



# The Word

## Fact Sheet 3, The Elements of Worship Series



**Whenever God's word is read or preached, Jesus, the Word made flesh, meets us in his word. While all of the liturgy is scripture, in this part of the service the focus is on the proclamation of the Word through the readings and sermon.**

There are several components in this section:

- **The Greeting** “The Lord be with you/And also with you”— which takes us back to the angel's greeting to Mary in Luke 1. It is an announcement that the Lord is with his people as we pray, and with the pastor as he leads us in our praying.
- **The Collect or Prayer of the Day** is a short prayer which gathers (“collects”) the petitions of the people and presents them before the throne of God in a brief and powerful way, thematically linked with the main theme for the day. There are three to four choices each week, which you can find in the Liturgy and Prayers section of the Worship Planning Page.
- Next are the **Readings**. The readings usually follow the **Revised Common Lectionary**, which combines texts through a three year cycle, with the intention of covering a wide range of scripture and drawing us into the life of Jesus. Each reading is followed by a congregational response acknowledging God's word.
  - The **First Reading**, which at certain times of the year may vary to include readings from Revelation, points towards the coming Christ.
  - Sometimes a **Psalm** is read or sung after the First Reading, if this has not happened already.
  - The **Second Reading** draws from the letters of the apostles to explain the meaning of Christ's coming to us. The Gospel reading then brings us to the saving deeds and words of Jesus, the fulfilment of the scriptures.
  - After the Second Reading, an **Alleluia Verse or Gradual** may be said or sung. Traditionally, these short Bible verses were sung or chanted in preparation of receiving the Gospel as the pastor gradually stepped up towards the platform where the Gospel was read from.
  - Sometimes a **Hymn of the Week or Gradual Hymn** can be sung at this point instead.
  - **The Gospel** reading then brings us to the saving deeds and words of Jesus, the fulfilment of the scriptures.
  - A **Prayer after the Gospel** may be used to expand the congregation's thanksgiving to God for the good news of Jesus Christ. This is usually a short Bible verse with a congregational response, followed by the usual response.
- The Word is then proclaimed in **the Sermon**. In the sermon, Christ addresses us through his called servant. The sermon should always be based on the scriptures, proclaiming God's Word, explaining it, and applying it to the lives of the hearers.
- A **Hymn or Song of the Week** is for usually sung either after the Gospel or after the Sermon and ideally is scriptural in content. Hymns or songs should lead the congregation to ‘sing’ the scriptures or at least reflect the message of the word for the day, to help people remember it through the coming week.
- **The Offering** is normally collected during this hymn/song.

- It is followed by **the Offertory or Offering Prayer**, which is sung or spoken. The offertory is made up of Psalm verses, which leads us to express our faith by dedicating ourselves and what we have to God.
- The Confession of Faith usually follows. The congregation joins together with Christians in all places since the earliest times of the church to declare our common faith using a Creed. This is usually the Apostle's Creed or the Nicene Creed.
- After the sermon, God's Spirit leads us to respond in prayer. The **Prayer of the Church** is an intercessory prayer, in which we pray for the church, for the government and for all people in their various needs. An overall structure is provided each week as guidelines so that we pray broadly across the needs of the whole church and the world. Congregations can customise these prayers, adding in particular issues which affect their local context.

**So the Word part of the worship service follows the rhythm of worship – in which God acts and we respond. In the next video, we will explore Holy Communion.**

### The Greeting

- **Often.** A special greeting between pastor and congregation, based on Biblical greeting. Here it is used to signal the ascent to a high point in the service.

### Collect/Prayer of the Day

- **Usually.** A short prayer collecting the petitions of the congregation and leading onto the main emphases of the Word for the day.

### Reading of the Word

- **Essential.** Usually three readings, Old Testament, New Testament letters, and Gospel.

### Psalm

- **Often used.** Sung or spoken after the first reading if not used in the Gathering.

### Alleluia Verse/Gradual

- **Sometimes used.** Short Biblical response after the second reading.

### Prayer after the Gospel

- **Sometimes used.** Short Bible verse and response after the Gospel.

### Sermon (Proclaiming of the Word)

- **Essential.** The pastor shares, explains and applies the Scripture

### Hymn of the Week

- **Usually.** Hymn or song sung after the Gospel or the Sermon encapsulating the message for the week.

### Offering and Offertory/Offering Prayer

- **Usually.** We dedicate ourselves and all we have to God in response to the gift of his Word.

### The Creed

- **Usually.** The congregation speaks aloud their common faith.

### The Prayer of the Church

- **Usually.** The congregation prays for the needs of the church, the world and the people they know who are in need.