



All Saints Anglican Church

BIBLICAL FAITH + APOSTOLIC ROOTS

Instructed Liturgy

This booklet contains an explanation of the service of Holy Communion according to the *2019 Book of Common Prayer* as we use it at All Saints. It is hoped that this will help those who attend our services to more fully enter into worship.

The word “Liturgy” comes from the Greek and literally means “work of the people.” The English *Westminster Catechism* of 1647 describes the purpose of our life in this way: “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.” Therefore our principle “work” in this life *is* worship.

The liturgy in itself is *not* worship, but a tool. Worship, properly understood, is to give *worth* to something. Whatever we value, we worship. In coming together to enter into God’s presence each week we declare God’s value to us—we ascribe worth to him—we *worship*.

The principle worship service at All Saints is The Holy Communion or Lord’s Supper (also called *Eucharist*—a word meaning “thanksgiving” in Greek). All three terms work together to represent what this service is about: It is a *thanksgiving* for what God has done for us through his Son; it is a celebration of our *communion* with him and each other; as well as a participation in the *Lord’s supper* which is both a sign of that communion as well as a means of maintaining it.

It was the custom of the early church to celebrate communion every time they got together.¹

¹ See, *e.g.*, Acts 2.42

The traditional service of Holy Eucharist is divided into two portions: “The Word of God” and “the Holy Communion.” The first part is modeled after the Jewish synagogue service, and includes readings from the Bible, songs, prayers and a teaching. The second portion of the service, *The Holy Communion*, is what makes this a distinctively Christian form of worship.

OPENING HYMN

We usually begin our service with a *Hymn* or Song. This not only serves to “cover” the movement of the ministers and choir to the chancel or altar area, but is in itself an act of worship as well—*worship in song*.

There are, of course, different kinds of hymns and songs to fit different moods and purposes: There are hymns of joy and songs of sadness; there are doctrinal or teaching hymns as well as hymns of thanksgiving.

The opening hymn is generally a hymn of praise. We praise God in our opening hymn and declare His worth to us. There is something powerful about *worshipping in song*. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, paraphrasing St. Augustine, says “He who sings prays twice.”² Song communicates on more levels than mere words, it engages the affective side of ourselves—our emotions and Spirit—in a way that the mind alone cannot.

There is also power in the act of *praise* itself. We read in the Bible of the time when Solomon’s temple was consecrated that as the party of worshipers sung and played instruments, “the house of the LORD was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister . . . for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.”³ In other words, as the congregation worshipped, the presence of God became so great among them that the priests were unable to perform their duties.

² *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1994), Paragraph 1156

³ 2 Chronicles 5.13ff

Psalm 22 tells us that The Lord is “enthroned on the praises of Israel.”⁴ God’s throne is in the midst of our praise. We praise God because we love him and because of the wonderful things he does. And when we praise him, we are lifted into his presence and there transformed.

COLLECT FOR PURITY..... p. 124

A *Collect* is a short, one-sentence, prayer with a single message. The word “Collect” comes from the Latin: *oratio ad collectam*, “the prayer at the people’s assembly.” It’s a “gathering prayer” if you will. This particular prayer is a request for God to purify our hearts as we enter into worship.

It is common at the conclusion of many prayers in the service for the congregation to say: “*Amen*”: The familiar word is from the Hebrew and means “so be it.” In saying “*Amen*” you make the prayer your own. It is *your* prayer, *your* petition, *your* intention. You are publicly proclaiming your agreement with the prayer that has been offered.

Most often the *Amen* is said when someone else reads the prayer. In the case of the Collect for Purity, although it was originally intended to be read by the priest on behalf of the people, here at All Saints it is our custom to say it together (in which case the *Amen* simply serves to add emphasis).

SUMMARY OF THE LAW..... p. 124

Now that our hearts have been cleansed, we turn the page and read either the Ten Commandments from the Old Testament⁵ or Jesus’ summary of the Law from the New Testament.⁶ We do this in order to remind us of the life we are called to live. At All Saints it is our custom to read the Ten Commandments or *Decalogue* in Advent and Lent (pp. 100-101).

⁴ Psalm 22.3

⁵ Exodus 20.1-17; Deuteronomy 5.6-21

⁶ Mark 12.29-31; Matthew 22.40

KYRIE ELEISON..... p. 124

“Lord, have mercy”—a traditional prayer originating in the Eastern Church that was adopted in the west and placed in its present position at the beginning of the service starting in the fifth century A.D.

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS..... p. 125

The “Glory to God in the Highest” is a traditional Greek hymn of praise dating back at least to the 4th century. This hymn is modeled after the psalms and begins with the words of the angels who announced to the shepherds the birth of Jesus.⁷ The Gloria is traditionally omitted in Lent (and sometimes Advent).

COLLECT OF THE DAY

There are several elements of each Sunday’s service which are variable and set the tone. The collect (or gathering prayer) of the day is one. This will often coincide with the church season or reflect the theme of one of the day’s readings.

SCRIPTURE READINGS (LESSONS)

We then proceed to read three *lessons* from the Bible, with a psalm or hymn in-between each. The 1st lesson is from the *Old Testament*. Jesus taught that he came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it.⁸ Christians have, therefore, always included readings from the Old Testament as part of their private devotions as well as public services.

Following the Old Testament reading we hear from the *Book of Psalms* which was the hymnal of the Jewish people. Afterward, a portion of one of the New Testament letters is read. They’re called *Epistles* which is simply the Greek word for “letter.” These letters, it seems, were written to be read in public to various congregations.

⁷ Luke 2.14

⁸ Matthew 5.17

Finally, after a hymn, we read the *Gospel*. The term “Gospel” is a Greek word simply meaning “Good News.” It was used by Jesus himself to describe his message and was later applied to the first four books of the New Testament—those portraying the events of Jesus’ life and containing his words to his followers.

The Gospel reading is set apart with a special procession and emphasis—it’s the only lesson that is reserved for reading by an ordained minister. We treat it with an extra measure of respect because this is the portion of the Bible that contains the words of Jesus to us.

Many people accompany the introduction of the Gospel reading with a special *sign of the cross* signifying a prayer that the words of the Gospel would always be on their mind, on their lips and in their hearts.

The sign of the cross is a prayer gesture you often see people use at the conclusion of a prayer made in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It can be a way to apply to yourself the name of God the Trinity—it is sort of a physical “amen.”

You may see folks doing a form of it at the introduction of the Gospel reading, as well as at the opening of the sermon, during the Creed (at the statement “the resurrection of the dead”), during the *Sanctus* (when we sing “Blessed is he who Comes in the name of the Lord”), during The Lord’s Prayer (at the phrase “Deliver us from evil”), and upon the final blessing at the end of the service as well as other times.

We use our physical bodies as part of our worship. The sign of the cross is a traditional and very powerful physical prayer. The great saint and desert monk, *Anthony of Egypt* talked about the devil fleeing at the name of Jesus and the making of the sign of the cross.

The *reading schedule* we adhere to each Sunday follows a three-year cycle. It’s the same set of readings, more or less, that you would hear in other liturgical churches around the world—*e.g.* the Roman Catholic or Lutheran churches.

The readings for each week are usually focused on a theme. The preacher has a choice of focusing on the main theme for the day or the Epistle or, occasionally, preaching on the collect or some other timely topic.

SERMON

The *Sermon* is intended to make the Gospel relevant for today. The preacher will sometimes begin with a quote from the Bible passage that is to be the focus for the message. It is also common to begin with a prayer or *invocation* such as: “In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” The point of that particular invocation is not only to invite God’s blessing and guidance, but also to indicate that it is not the preacher’s intention to deliver his own thoughts and words, but God’s.

The preacher also does not stand in the pulpit on his or her own authority, but by God’s assignment and should be careful not to preach personal opinions unless they’re clearly labeled as such.

Different preachers have *different styles*: Some will take a Bible passage and carefully explain the meaning—verse by verse. Others might teach from the traditions of the Church or talk about aspects of the Christian life or spirituality. Sometimes the same preacher will vary styles from week to week.

NICENE CREED.....p. 127

After the sermon we continue by reciting the *Nicene Creed*. This statement of faith was first drafted in 325 A.D. at a Church council in what is now modern-day Turkey.

It was originally adopted to make clear that Jesus and the Father are of the same substance and equally to be worshipped. You see that in lines such as “God from God, Light of Light” and “of one Being with the Father.”

Over time, the Creed found its way into the worship service where it has been for over a 1,000 years. The church is described as “*apostolic*” in the Creed because we strive to uphold the teaching and practices of Jesus’ original followers—the apostles.

The term “*catholic*,” which confuses many folks who join us from non-liturgical church traditions, does *not* refer to the Roman Catholic Church but rather to the church *universal*. “Catholic” (with a small “c”) means “universal” in both Greek and Latin. So when we say we believe in the one holy catholic church we are saying there is only one universal church of Christ on earth⁹—just as there was one visibly united church for the first 1,000 years after Jesus, and there will be again.

We recite the Creed weekly not only to remind us of our core Christian beliefs but because there is power in speaking the truth. We *worship* by reciting the Creed. We worship because we are declaring the wonders of God, the salvation he has worked for us and the glorious future that awaits us—what the creed calls “the life of the world to come.”

Furthermore, it’s worth pointing out that the devil hates it when we recite the Creed; and anything the devil hates, we should do as often as possible.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE..... p. 128

Following the Creed, we have a time of *prayer* usually led by one of our lay ministers. This prayer normally includes petitions for the Church, our local community and country, the sick and suffering, as well as those who have died.

⁹ Ephesians 4.4-6

Jesus assures us: “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them,” and “whatever you ask in my name, I will do it.”¹⁰

CONFESSION OF SIN..... p. 129

The *Confession of Sin* is enormously important because repentance is a key component of salvation.¹¹ Jesus tells us not only to believe in him but also to repent of everything in our lives and in our past that is against his will.

Fortunately we have the promise in *St. John's* first letter that “If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”¹² But along with that encouraging word we have warnings to take the confession seriously. St. Paul urges us to *examine our consciences* before we approach the Lord's Table lest we, in his words, “profane the body and blood of the Lord.”¹³

Moreover, Jesus teaches us that we are first to *forgive* and to *seek forgiveness* from one another before coming to the Altar.¹⁴ So we are to take this confession *seriously*. This is not simply an exercise in group reading-out-loud. The officiant will normally pause for a moment after introducing the confession in order to give congregants some time to allow the Lord to bring to their minds sins that they need to confess to him in their hearts.

If you wish to truly experience the *peace of Christ* in your heart, you must genuinely confess your sins and seek to live your life from that moment forward according to his will.

¹⁰ Matthew 18.20; John 14.13

¹¹ Mark 1.15

¹² 1 John 1.9

¹³ 1 Corinthians 11.27f

¹⁴ Matthew 5.23f

ABSOLUTION & COMFORTABLE WORDS..... p. 130

After the confession, the priest pronounces God’s *forgiveness* and reminds us through further verses of scripture of God’s mercy and forgiveness.

PEACE

With *the Peace* in our hearts of true and complete forgiveness, we then proceed to joyfully share that peace with each other. Hence the ancient practice of passing the “kiss of peace” during the service.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We normally take advantage of this natural break in the service to bring up any announcements of special interest to the congregation concerning upcoming events and ministry opportunities.

In early Church tradition, those who were preparing for *baptism* would be dismissed from the service at this time (prior to the start of the Communion portion of the service). The Lord’s Table was reserved for the baptized alone—not just reception of the bread and wine, but even to participate in the celebration at all.

The transition from the first half of the service to the second could be expressed by saying: “We have heard about God; we have sung his praises and prayed to him; now let us gather to meet him.”

OFFERTORY

The Holy Communion portion of the liturgy begins with something called the *offertory*. This is more than just the time when you’re supposed to put some money in the plate. We come before the Lord, after the first half of the service, enlightened, repentant, cleansed by God’s forgiveness and with peace and joy in our hearts.

At this point in the service, we are offering *all of ourselves* to him—with *abandon*. This is not a “passing of the hat” to keep the light bills paid. If that’s what you’re thinking we’re doing here, you’re way off.

God has given everything to us to the point of offering his son to torture and death that we may be reconciled to him. The offertory is *our response*. We are to offer to God everything that we have and are—our time, our talents, our treasure, the fruits of our labors, our hearts and our souls. It is the expression of our response to Jesus’ commandments to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength; and our neighbor as ourselves.¹⁵

In our offering we also acknowledge that *everything we have is God’s*: Every gift we’ve put to work to gain our wealth came from God; If we’ve been blessed with good health, it was from God; If we’ve been blessed with a home, family, friends, a job and food, it’s from God. The Lord has given and it is *by his pleasure* that we have any of these things.

This is well summarized in the traditional words we sometimes use at the offering, taken from a prayer of *King David*: “All things come from thee [O Lord], and of thy own have we given thee.”¹⁶ We give back to the Lord a portion of his own in acknowledgement of this.

You may notice that, along with the collection, the ushers also bring up the *bread and wine*. Traditionally this would have been provided by a family of the parish—wine from their vineyard, bread from their oven. In fact, in ancient times (and in some places still today), people would literally bring up the fruits of their labors—produce, farm animals, etc... It was the *Deacons’* job to sort through all this stuff and distribute it to the poor.

It would be very much in keeping with the intent and tradition of the offertory (if you were so moved) to start dropping your jewelry in the plates—gold watches, diamond rings, even the keys to your car!

¹⁵ Mark 12.29-31; Matthew 22.40

¹⁶ 1 Chronicles 29.14

It is that kind of *offering with abandon* which touches the heart of God and opens up the road to incredible intimacy with the Father (and a radically new life for the Christian).

The offertory is officially introduced with one of several *sentences* of scripture, like:

- “Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and make good your vows to the Most High;”¹⁷
- “I appeal to you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present yourselves as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship;”¹⁸
- “Walk in love, as Christ loved us, and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God;”¹⁹
- “Ascribe to the Lord the honor due his Name; bring offerings and come into his courts.”²⁰

DOXOLOGY

Literally “*Word of praise*”

SURSUM CORDA.....p. 132
“*Lift up your hearts*”

SANCTUS

“*Holy...*”

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION.....p. 132

Now the “*Eucharist*” or Great Thanksgiving is to begin in earnest. As noted above, this service is also known as the Holy Communion or the Lord’s Supper. It was founded by Jesus in the Gospels²¹ and is

¹⁷ Psalm 50.14

¹⁸ Romans 12.1

¹⁹ Ephesians 5.2

²⁰ Psalm 96.8

²¹ Matt. 26.26-8; Mark 14.22-4; Luke 22.17-20; *cf.* John 6.32-58)

addressed by St. Paul in his 1st letter to the Corinthians.²² It is an accepted fact that it was practiced in Christian Churches from the beginning. We see this in the Book of Acts, where it is mentioned that the first believers devoted themselves to, among other things, “the breaking of bread.”²³

There are also several writings from the first two centuries after the Bible which speak of the communion service. One of these, written in about the *mid 200's A.D.* contains an early Christian service. It is fascinating to note the similarities between what we do in church each Sunday and what was being done in Churches just 150 years after the Bible was written. The instructions to this ancient Liturgy are as follows:

...All shall offer the kiss of peace....

[That's the passing of the peace]

Then the deacons shall present the offering to [the Bishop];

[the offertory]

and he, laying his hands on it with all the [priests], shall give thanks, saying:

The Lord be with you; and all shall say:

And with your spirit.

Up with your hearts.

We have them with the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord.

It is fitting and right.

And then he shall continue thus;

We render thanks to you, O God through your beloved child Jesus Christ, whom in the last times you sent to us as saviour and redeemer and angel of your will; who is your inseparable Word, through whom you made all things, and in whom you were well pleased...²⁴

²² 1 Corinthians 11.23-29

²³ Acts 2.42

²⁴ Geoffrey Cuming, *Hippolytus: A Text for Students*, 2nd ed. (Grove Books, Nottingham, 1987), p. 10

What we do is very ancient. We do it because the Lord commanded it. We do it with the words we are given in scripture and in very ancient forms that have been passed down to us faithfully over 2,000 years. It is called “The Eucharist” because the prayer is an extended *Thanksgiving* for what God has done for us in Jesus. But it is also a *remembrance*. Jesus said “Do this for the *remembrance* of me.”²⁵

Now it is important to point out that the Greek word in the Bible that we translate as “remembrance” means more than what we usually think of when we use the word, “remember.” The underlying word in Greek is “*anamnesis*.” And it includes the sense of allowing an event in the past to come forward and include us in it. So what we’re doing here is not simply a remembering. Nor is it a re-offering—scripture is clear that Christ died “once for all.”²⁶

The sense is that as the congregation is gathered in prayer and the priest speaks the words of Christ over the bread and wine, time is transcended so that we are present (spiritually speaking) at the Last Supper and receive the benefits of Jesus’ once-for-all self-offering on the cross through the physical elements of bread and wine. In other words, we are not “re-enacting” the death and resurrection, but spiritually entering into those events.

As for *Christ’s sacrifice*: According to St. John’s Gospel, Jesus died at the moment the Passover lambs were being slaughtered. And, as in Moses’ day, the blood of the *Passover* lamb on the doorposts was a sign for the Lord to “pass-over” that house and not bring judgment; so when we receive the benefits of Jesus’ sacrifice, God will “pass-over” us (forgive our sins) and we will not receive their just reward.

The Bible says that all of us have sinned and that “the wages of sin is death.” But through faith in Christ and obedience to him we are given “the free gift of God” which is “eternal life.”²⁷

²⁵ I Corinthians 11.23-25; Matthew 26.27-28

²⁶ Romans 6.10

²⁷ Romans 3.23, 6.23

Participation in the Eucharistic meal is a sign of *our acceptance* of the covenant sacrifice of Christ. It is the *covenant meal* which seals our relationship: both our offering of ourselves and our accepting of God's offer. When we come to the altar, there is a spiritual transaction taking place—a *mutual self-offering*. So we are not to come forward lightly, but mindful of what it means when we come as well as what it means when we receive.

In some Churches they have something called an “*altar call*.” In the Anglican Church, we really have an altar call every week. We just don't always fully appreciate the implications of what we are doing to the extent that we should.

Now as to describing what happens to the bread and wine in the Communion and when it happens, Anglicans have tended to avoid overly precise definitions. Basically, it is safe to say that we believe that Christ is somehow *truly present* in the sacraments and that we receive him when we consume them.

Some Churches believe that the communion is simply a memorial—that is a “remembering”—thinking there is nothing special about the bread and wine other than what they mean to us. But that is placing too little faith in the words of Christ for us.

At the other end of the spectrum, the Roman Catholic Church has taught that in the Eucharist the *substance* of the bread and wine is changed into the actual body and blood of Christ. A doctrine called “*transubstantiation*.” That is something that our reformation forebears rejected as being overly literal with the words of Christ.

The famous English Theologian, *Richard Hooker*, wrote in the seventeenth century: “Let it . . . be sufficient for me presenting myself at the Lord's table to know what there I receive from him, without

searching or inquiring of the manner how Christ performed his promise.”²⁸

That goes along with the thinking of the famous reformed theologian *John Calvin* who wrote: “[Christ] bids me take, eat and drink his body and blood under the symbols of bread and wine. I do not doubt that he himself truly presents them, and that I receive them.”²⁹

Put simply, when we take the bread and wine we believe that they are what Jesus said they are—his body and blood. Or, if you prefer: once the prayers have been said over the bread and wine, *it is no longer ordinary bread and wine.*

Because of this, the communion bread and wine is to be treated with respect. The sanctuary lamp that is lit behind the altar is a visible sign that Christ is present in the consecrated bread and wine. Portions of what we consecrate on Sunday are kept in a special box called an *aumbry* or *tabernacle* in order to have some available to take to those who are sick or shut-in during the week.

The Communion, or consecrated bread and wine, is one of the *sacraments* of the Church. The classical definition of a sacrament in the Anglican tradition is “an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace,”³⁰

In the Communion, the outward sign is the bread and wine which we can see and touch and taste. The inward grace is the body of Christ broken for us and the blood of Christ shed for us. Jesus teaches us that “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.”³¹

At points during the Prayer of Consecration, you may see the clergy kneeling or *genuflecting* before the bread and wine. A genuflection is a

²⁸ *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, V.lxvii.12

²⁹ *Institutes* IV, xvii, 32

³⁰ 1928 Book of Common Prayer, p. 581 (1979 p. 857)

³¹ John 6.56

gesture of respect acknowledging the presence of Christ in the sacraments.

The Prayer of Consecration itself begins on page 132 with an introductory exchange between the celebrant and the congregation. That is followed by words of praise to God the Father along with an explanation of what we are praising him for.

At this point in the prayers, the celebrant adds a *Proper Preface* which is another element of the liturgy which will vary by season (*e.g.* Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, etc). In the *2019 Prayer Book* these prefaces may be found on pages 152-158.

The service continues with the hymn referred to as the *Sanctus*: “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord...” The *Sanctus* is an ancient hymn that has been included in Christian worship services since the 1st century and is based on prayers and praises found in the Old Testament book of Isaiah, the New Testament Gospel of Matthew and the Revelation to St. John.³²

After praising the Father, we move to the *anamnesis* or “remembering” section of the Prayer over on page 133. On the bottom of that page and continuing onto 134 there is a time of *offering the gifts* to God as well as a prayer that he would send his *Holy Spirit* upon them.

Frankly, we do not know at what precise moment the bread and wine are transformed; nevertheless, we believe by faith that through the action of the entire prayer, what Jesus has promised has been accomplished.

This is not something the priest does, but is a prayer of the whole congregation with the priest at the head. And we all signify our participation in this prayer by joining in a loud “**Amen**” as it concludes on page 134.

LORD’S PRAYER.....p. 134

³² Isaiah 6.3, Matthew 21.9 (see also Revelation 4.8)

The Prayer of consecration is now over. The prayers on pages 134-135 are our way of *preparing to receive* the body and blood of Christ. We begin with the Lord's Prayer which has been included as part of the Eucharistic Prayer of the Church since at least the 4th Century.³³

PRAYER OF HUMBLE ACCESS..... p. 135

Next we say together the *Prayer of Humble Access* which combines the humble confession of the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15 who pleaded with Jesus for her daughter's healing as well as Jesus' teaching about communion in the 6th chapter of the Gospel of John.³⁴

AGNUS DEI..... p. 136

Finally, our communion preparation concludes with the singing of the *Agnus Dei*—an ancient prayer based on the words of John the Baptist in The Gospel of John, chapter 1.³⁵

When *coming to the altar* to receive, you may kneel or stand. When the ministers present the bread and wine it is appropriate to say an "Amen" to the words of administration—acknowledging that you truly believe you are receiving the body and blood of Christ as it is presented to you.

In our tradition, *anyone may receive* communion who has been baptized with water, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and has been admitted to Communion in their own church. For younger children, we like to wait until they've had a *first communion* class—usually after they reach at least 2nd grade.

Before or after receiving communion, when you are in your pews you may meditate or pray quietly or else sing the communion hymns. The idea is *not only* to spend some time with the Lord, but to be careful not to distract from the worship experience of others.

³³ Matthew 6.9-13

³⁴ Matthew 15.21-28; John 6.53-56; *cf.* Matthew 8.5-13

³⁵ John 1.29

COMMUNION HYMNS

As for communion music, the first couple of hymns or songs we choose are usually more quiet and meditative. This slowly transitions to the point that, after everyone has received, we like to finish with a more upbeat hymn of praise or thanksgiving. In singing the post-communion song, worshippers are encouraged to throw their hearts and souls and voices into worship. The point is not to rush out of the building as fast as possible after receiving communion, but to exuberantly express our love and thanks to the Lord.

During the singing of the final communion song you may notice the clergy “doing the dishes.” There is actually nothing special about these actions. The priest is simply *rinsing the plate and cups*. Although this is done carefully in order to be respectful of the remnants of the consecrated bread and wine.

Besides eating and drinking the elements, the only other approved method to dispose of them is by returning them to the earth. That is why the Altar Guild, after they wash the chalice, cruet or plate, pours the water they use into a special sink called a *piscina* which drains directly into the ground outside rather than down a drain.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER.....p. 137

After everything on the altar is put back in its proper place, we continue by giving thanks in the words of our *post communion prayer* on page 137.

BLESSING..... p. 137

As the service draws to a close, the priest or Bishop (if he’s present) pronounces God’s blessing upon the people.

CLOSING HYMN

As the altar party leaves the chancel area, we sing a final hymn of praise to God with great joy for his presence among us and with thanksgiving for how we have been transformed by his Grace.

DISMISSAL

The service is officially over with the dismissal from the back of the church. The word “mass” comes from the Latin word for *dismissal*. Long ago, a churchgoer may have asked a friend if they were going to stay for the “*mass*”—meaning “are you going to stay all the way ’til the end?”



Jesus said: I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. *John 11.25*

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