

A Service of Instructed Eucharist

I. Why do we celebrate the Eucharist the way that we do?

The simple answer is that we are a liturgical people. Since the beginning of God's call upon our spiritual matriarch and patriarch, Sarah and Abraham, we have always been a people who uses certain familiar forms of worship to remind us of the God who saves us and of our continuity with those who came before us, those who worship in other locales now, and those who will later follow in our footsteps. In fact, the word *liturgy* reminds us of our obligation to remember His saving works. *Lit* comes from the Greek word *laos* for *people*, and *urgical* comes from the Greek word, *eirgon* meaning *to work*. Thus, liturgy is literally "the work of the people."

The death and Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth ushered in new forms of that remembrance which we seem to crave, but most everything in our worship extends prior even to His ministry. As with the Jewish Passover, the meal at which Jesus introduced the Eucharist that we celebrate, Christians are called to celebrate the Eucharist in a context of thanksgiving, a context of memorial, a context of communion, a context of covenant sacrifice, and a context of anticipation. We give thanks to God, as the word Eucharist suggests, for all His promises and provision to His people. We celebrate the Eucharist in remembrance of His promise that His sacrificial death and its benefits are made available now to all who share in the bread and the cup. As I noted earlier, we celebrate that in the celebration of the Eucharist, Christ is present with those who participate in the service and binds them to one another no matter the time or location. The Eucharist reminds us that Jesus was the sacrifice which atoned for all our sins. Finally, we partake of the meal recognizing that what we eat in some sense, is just an appetizer, that He will come again to usher in the marriage feast celebrating the union of His bride (the Church) to Himself.

While most of this instruction will look at the form which we use to celebrate, some attention needs to be given to the setting. In our setting, the altar is the focal point of the worship space, signifying the importance we place upon the Eucharist. Above the altar hangs the cross, which reminds us all of the cost which He bore for our sins. The altar rail, while traditional and practical, no longer serves the purpose for which it was initially designed – keeping the animals away from the altar. Instead, it serves as the smaller "table" at which individuals are served, convenient for those who prefer to kneel when receiving the sacrament.

Similarly, the purposes of the altar candles have evolved through the years. In the beginning of worship, candles served simply to provide light. The discovery of electricity, and the invention of lights, naturally, made that purpose unnecessary. Today, we are reminded that Christ will be present in the Eucharist whenever we see the altar candles lit. Other candles may be used to call attention to specific areas.

On the altar, you will notice the veil and burse. The veil reminds us at each service that the barrier which stood between God and His people has now been removed, just as the curtain of the Temple was torn at His death. The veil covers the chalice, the purificator, the host, and the paten, to which more detail will be given later. And all of that sits on the corporal, the covering cloth which calls to mind the cloth in which Jesus was wrapped at

His death. The burse is used to carry the folded corporal to and from the altar as well as store other purificators.

Unique to St. Alban's is the credence drawer. Traditionally, a table is set off to one side in the church, and it usually contains a lavabo bowl and towel, a cruet of water, a second chalice and purificator and extra wine, if necessary.

The priest, you will notice, is vested as appropriate to his or her office and reflective of some of his or her personal theology. Some priests will use a cassock alb, calling to mind the white robe of the newly baptized, while others will wear the Anglican cassock (black robe) and surplice (white covering). All priests celebrating the Eucharist are required to wear a stole, a reminder to them and us that they are pastors sent by God to feed and tend His flock. The stole is always supposed to be the same color as the veil and burse, reminding the people of the season of worship in which we are. Some, tending toward the Anglo-catholic spectrum of worship, may choose to wear other celebratory vestments appropriate to the service.

Looking at the entrance to the worship space, you will notice the presence of the baptismal font. Every time we enter this sacred space, we are reminded of how we entered into discipleship with Christ, through our own baptism. Indeed, many worshippers take advantage of the holy water present to remind themselves of the promises which they made before God and the promises He made to them every time they enter or leave the sacred space.

Opposite the baptismal font is the *hombre* or *tabernacle*, from the Hebrew word meaning "God pitched His tent among us." The blessed sacrament is kept by the congregation for sharing with shut-ins or for consumption during spiritual emergencies. The lit candle above reminds us that Jesus is truly present, and, in many churches, is built into the altar so that people may bow in respect to Him as they enter the church.

Between the two, on the south end of the church, you will notice the organ and keyboard. We are taught to sing to the Lord and to make a joyful noise unto Him, and the music assists us in the obligation of worship.

With respect to style of worship, St. Alban's is probably more "low church." Other churches will tend to the Anglo-catholic side of things, where incense (prayer offering to God) and sanctus bells might be used. Still other churches will be between the two extremes.

The pews in which you sit also assist in worship. The pews offer a place to sit during appointed times, a place to kneel for those penitent or prayerful before God, and room enough to stand when we recognize that Christ has made us worthy to stand before God. You will notice that at St. Alban's most of us tend to sit to listen, to stand to praise, and to kneel to pray and confess. Others among us, however, may choose to stand to pray or simply use a position better suited for their bodies. You will quickly notice that our services are also catholic in the sense that our whole bodies are used during the service of worship. With all that described, let us consider for a moment the tradition in which we participate.

Traditionally, before the beginning of worship, there is quiet time or transition time. This allows people to begin to re-orient themselves from the world around us and to begin

to concentrate upon God and His presence. It is not uncommon to see people in prayer or meditation as music is played quietly in the background. Some may choose to kneel or to sit as they transition, keep eyes open or closed, depending upon personal preference.

The service itself begins with The Entrance. Technically, the Entrance rites go from the time the Cross leads the Procession into the church all the way to the Collect of the Day. Done poorly, entrances can be confusing and cluttering, causing the congregation to forget why it is gathered. Done well, and the congregation begins to feel drawn into worship of God. Processional Hymns are most often used at this church, though at times there are solemn processions, where the worship team enters in silence. There are also some other specific times, like at the Great Vigil, when the Procession enters to the singing or speaking of a special litany.

There is a specific order to the Procession. The cross leads, usually followed by two acolytes with candles—again focusing our attention upon the means of our redemption. At this point, the congregation is standing, if able, to participate in the procession. Most in the congregation will reverence the cross as it passes by. Next often comes the choir to help lead the congregation in song. Although not practiced in our church, the Gospel is often processed by a deacon or an assisting priest. After the choir comes the deacons then the assisting priests followed by the Celebrant. If the bishop is present, he or she is the Celebrant and comes at the last. The motion of the procession is meant to recall the image of a flock and its pastor. God notes throughout the Bible that His pastors will lead His people into worship, and the procession reflects that intention. Traditionally, everyone in the procession reverences the altar when they reach it, once again focusing the attention of the gathered congregation on the actions that are about to occur there.

Once the hymn is finished, the People remain standing, if able, and are called to worship by the priest. There are three possible opening verses, each of which reminds us of the liturgical season in which we find ourselves. For most of the year, the priest will open worship with the sentence we hear today, which reverences the Holy Trinity. Immediately after the peoples' response, the priest says the Collect for purity, which reminds God's people that He knows their hearts and prays to God for the grace to be cleansed and inspired. Next, the Gloria is sung, although it can be spoken, except during the season of Lent. The Gloria, in a very distilled way, explains the purpose of the Incarnation, Crucifixion, and Ascension as the will of God. It is at this point in the service that you may begin to notice those worshipping with you bowing during the praise of Lord Jesus Christ. Although by no means required, some choose to do so in recognition of the promise of Philippians 2:10 that, at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bend. Many will choose as a sign of personal devotion to bow throughout the rest of the service any time His name is mentioned.

Finally, as the last part of the Entrance, the priest leads us in the Collect of the Day. The Collects, many of which were written by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer and based upon numerous prayers of the early Church, are assigned by date. The priest reads the one appointed by the date as found on pages 211-236. Some may wonder why the date and proper differ. For example, upon closer examination, you may notice that today is the Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost, yet we are using Proper 16 readings and its collect. The difference is explained by the calendar. For Christians, Easter is celebrated on a different

date each year. The date of Easter sets the rest of our liturgical calendar. When Easter comes early, so does Pentecost. When Easter is later in the year, so is Pentecost. The Propers are set up for any eventuality. In those years when Pentecost falls on April 27, then our Propers and Sundays line up. Every other year, there is a difference. This year, Pentecost came three weeks after the Sunday closest to April 27, so we skip the first three Propers in our liturgical cycle and celebrate the second Sunday after Pentecost with Proper 5 (celebrating Trinity Sunday the first week after Pentecost).

Now, let us begin with the singing of hymn number 450 verses 1-3.

(insert Hymn)

After the Entrance, the congregation sits for the Liturgy of the Word. On Sundays and major Feast Days a Lesson, a Psalm, Epistle, and Gospel are appointed to be read. All four readings were read in the early Church to remind those gathered in worship of the continuity of God's plan in salvation history. We use a fixed pattern of scripture readings, called a lectionary, that allows us to hear some parts of the Bible within a three-year period. It is preferred that designated laity read the Old Testament lesson and the New Testament Epistle. Psalms are often led by Cantors or said in unison or responsive reading by the congregation. Some congregations prefer to sing the Psalm. The readings close with a reminder that what we read we believe to have been revealed and inspired by God. And the congregation gives its thanks.

After the Epistle, the congregation usually sings an alleluia verse or a sequence hymn. During the song, the deacon or priest reading the Gospel will process the Gospel to the place where it is to be read. In many traditional churches, the clergy reading the Gospel is led by the crucifer and accompanied by the torchbearers (reminding us to focus our attention there); at St. Alban's, however, our liturgical space dictates that it will be read at the altar, as that is the center and the attention of the people. And now, let us continue with the service . . .

(Readings)

(Gospel Hymn)

(Gospel)

Why do we stand during the Gospel but sit during the Old Testament and New Testament readings? The act of standing is a sign of showing respect. When somebody enters a room, as a sign of respect, we often stand to greet the individual. When more important people enter a room to speak with us, it is considered bad manners if we do not stand to greet them. If the President of the United States or other such dignitary entered a room, not standing would be perceived as an insult rather than just bad manners. The Gospel reading, of course, contains the teachings and words of our Lord. Furthermore, the Gospel serves as the lens through which we correctly interpret the Old Testament, Psalms,

and New Testament. Thus, standing becomes an obvious way for us to show Jesus respect for what He has accomplished for us.

Similarly, our response to the Gospel differs from the rest of our readings. We praise Him through the responses “Glory to You, Lord Christ” and “Praise be to You, Lord Christ,” reminding ourselves of His place in salvation history. He is unique. He is the Son of God. He is our Lord and Savior. We should praise Him for the wonderful things He has done.

At this time, a sermon is usually preached. The sermon is supposed to be an integral part of our liturgy. Ideally, sermons are not breaks from the liturgical actions, nor are they somehow separate from the liturgy. It is part of the Liturgy of the Word and should be approached with the appointed readings in mind. As our readings progress through the weeks, months and years, a preacher faithful to the appointed readings is forced to touch upon a wide variety of topics as they are introduced. This keeps the preacher from sticking to the same topic each and every week or, perhaps, from avoiding so-called “difficult” topics for the sake of congregational harmony. Although descriptions may differ among some preachers and emphases as to which is more important may also change, sermons should instruct the congregation in God’s Truth, reprove the congregation of its immoral or ungodly behaviors and attitudes, correct or re-orient the congregation’s moral and intellectual failures, and train the congregation in righteous living. All of this must be done, of course, in light of God’s sacrifice for our sins and with forceful proclamations of His grace towards all humankind.

On Sundays, Principal Feasts, and Holy days the Nicene Creed comes immediately after the sermon. The creed, which comes from the Greek word *credo* meaning I believe, is named after the council in which it was adopted as the normative distillation of the Christian faith at some time around 325AD. Its purpose is to remind worshippers week in and week out of the Gospel basics and of the Triune God Whom we are called to worship and to prevent the same from being beguiled by false teaching. Specifically, the creed came about as a result of false teaching. During the early years of Constantine’s conversion, a bishop named Arius began to teach that Jesus was a creation of God and not really God. Some 300 plus bishops gathered to discern the truth and determine the essentials of the Christian faith in accordance with the Scriptures and teachings (remember, many would claim to have sat at the feet of others who sat at the feet of others who sat at the feet of Jesus). We stand once again as a sign of respect to God for who He is and what He has done for us.

You may notice during the creed that some may bow at the Incarnational affirmation “For us and for our salvation.” The bow, which may continue through the affirmation of death and burial of our Lord, is simply a sign of respect that one is of greater standing than oneself. The creed reminds us that Jesus died for us, rose again, and now sits at the right hand of the Father. He is of infinitely greater standing than ourselves, and so we honor Him appropriately by bowing before Him.

Similarly, you may notice that some among us cross themselves either at the promise of the resurrection or after the creed in its entirety. The cross reminds us how our hope is not in vain, and it serves as a reminder to the individual of the cost of one’s salvation.

Although the Nicene Creed debate seems settled (we have been using this for nearly 17 centuries), there is one theological battle still raging about its content. Most Eastern Orthodox churches do not say the *filioque* clause or “and from the Son.” The Eastern bishops were late in arriving to the Council of Nicea, and so they felt the decision to include the *filioque* was not properly debated. Our national church is actually considering dropping the clause in an effort improve our ecclesiastical relationship with many of those churches.

One last note: it is entirely acceptable for the creed to be left unsaid during weekday services. As, however, our weekday services skip the sermon, the creed serves as a reminder of what we believe after each set of readings. The creed is also omitted at Baptisms, Confirmation, and other liturgies which require a Renewal of Baptismal Vows, as those liturgies require the individual to assent. Thus, the Apostles’ Creed, which begins with “I believe” rather than “we believe” is far more appropriate.

Let us now confess our faith as found in the Nicene Creed . . .

(Nicene Creed)

After the creed comes the Prayers of the People. The Prayers of the People are led by a deacon, if present, or a member of the laity designated by the celebrant and licensed to do so by the bishop. The members of the congregation may kneel, as a personal devotion recognizing their sin before God, or stand, cognizant that they have been made worthy by Christ to stand before God, and still others may sit, as a result of infirmity. In the Rite 2 service there are six possible forms to be used. Forms I and V are penitential, and so they are often used during the seasons of penitence, Advent and Lent. Forms III and IV, can be used during any liturgical season, as can Form VI, which concludes with a prayer of confession, thereby obviating the need for the Confession of Sin. Those prayers marked with a vertical line, may be omitted during the Prayers of the People. Upon completion of the Prayers, the celebrant says one of the concluding Collects found on page 394-395, each of which should be used appropriately. Collects 1, 3, and 4 are for use at any time; Collects 2 and 5 are for use during Advent and Lent; Collect 6 is for use at any time, but in particular when Prayer 6 has been used to confess sins, Collect 7 is for use during Lent, Christ the King, Ascension Day, Epiphany, and any other day in which the focus is the Reign of Christ, and Collect 8 is appropriate for all celebrations of saints’ days.

Let us now pray for this congregation, this community, and any other cares and joys which we bring before God.

(prayers of the People)

After the Prayers of the People are finished and the Celebrant has completed the Concluding Collect, the Celebrant then calls the congregation to the Confession of Sins. Traditionally, the Confession is made in a kneeling position, indicating the confessor’s position as a penitent petitioner, though a solemn bow may be used as well. After the Confession, the Celebrant stands to pronounce absolution. Part of the responsibility given to priests as clergy in the apostolic tradition is the right to forgive or to retain sins in the

name of Christ. The sentence of absolution reminds us that God does, indeed, forgive us our sins if we are penitent before Him. Often, as a sign of devotion, those receiving absolution will cross themselves, usually reminding themselves of the cost of that forgiveness or of their own desire to follow Christ. Some, however, may choose simply to kneel or to stand. Nearly any reverential, awe-filled, joyful response would be appropriate at this point.

Immediately after the Absolution, the Celebrant exhorts those present to participate in the sharing of the Peace of the Lord. It is important to remember that this time is not visiting or catching up time. While the practice of shaking hands and hugging has, during modern times, almost become a time of liturgical halftime, it served an important function in the early Church. For all the importance and centrality of the Eucharist, the Bible gave very little in the way of instructions as to how the meal was to be celebrated. Certainly, as the Gospels relate Jesus' institution of it as a Sacrament in the Church, we are called to remember the meal as the Jews remembered the Passover, with even more significance, because God's people have finally and forever been redeemed. Besides Jesus' instructions to remember Him when we eat His flesh and drink His blood, He also reminded us in Matthew 5:23-24 to forgive and to seek forgiveness from those around us. Further, in 2 Corinthians 11 and a few other places, Paul reminds us to come before God with penitent hearts and in love and charity with our neighbor. Naturally, the Confession demonstrates our penitent heart, and the Peace serves to allow us to ask for and receive forgiveness from our brothers and sisters so as not to blaspheme the Sacrament and earn the curse of God. From time to time, you may notice people gathered for Eucharist not coming forward. If the person from our faith tradition refuses to come forward because they have not confessed a sin to God, such is an appropriate response. Similarly, if a person has not sought forgiveness from one whom he or she has wronged *or* if a person is unwilling to forgive another who wronged them, the appropriate response is to avoid receiving the sacrament. Such a person correctly understands the cost of their sins, the death of our Lord Christ, and honors that sacrifice by recognizing that he or she is unable or unwilling to emulate Him for a time. The Peace marks the end of the Liturgy of the Word.

The priest will now call us to confession. . . .

(Confession of Sins)

(Absolution)

(Peace)

Returning now to our service, we begin the Liturgy of the Sacrament. This part of the Liturgy begins with the Offertory. Although any Offertory sentence is acceptable, most celebrants use one of the sentences found on page 376. It is not uncommon at this point, while the plate is being passed around so that worshippers may offer their first fruits and their thank offerings to God, for a choir or individuals or even the congregation to offer an appropriate song to God. Ideally, the song will touch on the same themes as the reading and sermon.

While the choir sings and the plate is being passed around, action occurs at the altar. The first of those actions are the presentation of the elements, the bread and the wine. Traditionally, the bread and wine are brought forward before the plate is passed, as an offering on behalf of all those present.

As the elements are being presented, the deacon, if present, or the celebrant, will begin to set the table. Along with calling the attention and efforts of the Church to the needs of those around them in the world, the preparation and cleanup of the altar or table are the primary functions of deacons. In Acts 6, the Apostles recognized that their serving at the tables forced them to neglect some of the prayers and teaching the word of God, so it pleased all those present to call from among the congregation 7 *diakonoi*, or deacons.

Prior to the elements being brought forward, the altar must be made ready to receive them, and most of this action occurs while the choir's offering is being made. The first action is often the presentation of the chalice and paten, covered by a veil and topped with a burse. The corporal is then removed from the burse and spread upon the altar. The corporal, which is folded into nine squares, is meant to remind us of the burial shroud of Jesus. When the corporal is placed, the creases are placed so that it folds up, thereby preventing any of the blessed sacrament from being swept off onto the floor.

Once the corporal is spread, the chalice is placed on the corporal. There can never be more than one chalice, one cup, on the altar during the Eucharist. For large numbers of people present, cruets should hold the wine until after the prayer of consecration. The burse is set to the side, and the veil is removed, reminding those worshipping that the barrier or gulf which once existed between God and humanity has been torn asunder by Christ's saving work on the cross, and folded neatly and placed upon the burse. Next the paten, which comes from the Latin *patina* meaning shallow dish, is placed on the corporal in the center closest to where the celebrant will stand. The purificator, a white linen which has rested over the chalice and beneath the paten, is removed and placed to the side. The purificator will serve to wipe the chalice after each individual drinks from the chalice. At this point in the service, the altar is ready to receive the elements. You will notice, of course, that as you enter the sanctuary of St. Alban's, the corporal is already set and the chalice is already placed in the middle of the corporal, so some of that action has been completed by members of our altar guild, who work to make sure that liturgical actions around the altar go smoothly.

The last liturgical action at the altar during the Offertory, presuming there is no incense, is the washing of the priest's hands. Although the act is more symbolic today, its use was required as early as the third century and definitely by the Middle Ages. In those days, animals were kept in the churches to shelter them from the weather and protect them from bandits. One of the first jobs of the priest upon entering his cure in the morning was to shoo the animals out of the church and clean up the evidence that animals had spent the night. Hygiene dictated that the priest's hands be washed before handling the elements or blessed sacraments. Today, the washing is meant to signify the celebrant's inner purity, made possible through Christ's offering and the gift of the Holy Spirit. In fact, the Celebrant is expected to wash his or her hands and recite the words of Psalm 26:6-12 - "I will wash my hands in innocence." The water, you will notice, is poured over the priest's hands into a lavabo bowl. Lavabo comes from the Latin *lavare*, which means "to wash."

Once the altar has been prepared, the music finished, and the offerings of gifts and tithes collected, the offering plates are brought forward to the altar, often to the doxology. From the Greek meaning glory word, the doxology is a short hymn of praise where the congregation reminds itself of the Trinity and calls this world and the heavenly world to worship the Lord with them. This prayer has been said or sung since approximately the 600's. During this presentation of gifts, the celebrant will often raise the elements and the monetary gifts to the Lord, though some may eschew the offering of the plate. In our diocese, the bishop requires that the offering be kept on the altar, signifying the sacrifice of those present. Thus, while one may see the plate carried off to the credence table or other location in other diocese, in the diocese of Iowa one should always see the offering plates on the altar. As a matter of personal devotion, our priest almost always prays a prayer of loaves and fishes over our gifts, that God might multiply them to His use.

And now, let us walk in love as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God. . .

(offertory)

(doxology)

And now we come to the Holy Communion. The service will follow the pattern established by God in the Old Testament and reaffirmed by Christ during the feeding of the 5000. During the Holy Communion, the priest will take, bless, break, and give those gathered together in worship. As the celebrant begins the Eucharistic Prayer, his or her hands are held outward of the waist, signifying that all are invited. After the opening sentence, the celebrant's hands will move toward the heavens, prompting us to lift up our hearts. During the Eucharist, a celebrant has a choice of four prayers. Prayer A is properly used any time of the year. Prayer B is properly used at any time in which the Incarnation, the ministry of Jesus, is the principle focus of the day. Prayer C is also used any time of the year, but especially those days on which our focus is upon God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth. Prayer D, which you may notice we do not use very often, was composed primarily for ecumenical services celebrated with other Christian traditions. It was not meant to be used as the primary worship service when most present are of our denomination. Today, we will be celebrating using Prayer A.

(beginning of Prayer A)

Immediately following the introductory sentences and the call to worship, the celebrant will remind the congregation that it is right and a joyful thing to worship God. During this part of the service, a Preface is always said or sung on Sundays, Feast Days, and any other appointed days. During the season in which we are in, the celebrant will choose from or rotate through a Preface speaking of the Father, of the Son, or of the Holy Spirit. Every other preface is assigned to a specific liturgical season or liturgical service. You may peruse those prefaces at your leisure on pages 377-382. If one participates in a weekday service

not held on a feast day, one may notice that a Proper Preface is not said, in accordance with the rubrics of the Prayer Book.

After the Preface, the celebrant reminds the congregation that the worship of God is occurring in heaven and that our voices join with the angels in the praise of God. Chiefly this praise comes in the form of a song called the sanctus, from the Latin word *tersanctus* meaning “Three times holy.” Once again, many worshippers will bow during the “Holy, holy, holy” out of respect to the Trinity. Similarly, many worshippers will cross themselves during the “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,” reminding themselves and signifying to others that they are, indeed, ambassadors of Christ.

(Prayer A more)

(preface)

(Sanctus)

At this point in the service, worshippers may continue to stand, recognizing that they are made worthy to stand before God; or they may kneel, in reverent awe of the saving deed He has done for them. The celebrant’s hands are in the orans position, or Latin for praying. The position goes back to Jewish times, and it may have in its root the 141 Psalm. The first paragraph of Prayer A reminds us that God created us, that we rejected Him and so brought death upon ourselves, and that He acted to save us, for once and for all, through the Crucifixion.

(Next part of Eucharist)

Next in the service comes the Consecration of the elements. During the consecration of the bread, the celebrant will raise the bread to God, pray for God to bless it, and then return it to the paten. The consecration of the elements can only be effected by those ordained to the priesthood. Part of the purpose of the laying on of hands by a bishop at an ordination service is the bestowal of this charism on the priest. Sitting here, you might be wondering “What about bishops.” Bishops are ordained priests before they are consecrated as bishops; therefore, they, too, may bless the sacrament. Some celebrants, as a sign of personal devotion, will genuflect; others may bow deeply. All gathered should reverently remember that He gave up His body for their sake.

(consecration of bread)

Similarly, the cup of wine will be lifted up to God, prayed over, and blessed by God in remembrance of the covenant made by God. Today we talk about the “New” covenant. However, the *kaine* or new was not a part of the Gospel. Jesus’ death and blood fulfilled the demands of the firstborn sacrifice of the Old Testament. Again, the celebrant may genuflect, bow deeply, or show some other sign of deep respect that does not detract worshippers from the celebration.

(consecration of the wine)

After this action, the celebrant will call us to proclaim the mystery of faith. Remember, it is a claim of faith. We do not expect ourselves to be able to explain fully why God would die for us, how He was raised (other than through God's power and for the purpose of signaling to us that He was and is the *Messiah*), or how He will come again. These basic tenets are to modern science and to reason, mysterious.

(mystery of faith)

Next, the actual memorial and consecration of the elements is beseeched of God. Like salvation, the efficacy of the sacrament is dependent solely upon God's grace towards us. We offer the gifts remembering Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension, praying to God to sanctify and bless the elements, and turn them into the flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. As the celebrant intones the blessing, he or she may lay hands over the elements or he or she may make the sign of the cross three times over the element, signifying that God is Triune.

Additionally, some worshippers may choose to cross themselves when the celebrant asks God to sanctify all those who will share the meal as a sign of personal devotion.

Finally, during the third paragraph, the Trinity will be invoked again. Some celebrants may make the sign of the cross over the Sacrament, perhaps even three times to signify the Three Persons of the Trinity, some may reverently bow, and still others may remain upright as a matter of personal devotion.

What do we believe happens when the elements are blessed and become the sacrament? Properly understood in the Christian tradition, the bread and wine remain simply bread and wine (Zwingli-ists) or become truly the flesh and blood of Christ (transubstantiation). Most of those gathered with us today will think of the sacrament along those lines. Typically, the Anglican/Episcopal faith tradition sought a middle way of understanding. While we believe that Christ somehow inhabits the bread and the wine fully, we recognize that if we put the sacrament under a microscope, it would still look like plain bread and red wine rather than human flesh and human blood. For us, the "how" God works through the sacrament remains a mystery, and theological circles call it consubstantiation. What remains of primary importance to us is that He blesses it and nurtures us through it.

Finally, the celebrant calls us to pray the prayer our Lord taught His disciples.

(more Eucharist through Lord's Prayer)

After the Lord's Prayer, there is often a moment of silence. Then the celebrant lifts the bread, breaks it so as not spill any crumbs on the altar, and reminds us what has been completed for us, as followers of God.

The presence, or rather the absence of the alleluia often causes some confusion. Alleluias may be used on any Sunday (after all, each calls us to remember the first Easter Sunday) and any major feast day which falls outside of Advent and Lent. During the

seasons of penitence, we are more focused on the cost that Christ bore rather than just the joy of the Resurrection.

After this, the celebrant will face the people, raise the paten and chalice, and Invite the People of God to share in His holy meal. Usually, those serving at the altar and working during the service are served first; church spaces and local traditions, however, may change the order. Often, in smaller churches, laity may serve as chalice bearers, though in some the clergy may serve both. Celebrants and co-celebrants, those ordained to the priesthood present, will usually serve the host.

Standing or kneeling to receive the Sacrament, is again usually a matter of personal devotion or local tradition. One may either stand in recognition that Christ made one worthy to stand before God, or one may kneel in reverent awe that God would condescend to save humanity. Those choosing not to receive either because they are unrepentant, unwilling to be reconciled to a neighbor, or those of another Christian tradition, may come forward to receive a blessing from the celebrant at this time. To signify to the celebrant that a blessing is desired instead of the sacrament, one crosses arms over one chest.

It is appropriate during this time that there be music. Again, we are joyfully celebrating what God has done for us, and so we lift our voices in song.

Now, let us consider in silence what God has done for us, before the celebrant breaks the bread. . .

(the Breaking of the Bread)

(Sacrament communicated)

After all who desire to be and all who should be properly communicated (remember, notorious sinners are not to receive else they blaspheme the Sacrament), the altar is cleaned. If the celebrant chooses and the congregation needs, any extra Sacrament may be put in the hobre to be reserved for future use. Otherwise, the ministers consume the Sacrament, returning the empty paten and chalice to the celebrant. Both are placed where they were placed at the beginning of worship. The cleanup that ensues is done to make sure that none of the Sacrament is lost. Crumbs are often poured into the cup, and both are consumed with water. Both the paten and the chalice are dried. The paten is placed upon the chalice. The veil and burse are also replaced “tenting” the vessels. Then the corporal is folded up carefully to prevent and Sacrament from falling to the floor, placed in the burse, and carried to the credence table.

As with the beginning of the service, these final actions are completed at our church by the assigned member or members of the altar guild.

Once the altar is cleaned, the Celebrant calls us to the closing prayer, which reminds us that faith without works is dead. We are a sent people, now fed, nourished, and encouraged by God, used by Him to draw others into His heavenly kingdom. All this is done cheerfully and gladly in joyful response to the grace first given us.

After the prayer follows the blessing. Some of our blessings are thought to stretch back nearly to the beginning of the Church. They may vary according to the season, but each closes seeking the Trinity to bless all those present.

After the blessing is the closing procession. Often the closing procession is thought of as a recession, but that is incorrect. The terms refer to how one faces the one being honored or respected when approaching and leaving. A recession requires one to back up, still facing the one honored. As it is, we are led out into the world, with the cross before us, in the same order in which the service began, with the celebrant again in the last position.

And now, using that form, let us pray. . .

(Closing Prayer)

Now our work is nearly complete. All that remains is the Dismissal. If a deacon is present, he or she dismisses the congregation. If not, a priest or the celebrant dismisses. Again, the presence or absence of alleluias sometimes causes confusion. The rule is the same as before: alleluias ought to be avoided during seasons of penance and during regular weekday services. Otherwise, alleluias are proper and said in response to the clergy's use during the dismissal. In other words, if the clergy uses it, so should the congregation. If the clergy does not use the alleluias, then neither should the congregation.

It is the hope of Fr. Brian, the Vestry, and the Liturgy & Worship committee that this service was of some benefit to you. More questions can be addressed in the Parish Hall, and comments and critiques are welcomed as we try to fine-tune and edit this service. And now, all our work having been accomplished this morning . . .

(Dismissal)

(Postlude)