

Instructed Eucharist
Script/Presider Copy
Trinity Episcopal Church
January 21, 2018, 10:15 am service

Beginning/Before Prelude & Processional Hymn

Devon comes to the front of the sanctuary, along with Chip and Anne. Choir and altar party remain in back of sanctuary, ready to process. There will need to be a music stand in front of the altar for Devon. Devon will wear a portable microphone, and Anne wears the other one. Andrew and Chip will have the two portable microphones. The clergy are not vested. Vestments are placed ahead of time on the front pews, including a huge chasuble. Everyone else (altar party, choir, Andrew) are vested.

Devon: Welcome everyone! Today we have a special treat – an Instructed Eucharist – which is really a regular Sunday morning service, with commentary along the way. The service will last about the same amount of time, because there will be no sermon. You will see in your bulletin an indication of where we'll stop along the way for some commentary and explanation.

We begin with an opening instrumental piece called a **PRELUDE**, played by Andrew on our lovely organ. Most of us are not in the sanctuary during the Prelude, as we dart into the sanctuary after a meeting, or Adult Forum, or Trinity Play, or parking our cars or quickly downing coffee at Dunn Brothers. The Prelude is a chance to calm ourselves, to breathe and put aside the worries of the day. It's a chance to give all of our attention to God and to this moment and to each other.

Another way that many of us prepare for the service is by getting dressed! Those of us who help lead the service, with the exception of our readers, put on vestments. To spice things up we're going to get dressed in front of you this morning!

I'm putting on a white robe called an **ALB**. The word alb means *white* and is a sign for the purity of Christ. The alb is a carry over of the daily dress of the ancient Roman citizen.

There are several different vestments that can be worn over the alb. Each one, if you know what to look for, carries pieces of information. This long narrow strip of fabric is called a **STOLE** and it's worn by priests. It is worn around the neck to represent that a priest takes on the yoke of Christ.

Sometimes the priest that celebrates the Eucharist that day wears a fancier fabric called a **CHASABLE**. We have chasubles here at Trinity – but they are man-sized (because priests used to be mostly men!) and way too big for your rector. I usually wear one on Easter Sunday, though.

The color of stoles or chasubles can also tell you what season we are in. Each season of the church has a different color. Advent is royal blue, or in some churches, purple. Christmas is white. Epiphany (the season we're in now) is green. Lent is purple. Easter is white.

Now, Anne, Chip, and Andrew and the choir have special vestments they wear, too.

Anne: *tell about your SCAPULAR – modeled after the aprons worn by medieval monks as they prepared and ate their meals, and used by priests in the early church. The scapular symbolizes the ministry of serving and gathering at the table. (Tell about the special person who made them for you.)*

Chip: *tell why your stole is worn across the body rather than parallel like priests. (You may also want to mention **DALMATICS**).*

Andrew: *tell them names of your vestments (**SURPLICE** and **CASSOCK**). Do they have special meaning?*

Devon: There are other leaders of our worship – they are the Lay Eucharistic Ministers (who serve the chalice), the Verger (the “MC” who keeps us all in line), the server (who helps with communion), and the acolytes (who assist by carrying in the cross, and helping with communion). They each wear a surplice and cassock.

So now we’ll begin our service with the Prelude, and with the opening hymn that always accompanies a procession – because the Episcopal Church loves a parade! All of these rites and ceremonies and traditions exist to make a point: Something important is about to happen. We’re ready! Pay attention!

Vested clergy return to the back of the sanctuary with the altar party and choir.

PRELUDE *Thou, Whose Almighty Word*

OPENING HYMN # 371

At the end of the hymn, Devon stands before the congregation with a music stand and script. Anne is next to her, ready to lead the opening sentences after the instruction.

After the Opening Hymn & Procession/Before Opening Sentences

Anne and Devon take their place in front of the altar. Devon with music stand.

Devon: Oh – I see a question in the back.

Question #1: Before we get started, I have a question – why do we call our service “the Eucharist?” Isn’t it really “Holy Communion?” Or at some churches they call it “The Lord’s Supper,” and other churches call it “Mass.”

Devon: What a great question! All of those names are right, and each one emphasizes a different aspect of our worship. “Holy Communion” speaks about *community* – our relationship with God and each other. Because you need community to be a Christian, and to follow Jesus. “The Lord’s Supper” reminds us that it is God’s table, and Jesus himself who invites us to eat with him. What we do in worship together is a preview of the great banquet we will share with all God’s people in heaven. The term “Mass” comes from the last words of the service when it was all in Latin: *Ite missa est* which means ‘Go – you are sent.’ We come together to worship and be healed and strengthened so we can go out into the world. We come in, and we go out. And we come in again. And we go out again. All of it

with thanksgiving – which is what Eucharist means. Thanksgiving for community, for being fed, for God’s presence, and for being sent.

So we gather to make Eucharist – to give thanks. And after getting ready with our vesting and prelude and procession and hymn, then the next part of our liturgy is GATHERING.

Question #2: Wait! Wait! Another question before we move on. Why do you say “liturgy” instead of “worship service?”

Devon: Wow – you’re on a roll. LITURGY is the combination of two Greek words – work and people. So liturgy is the “work of the people.” It’s not the work of the priests. It’s not the work of the choir, or the deacon, or the readers. It is the work of **all the people**.

A wise person once said to me that when people come to church, they often think that the clergy do the work, led by God, and the congregation is the appreciative audience. But that’s wrong. Because really, it is the PEOPLE who do the work, led by the CLERGY, and GOD is the appreciative audience. Our liturgy is our gift of thanksgiving and praise to God from all of us.

In our worship, each of us has a part to play. What is your part this morning? To sing? Pray? Read? To open your ears and heart? To warmly greet a fellow parishioner? To say, with passion, AMEN! If you are not here, or you don’t do your part, our worship is not as rich and wonderful as it is when you’re here, doing your part.

And liturgy isn’t only for people who have their act together. One of my most favorite things that Pope Francis said is: *the Eucharist is not for perfect people. The Eucharist is for hungry people.* And so, hungry people everywhere, we gather.

Anne leads: Opening Sentences & Collect for Purity

Andrew leads: Hymn of Praise

After the Gathering Rites/Before Collect of the Day

Devon and Anne remain in front of the altar.

Devon: The whole gathering piece at the beginning of the service ends with the **COLLECT OF THE DAY** when the presider sums up, or “collects” the themes of the day from the scripture we will read, in

one prayer. There is a different collect of the day for every Sunday, because we read different scripture and have different themes for every Sunday.

After we are finished gathering, we sit down for the next part of the liturgy. This part is the **LITURGY OF THE WORD** -- the time when we hear the sacred stories and then respond to them. The scripture readings we are about to hear are old family stories, retold and handed down generation to generation to generation. We retell them on Sunday mornings to refresh our sense of who we are, where we come from, and where we are going. The purpose of the stories is not so much education as it is community building – and reinforcing the ties that bind us together and remind us that we are God’s people and followers of Jesus. In the stories we don’t listen for bits of information or rules – (because nobody ever sang a song about rules!) – but we listen for the loving presence of God who has gathered us from the beginning of the world, and who continues to guide us and shape us as a community of faith.

Every Sunday we have four readings: from the **HEBREW SCRIPTURE**, a **PSALM**, a reading from the **EPISTLES** (a fancy word for “letter”), and then a reading from the **GOSPEL**: Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. The Gospels are the stories of Jesus’ life and ministry, his death, resurrection and ascension. We usually sing before the reading of the Gospel. Some people think that this practice is left over from a time when spontaneous shouts of “Alleluia!” and “Amen!” would erupt as the Gospel Book, a valuable and prized treasure, was brought out at the earliest liturgies. The word “Gospel” comes from the Greek words “Good News.” All the stories about Jesus are Good News.

It’s the deacon’s ministry to carry the Gospel book out into the congregation and read the Gospel of the day. Reading the Gospel in the midst of the people is a symbol of Jesus living among us as one of us. God always comes to us where we are, and loves us just as we are, no strings attached. So the Good News comes to us, as we are.

When our deacon announces the Gospel reading, *The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Mark*, you’ll see people sometimes making three crosses on their bodies: forehead, lips, and heart. “God be in my thinking, in my speaking, and in my loving.” Let’s try it out today to see how it feels when Chip is introducing the Gospel. But first, let’s practice: *The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark*.

So after the Collect, let’s be seated and feast on the richness of today’s family stories.

Anne leads Collect, and invites the congregation to be seated.

We then hear the Hebrew Scripture, chant the psalm, hear the Epistle.

Chip carries the Gospel book into the congregation and reads the Gospel.

After the Gospel/Before the Affirmation of Faith

Devon invites congregation to be seated.

Question #3: Hey Devon! I have a question: so we got ready, we gathered, and we heard the stories. What happens next?

Devon: What an astute and timely question! In the next part of the service we **RESPOND** to our sacred stories and the Good News. The response is almost like a second gathering, because it unites us with each other, and reconciles us to be ready for the sacrament of Holy Communion.

First, there's a **SERMON**. The role of the sermon is to raise up a theme or a particular meaning or theological point from our scripture of the day and dive into it more deeply. The process of writing and delivering a sermon is a bit of an art form, unique to each preacher. I did the math, and Trinity's three clergy have a combined 60 years of experience preaching. Anne, can you tell us a few things about how you prepare a sermon, and what's important to you in that ministry?

Anne: (just a few ideas, here, about how you construct sermons)

Devon: What about you, Chip?

Chip: (share with us a few ideas about how you construct your sermons)

Devon: That's so interesting. Thank you. After the sermon, our deacon stands up and leads us in saying the **CREED**. The Creed is a bit of a sticky wicket for many people. And because this is an instructed Eucharist, and not Adult Forum, I'm just going to say a few brief things about it.

The creed is, like the sermon and the prayers of the people and the confession and the peace, a response to the sacred stories we have just heard. We stand together and say together the foundational, historical beliefs of our Christian faith. Most times we use the Nicene Creed. Sometimes we use an Affirmation of Faith, like this Sunday, that serves the same purpose as the Nicene Creed, but is more recent or more reflective of the season. We spend a lot of time in Confirmation Class talking about the Creed. Mostly because it's hard for so many of us. *Really? Did these things really happen? Do I believe that they happened just like this?* And also, remember, that the Nicene Creed was written by a committee (the Council of Nicea) in the year 325, and reads like it.

Here's my take: first, the root of the word "believe" comes from the Latin word, "cor" or "heart." To "believe" means "to give my heart to." And I like thinking about it that way – can I give my heart to the story of Jesus? Can I give my heart to what God is trying to tell me through the story? Second, I understand the Creed to be like a "Table of Contents" for the Gospel – in one short recitation, we tell the entire story of Jesus (or at least, the highlights) – and I like the summing up of the story every Sunday and allowing the words to get down into my system. And finally – my colleague Nadia Bolz-Weber is a Lutheran minister, and a widely published author. She is also very hilarious. She says that her favorite part about the creed is that it starts with "**We** believe," not "**I** believe." "This lets me off the hook, a bit," she writes, "because I can be assured that for every, single line of that creed there is at least one person in the "**we**" that believes it."

Chip is going to lead us in this morning's Affirmation of Faith.

Chip asks everyone to stand, and leads the Affirmation of Faith.

After Affirmation of Faith/Before Prayers of the People

Congregation remains standing.

Devon: We continue our response to the sacred stories with the **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**, the **CONFESSION**, and the **PEACE**. God has spoken to us, and calls us into relationship with each other, and so we bring our concerns to God. Not just for ourselves, but for our community and for the world.

After the confession is the peace – it’s a “fun fact” that for most of the Church’s history, there was no confession during the Eucharist. The great Howard Galley who wrote a famous book called *Ceremonies of the Eucharist* explained it this way: “The sign of reconciliation with God and one’s brothers and sisters was not the confession, but the exchange of the Peace...An unwillingness to exchange with any of the faithful assembled was considered to disqualify one from receiving communion. All of this was understood as a part of the people’s ministry of reconciliation, focused in the liturgy and lived out day by day.

Our reconciliation, our exchange of Peace, if it is genuine, is supposed to go beyond merely wishing each other well or saying “good morning.” It is intended to be lived out day by day in concrete ways and includes taking a hard and honest look at our relationships with other human beings. Are those relationships just? Are they loving? Do they make peace?

Devon invites intercessor to the pulpit if he/she isn’t there already.

After announcements/before Offertory

Devon: Now is the part of our Eucharist where we leave behind the **MINISTRY OF THE WORD**, and move to the **MINISTRY OF THE TABLE**, or **HOLY COMMUNION**. There’s lots of moving around in this part – first, we have the bread and the wine brought up from the back of the sanctuary.

(Devon invites the ushers to bring up the bread and the wine. Chip approaches the altar).

Devon: Then, Chip sets the table. Setting the table is the deacon’s job, as the deacon’s ministry is one of preparation and service. Usually Chip sets the table as the choir sings the anthem, and the ushers take up the collection. But I want to hold off on those two rituals for a moment and I wonder if Chip would give us a tour as he sets up?

Chip: (as the server hands you the implements):

The altar is set up in a very specific way; and everything we use has a fancy name and an ordinary name.

CORPORAL (“holy placement”) – very nice linen - first on, last off

PATEN (plate for the bread)

CHALICE (goblet for the wine)

FLAGON (pitcher that holds the wine)

MISSAL (altar book)

Altar covered by a **FAIR LINEN** (fine linen; white; resurrection)

LAVABO BOWL (wash basin; ceremonial hand washing for presider)

Devon: Usually while the bread and the wine are brought to the altar, and Chip sets the table, the choir is singing an anthem and the ushers are taking up the collection. Presenting material goods – like bread, wine, and money – and gifts – like our voices and our service has been a regular part of Eucharist since the 2nd century. It was a particularly impressive (and lengthy) ritual in ancient Rome. In those days the entire congregation would line up to bring to the altar the fruits of their life and labor in the world. From these gifts, the deacons would select the loaves of bread and jugs of wine to be used at the Eucharist. The rest would be distributed to the city’s poor.

The point is – God gives to us. We give back to God. This, too, is the meaning of our own gifts of money and bread and wine. They represent our whole selves. Our gifts are returned to God in the Great Thanksgiving that follows. As the ushers carry the gifts to the altar, they are, in a sense, carrying us along with them. We are giving ourselves back to God – all that we have, all that we have done, all that we are. St. Augustine said, “There you are on the table. There you are in the chalice.”

We also raise up the gift of song and music as part of the offering. Andrew, would you tell us about singing anthems, and about the role that music plays in our liturgy?

Andrew: (says anything he wants about music and anthems)

Devon: And now, as we settle ourselves and clear our minds, we’ll enjoy our choir as they sing this morning’s Anthem, as our ushers take up this morning’s collection offering.

Anthem

Altar party gathers around the table as the gifts are brought forward

Anne takes her place at the altar to celebrate

Right before the Great Thanksgiving

Gifts of money are brought forward; Anne receives the offering plates.

Devon: And now, we’ve arrived at **HOLY COMMUNION**. We take ordinary things – bread and wine – and as we gather together around this table, God makes these things, and us, holy – transformed for God’s own use.

St. John Chrysostom once said, “Week by week you come to the Lord’s table to receive bread and wine. What do these things mean to you? At the Lord’s table we offer our labor to God, dedicating ourselves anew to [God’s] service. Then the bread and the wine are distributed equally to every member of the congregation...[the Eucharist] is a meal at which everyone has an equal place at the table.”

At Trinity, everyone is welcome to receive communion. Everyone. Because, as we always say, this altar is God’s altar. And God welcomes everyone.

The Great Thanksgiving begins with the “Sursum Corda” which is a three-part dialogue between the priest and the congregation -- and dates back to at least the 3rd century, one of the earliest recorded liturgies of the church. Sursum Corda is Latin for “Lift up your hearts,” or, literally, “Hearts up!” In the first part we greet each other, in the second we lift up our hearts, and in the third, the people invite the priest to continue the Eucharistic Prayer with one voice on their behalf.

You’ll notice that sometimes we sing the Sursum Corda, and sometimes we say it. It’s our choice. Your previous rector, Andrew Waldo, was a professional musician with a beautiful singing voice. I wonder if Trinity secured its tradition of singing the Sursum Corda more often than saying it so they could hear the beautiful chanting each Sunday.

After the Sursum Corda is the Eucharistic Prayer, when the presider tells the greatest story ever told – the story of Jesus’ last meal with his disciples, his death, resurrection, and ascension. We tell the story so that we remember, and we follow the instructions Jesus gave us, using the words Jesus used. Jesus told us to: take the bread, bless the bread, break the bread, share the bread: Take. Bless. Break. Share. That’s what Holy Communion is all about. Those four things.

The Eucharistic Prayer we use is usually from our Book of Common Prayer. Today’s prayer is from another source, but follows the same flow and includes the same pieces as our traditional prayers.

Anne celebrates communion. Proceed as normal!

Before Post-Communion Prayer

Altar party and Chip return to seats. Anne returns to altar. Devon to the music stand.

Devon: We gathered, we heard, we responded, and we shared a mystical feast – and now we will go out. In any Eucharist service, Holy Communion is the high point, after which any self-respecting service should end as soon as possible.

The work of peace and reconciliation that has begun here is intended to be taken with us out into the world. At the Episcopal cathedral in Hanover, New Hampshire, across the back door are painted the words: “Our worship has ended, our service has begun.” After we are fed by our sacred stories, our prayers, and Jesus’ bread and wine, we go back out into the world renewed and strengthened to love and minister. Our priest blesses us, and our deacon dismisses us. *Ita missa est* – Go – you are holy, and you are sent.

Anne: Let us stand as we are able, and say together the Post Communion Prayer.

Devon returns to her seat. Postcommunion Prayer, Blessing, Procession, and Dismissal as usual.

Sources:

Instructed Eucharists composed and delivered by the following priests: Lydia Huttar Brown (for St. Anne's, Sunfish Lake) Anne Miner-Pearson (for Nativity, Burnsville), Susan K. Bock (for St. Clare's, Ann Arbor, MI).

Leonel L. Mitchell (Updated by Ruth A. Meyers), *Praying Shapes Believing: A Theological Commentary on the Book of Common Prayer*

Louis Weil, *A Theology of Worship*

Marion Hatchett, *Commentary on the American Prayer Book*

Louis Weil, *Liturgical Sense: The Logic of Rite*