG.

Organist: *Gathering Song.*

Narrator: The PRESIDING MINISTER greets the assembly with a greeting used by St. Paul in his letters. It is the New Testament way of saying "good morning". The assembly responds as usual with: "And also with you".

PRESIDER: *the Greeting Is Said and Response Given..... congregation joins in.*

Narrator: The KYRIE is a prayer for peace sung as a dialog between a cantor and the congregation. We need peace in the world, our country, our state, our parish, our family. The word KYRIE comes from the Greek and means Lord, or OH Lord, as in crying to the Lord like we might in prayer. In the Kyrie we pray that peace and reconciliation may be brought to those areas of life that reflect hostility and that God will provide opportunities for this to take place.

CANTOR: *the Kyrie is sung*

Narrator: God calls and gathers believers through the Holy Spirit, and in response the community acclaims this gracious God in song and prayer. We have prayed for peace; therefore, we now continue our entrance into the service by singing a hymn of praise. In this case it is "THIS IS THE FEAST" which is started by the cantor and then sung by the assembly.

CANTOR: *Introduction of the Hymn of Praise*

ORGANIST: *the Hymn of Praise Is Sung.*

Narrator: During Advent we light a new candle each week as a symbol of LOVE, PEACE, JOY & HOPE. Since this is the first Sunday of Advent, we also bless the Advent wreath. As the acolyte lights the candle we accompany this act

with song.

PRESIDER: *the Advent Wreath Is Blessed and the First Candle Is Lit.*

Organist: *the Assembly Sings "Light the Candle".*

Narrator: THE *GATHERING* chapter of our book ends with THE *PRAYER OF THE DAY*. This prayer helps us to focus our thoughts and concerns in relation to the central theme of the day. Before we pray, we exchange a form of greeting, or salutation, with the presider. This is a way of establishing a bond between the congregation and the one who is to lead us in our worship.

PRESIDER: *the Prayer of the Day*

Narrator: The *GATHERING* is now concluded and we are ready to turn our hearts to the *WORD*.

In the readings from the Bible we hear stories of people and their relationship to God set in the context of their daily lives. Their time in world history is removed from our time by many centuries, but the themes are the same as those of today: sickness and health, hunger and food, joy and sorrow, injustice and oppression, peace and war, life and death. The whole Church hears of God's actions in every time and place during readings from this rich treasure of Scripture.

A three-year cycle of readings provides portions of the Hebrew Scriptures, the New Testament letters, and the Gospel books for each week. During Advent and Christmas the lectionary reveals the mystery of the Word made flesh. In the time of Lent and Easter, the paschal mystery of the Lord's death and resurrection is proclaimed. Throughout the Season of Pentecost, the New Testament texts are read in an almost continuous order. During the last Sundays of the year, the readings present the final vision of a new heaven and a new earth.

In the First Reading we hear again of God's care of the Hebrew people in many

varied situations. At the end of both the first and second Readings we respond by saying "Thanks be to God".

LECTOR: the First Reading

Narrator: Between the first and second Readings we sing an ancient Jewish song called a Psalm. It is a chanted dialog between the cantor and the assembly in our service. This is a very ancient practice going back to early worship in the synagogue.

CANTOR: the Psalm Is Sung

Narrator: In the second reading we listen to a letter written by one of the first Christian teachers. It was the practice of early Christians to meet on Sundays in someone's home to share the holy meal and they often read the letters of Paul. In these same words, God speaks to us in our church and we are once again enriched by hearing of God's grace to all.

LECTOR: the Second Reading

Narrator: Our encounter with the living Word, Jesus Christ, is marked by proclamation, psalm, singing, speaking, movement and gesture. Through the narratives and interpretations of the early church writers the Jesus of history and of faith becomes present to us. We now stand out of respect because in Jesus, God came to live on earth and we sing the ancient word Alleluia, which means "praise the Lord". We call this the Gospel Acclamation and the only time the word Alleluia is not used is during Lent.

ORGANIST: Gospel Acclamation Is Sung

Narrator: The presider announces the Gospel reading for the day and the assembly gives a said response, or responds in song, as we do today : Glory to you, O Lord. Then the presider reads the Gospel. The meaning of Gospel is "Good

News". Therefore, when the Gospel is read we are really hearing the good news of Jesus from one of the four Gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. Following the reading the assembly gives a said response, or one in song: Praise to you, O Christ

PRESIDER: *the Gospel and Responses - the Congregation*

Narrator: This is the time for the SERMON. In the sermon, the pastor draws upon his or her theological education to help the congregation make the connection between religion and life, between ancient writings and the present.

Today this narrative functions as the sermon!

I will briefly call your attention to the structure of our sanctuary. Our focus is on the cross. As we come in we see the baptismal font. If you so desire, it is right and proper to dip our fingers in the water of the font and make the sign of the cross in remembrance of our own baptism both as we enter or leave the sanctuary. This is where we hear the Word and receive the gift of grace at a holy meal. The structure, the furnishings and the windows all help to make the setting a place for the Holy Spirit to lead us to God. We use simple everyday things, bread, wine, and water in the service as we offer up to God our prayers and give thanks for his continuing gifts.

Following the sermon a HYMN OF THE DAY is sung. Every effort is made to have this hymn reflect the theme of one of the texts read, or, is linked with the sermon subject. Therefore, the Hymn of the Day both proclaims and responds to the Word.

ORGANIST: *the Hymn of the Day Is Sung*

Narrator: The Creed is a further response to hearing the Word. With the whole church of God we stand together and confess our faith through an ancient form of expression; most often either the Apostle's Creed or the Nicene Creed. In this creed we say that we believe in the triune God: the Creator, who is

experienced through the mystery of creation; the Son, who is experienced in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and the Spirit, who is experienced in the healing of brokenness, the process of life and growth, and the hope of the future.

PRESIDER: *the Apostle's Creed Is Said by the Assembly*

Narrator: Our response to hearing the Word preached and acclaimed leads the assembly to pray for the Church, the world, and all those who suffer or are in need. In the PRAYER OF THE CHURCH we hold before God our concerns for our world, our loved ones, our neighbors and our daily needs. We pray for those known to us and for the millions who are unknown. We enter into the joys and sorrows of life. This is the prayer of God's people, prayed in the spirit of Christ. It was St. Augustine who said "he who sings prays twice". Therefore, we respond to our prayers in song.

ASSISTING MINISTER: *the Prayer of the Church -The Prayer Is Read And the Assembly Responds in Song.*

Narrator: We have now come to the end of the section of our book called the Word. A rite of Peace forms a link between the Word and the Meal. Having heard the proclamation of the Gospel and having shared together our concerns and joys through prayer, we now wish each other the peace of the Lord as we make ready for the Meal.

PRESIDER: *the Peace Is Shared*

Narrator: To prepare for the Lord's Supper, we bring forth the gifts of bread and wine, simple signs of God's love, humble signs of human labor. Along with these gifts we also bring our gifts of money, again a symbol of our labor. Sometimes other food items or monetary gifts are brought forward as needed. While this is being done, the choir sings an anthem selected because it reflects the theme of the day, followed by the offertory canticle.

ORGANIST: Anthem Is Sung by Choir

ORGANIST: Offertory Canticle is Sung

Narrator: The gifts have been brought forth and it is now time to give thanks for all the many gifts we have received.

ASSISTING MINISTER: Offertory Prayer.

Narrator: In the liturgy of the Meal we are brought to the table of Jesus as he ate with his disciples at his last Passover. In word and gesture, prayer and song, the people lift up their hearts in praise and thanksgiving for the gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation as they hear again the words that Jesus spoke at this supper and remember his death and resurrection.

This part of the service begins with a dialog dating back to the second century. It places the meal into its proper context; and it is often sung, but it is also sometimes spoken, as it is today. This is called the GREAT THANKSGIVING. It is followed by a seasonal preface that reflects the gospel stories about Jesus's entrance into the region of Jerusalem before his last Passover. The Eucharistic prayers change according to season, but they always retell the history of our faith. The assembly responds by singing the Holy Holy.

Presider: Prayer of Thanksgiving Dialog and Preface

Organist: the Holy Holy Is Sung.

Narrator: The prayers may include the acclamation that Christ has died, risen and will come again. We now have the words of institution that Jesus said to his disciples at the last supper which is followed by a the AMEN.

PRESIDER: the Words of Institution

ORGANIST: *the Amen Is Sung*

Narrator: With one voice the congregation prays the prayer our Lord taught us: the Lord's Prayer

Presider: *the Lord's Prayer Is Said by the Assembly*

Narrator: The presider now welcomes all to the Meal and the assembly prays in song for the end of sin and for peace.

Organist: *Lamb of God Is Sung*

PRESIDER: *the Meal*

Narrator: After the MEAL the presider prays that we will all be renewed and empowered by this gift.

PRESIDER: *Ends Communion*

Narrator: The meal is over but the experience remains. In song we express our faith and thankfulness. This is followed by a prayer that continues the theme of thanksgiving.

ORGANIST: *Post Communion Canticle Is Sung*

ASSISTING MINISTER: *Post Communion Prayer*

Narrator: The liturgy of the Meal is over. At this time we send communion to those who can not come to church and pray for those who do this service and those who receive it. This is done on the first and the third Sunday of

each month. We are now ready to receive a final blessing and join in the singing of our Sending hymn.

PRESIDER: *the Presider Now Blesses the Assembly*

ORGANIST: *the Sending Hymn Is Sung*

Narrator: Please Be Seated! Now Is the Time for Any
Announcements!

Narrator: We have been reminded of how the structure of our service reflects the practices of the very first Christians. We have heard again the gospel witnesses. We have celebrated the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus. We have gathered at the Lord's table. And we have been offered courage to live our lives as disciples. We have responded throughout with a joyful noise in songs of praise and thanksgiving. Our service is now concluded, but we do not close our book of worship; we leave it open to sustain and empower us to do God's will as the assisting minister sends us, with hearts full of song, back into the world.

ASSISTING MINISTER: *the Sending/Dismissal*

The Assembly Responds with: 'Thanks be to God'.

ORGANIST: *Postlude*