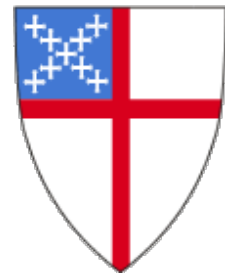


Worship. Holy Eucharist using The Book of Common Prayer 1979 is our main service of worship on Sundays. The BCP dates from the 1549 BCP when Archbishop Thomas Cranmer gave the Church of England a worship text translated from Latin to English. It has gone through several changes, and each Province of the Anglican Communion exercises management and control over its own BCP; in The Episcopal Church, that management is the authority of General Convention. Our BCP was last extensively revised when the 1928 Prayerbook was succeeded by the 1979 Prayerbook. The change since then has been to insert the new Sunday ecumenical Revised Common Lectionary in place of the Episcopal Lectionary

Our BCP service of Holy Eucharist consists of two parts. BCP p.323/351 the first part is the Word of God, the second part is Holy Communion.

Instead of our usual service of the Word we may have Baptism, Matrimony if a wedding, Burial if a funeral. In place of our usual service of The Word of God we may have the office of Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer, which are also services of the Word of God. It'll be Confirmation (p.

413) when the bishop comes on May 10th together with the second half, which is Holy Communion.



In the "Liturgy of the Word", we gather, sing, opening prayers including the rite of purity, read scripture appointed in the Lectionary, hear a sermon, stand and say our Creed together, have Prayers, a Confession and Absolution and the Peace.

At the Peace we greet each other in the Name of the Lord. Anciently, during times of Christian persecution, unbaptized people left during the Peace, before the service of Lord's Supper - - Holy Communion, that we may call the "Liturgy of the Table". Peace is the Jewish greeting Shalom, and Peace was Jesus' greeting in his post-Resurrection appearance at John 20.

Holy Communion begins with the offertory, which is both people giving money as their offering and people bringing up Bread and Wine as their offering for the holy meal. Offering the bread and wine is symbolic unless it's the case in the parish, as in some,

that a member bakes the bread at home and brings it Sunday morning, fresh, warm and aromatic, filling the room with fragrance, very nice.

Consecrating the Bread & Wine begins with a dialogue in which the Celebrant gets the People's concurrence that "yes, we will do this together now".

Then the Eucharistic Prayer (6 in BCP, 3 in EOW). From Gospel events of Jesus feeding people, we Take, Bless, Break & Give (the four "eucharistic actions") the Bread as the Body of Christ. And offer the Wine as the Blood of Christ. We declare and teach that Christ is present in and as the Bread & Wine, but we do not go into precise detail as to the "hows" of presence; in fact there's a range of what Episcopalians believe, from transubstantiation to that it's simply a gathering in Jesus' name to commemorate the Last Supper. My eucharistic theology might be that "this **IS** that meal and we are **there**". You may be your own theologian!

Words vary from one Eucharistic Prayer to another, but all have common theological features. The *Sanctus* (Holy, Holy, Holy, usually

sung), scripturally from Isaiah 6 and Revelation 4. An Oblation (offering Bread & Wine as a sacrifice of praise & thanksgiving. Anamnesis (saying we do not forget Christ's sacrifice, what He did for us). Words of Institution (that the synoptic gospels and Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 quote Jesus as saying at the Last Supper). Epiclesis (invoking the Holy Spirit upon the bread & wine). Words "rehearsing" our Salvation History with God. The Eucharistic Prayer concludes with everyone saying the AMEN.

Other things may be optional with the Celebrant or customary in a parish. *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God) may be said or sung. Music or silence as the People receive Communion.

At the end is the PostCommunion Prayer, which everyone is invited to join in saying with the Celebrant. Closing Blessing, and a closing hymn.

Throughout the BCP are little words in italics, called "rubrics" (red ink) as the priest's book (Missal) on the Altar has instructions printed in red. Notice that some rubrics say "may" and some "shall". "Shall" indicates obligatory

words or actions. “May” indicates words or actions that are optional.

Scholars may go to great length to describe and discuss our theology, what we say, what we believe, about God. But what we *say* about God, our

theology, may be discerned in our liturgy, what we do and say and sing and pray when we gather in worship. My common simple example is to discuss theologically, each Sunday’s Collect for the Day, current one here, Address, Petition, Closing:

Second Sunday in Lent

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Address “O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy” asserts our theology that God is merciful. The Petition “Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son” asks that which we believe is in God’s power and is God’s will to do: bring us sinners back to God. Also, the Petition asserts theologically that Jesus is God’s Word (from the prologue, Gospel according to John - *Logos* Word, creative energy of the universe), and that the Word is eternal, unchanging. Closing “who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever” is in the Name of the Trinity, as are most

of our prayers. You may do this theological exercise with every Sunday morning Collect, indeed with everything we say and pray. (The principle “should” apply to our hymn words as well, but we sometimes sing words of questionable theology! *H1982 57/58 vs 2. 1928v1979 BCP Prayer for the Whole State ...* ask about if you are interested.

Finally and obviously, our *true* theology, what we *really* believe about God, shows forth in our lives: how we live into our Baptismal Covenant.