

## Why we do what we do

A study in the liturgy of the Anglican Church in general  
and  
St. Michael and All Angels Church in particular

### Lesson #2: The Liturgy of the Word

- † The format of this part of the service comes from the Jewish synagogue service
  - ✦ This would be the worship that Jesus would have been familiar with during his time walking the earth, including Bible readings interspersed with Psalms, followed by an explanation of the readings and by prayers.
  - ✦ This type of worship was adapted by the Early Church and has continued to today
- † Vestments
  - ✦ Vestments are worn to distinguish between the different types of ministers in the service
    - ✘ The acolytes are dressed in cassock and surplice
      - † The cassock was, at one time, the plain dress of clergy, now we use it to distinguish those who are serving in the liturgy
      - † The surplice was, originally used to cover up the “work clothes” with something clean. White represents purity.
      - † The combination is to represent the set-apartness of those who serve in the liturgy
    - ✘ A deacon wears either a cassock, surplice and stole, alb and stole, or amice, alb, stole and dalmatic
      - † The cassock can be replaced by the clericals that most clergy now wear, which, being black, are basically a cassock with legs
      - † An alb is essentially the under-clothes of the first century, with the amice as a head-covering
      - † The deacon’s stole is worn over his left shoulder across to his right hip, where it is connected, either to itself, or run through the cincture, or rope-belt, which represents the girdle of faith.
        - + Deacons wear their stoles in this manner to represent their ministry of assisting with carrying the burdens of the congregation
        - + The Dalmatic is a tunic in the liturgical color of the season. This vestment represents purity and traces its roots back to ancient Rome
    - ✘ Priests wear the same under-things as a deacon, but wears his stole differently
      - † His stole is worn around the back of his neck hanging either straight down, or crossed over his heart.
      - † On special occasions, the priest will wear a cope for the first half of the service. The cope is essentially a cloak and, in the early church served the same purpose
      - † The priest will wear a chasuble during the Liturgy of the Sacrament, or perhaps for the whole liturgy. The chasuble looks like a poncho, and is a symbol of the office of priest
  - ✦ Incense?
    - ✘ Incense, like much of what we do, serves both a spiritual and a practical purpose
    - ✘ In the medieval church, people bathed once a year. The practical purpose of incense is that it offered some relief from the odor
    - ✘ The spiritual purpose is that the smoke, as it rises to the rafters, represents our prayers rising to Heaven
  - † The Procession
    - ✦ The procession has a practical and a spiritual meaning

- ✘ The practical purpose is to get the altar party from the back of the church to the sanctuary
    - ✘ Spiritually, the procession represents our spiritual pilgrimage, as the altar party moves from outside the church, through the water of Baptism (the font in the back of the church), through the reading of the word (the pulpit), to the place of Communion (the Altar) where we meet with God
  - ⌘ The procession is generally accompanied by music, which serves a dual purpose
    - ✘ It sets the tone for what is to come – “He who sings, prays twice”
    - ✘ It allows the altar party to make a smooth journey to its place
- † The Invocation, Collect for Purity, Confession and Gloria
  - ⌘ The Invocation reminds us why we are here
    - ✘ We are here to give value to God
    - ✘ A sign of the cross during the invocation is a means of coordinating our body with what we are saying, “In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
  - ⌘ The Collect for Purity puts us in the proper state of mind to begin our worship
    - ✘ “Clense the thoughts of our hearts...”
    - ✘ Make us ready, Lord, to receive you!
  - ⌘ Confession of Sin and Absolution
    - ✘ It is important for us to understand our sinfulness, and to be reconciled with God before approaching His table
    - ✘ After we confess our sins, absolution is proclaimed by the priest
  - ⌘ The Gloria is then sung
    - ✘ Singing brings our whole bodies into the act of worship, as it takes more effort to sing, than to say something
    - ✘ The Gloria is intended to take us from where we are, physically, to where we are going spiritually – to the forecourt of Heaven
- † Themes
  - ⌘ Collect
    - ✘ This is a short prayer that states the theme for the day
    - ✘ The opening “The Lord be with you”, and response, “And with your Spirit” is a way of stating that a prayer is coming.
      - † The priest offers the greeting
      - † In response, the people acknowledge the anointing of the Spirit which the priest received at his ordination.
  - ⌘ The Lessons
    - ✘ On Sundays and major feasts there are usually three lessons: Old Testament, New Testament and Gospel separated by a Psalm, hymn, or alleluia and verse
    - ✘ The Old and New Testaments readings are read by a lay person, but the Gospel is proclaimed by someone in Holy Orders – preferably a deacon, but if one is not available, a priest will do, as he remains a deacon – orders are stacked, not replaced.
    - ✘ The Psalm between the Old and New Testament readings is intended to focus on the theme of the day, as is the gradual hymn or alleluia verse
    - ✘ In our tradition, the lessons for a given service are determined by a Lectionary
      - † The Sunday Lectionary is on a three-year cycle which covers a large portion of the Bible
      - † There is also a Lectionary for other Holy Days throughout the year, including saints’ days and other celebrations of the Church
  - ⌘ The Sermon or Homily
    - ✘ What’s the difference
      - † A sermon is thematic, generally written out, and tends to be longer

- † A homily is specific to a lesson, to the point and tends to be shorter
- ✘ The sermon coincides with the Jewish synagogue service that included an explanation of the lessons that had been read
- ✘ One advantage to having a lectionary that preachers are expected to follow is that a congregation is not stuck hearing the preacher's pet topic over, and over again
- ✧ The Creed
  - ✘ The Creed, usually the Nicene, was put into the liturgy as a check against heresy
  - ✘ As a statement of common belief, "We believe..." it also gives the congregation an opportunity to come back into common worship after the sermon
- ✧ The Prayers of the People
  - ✘ The prerogative of the deacon, as he/she is the one charged with bringing the concerns of the world to the church, and the church to the world.
  - ✘ We align our intentions with Gods
  - ✘ We bring the prayers of the world to the foot of the Cross
- ✧ The Peace
  - ✘ This is much more than a social time
  - ✘ At the peace, we recognize that we are brothers and sisters in Christ
  - ✘ We also declare "peace" to one another, especially those with whom we may have had some disagreement in the past