



What is worship?

Fact Sheet 1, The Elements of Worship Series



Worship is a conversation between God and his people.

Two main things happen when we worship

- God comes to us – God speaks and acts through his Word, and through the sacraments (baptism, Holy Communion and the reading of the Word).
- We respond to God – we praise and thank God for being our great and gracious Creator. At the same time, we recognise our own unworthiness, confess our sin and ask him for forgiveness. We also ask him to help us and other people.

Planning a worship service

- The emphasis should always be on God and what he is doing, rather than our own actions or needs. What we do is always in response to what God has already done and to what He continues to do.
- Lutherans usually follow a “liturgy” (a fixed order of worship) in our church services. Using an order of worship ensures that the proper balance and emphasis is given to the most important elements of worship.
- There’s lots of room for variety, and we need to be careful not just to do things by rote,
- There are quite a few **service orders** for services with and without communion to use as a guide.
- There are a whole range of **propers** (service elements which change each week), and many opportunities to shape worship to reflect your congregation and its context.

The Rhythm of Worship

There is a pattern which shapes the service and guides our choices.

- **Gathering** –we come together to approach God with praise and to kneel before his throne. This is a stage of preparation as we get ready to receive what God has to say to us.
- **The Word** – the first high point of the service, as we listen to God’s word through the Bible readings, and dwell in what God is saying as we listen to the sermon or the message for the day. We respond by praying for the church, the world and ourselves.
- **Holy Communion** - we come to the Lord with joy and thanksgiving, and begin the climb to the second high point – God coming to us through Holy Communion.
- **Sending** - we respond to what God has done in worship, and ask God to bless us as we go back out into the world as his children.
- If Communion isn’t celebrated in a service, the focus is on the Word, with the Sending flowing on from our response to the readings and sermon.

This series will look at each part of the worship service, and how music, intergenerational elements and the arts can enhance our services. The final video will show you how to pull all of these elements of worship together.