

Why do we say what we say? Confession and Absolution Part 2

Way back in October, [I wrote about Confession and Absolution](#). I entitled it, [Part 1](#). That article focused on private confession and absolution. This is what Luther is talking about in his Small Catechism when he says, *“What is Confession? Answer: Confession has two parts: the one is that we confess our sins; the other is that we receive Absolution, or forgiveness, from the confessor, as from God Himself, and in no way doubt, but firmly believe that our sins are forgiven before God in heaven by this.”*

When I think of corporate confession in scripture. The first place I think of is Acts 2 on Pentecost. In verse 37, the congregation gathered to hear Peter preach respond to the preaching of God’s Word and respond together. However, we can go further back, into the Old Testament to Nehemiah 8. There, Ezra read from the Law before the congregation and the people wept together when they heard it. There are other examples as well, but these two stand as most prominent in my mind.

That being the case, corporate confession and absolution is a baby when it comes to the liturgy. There are things contained in the Morning Worship liturgy on page 2 in the [Ambassador Hymnal](#) or in the Common Service on page 25 in the Ambassador Hymnal that go back millennia, even before the Babylonian Exile. Though corporate confession was not broadly practiced until the time of the Reformation, it does have firm pre-Reformation roots dating back to at least the 12th century. At that time, it was common for the priest to go through a private confession called *Confiteor*, which means, “I confess.” The *Confiteor* served as the priest’s personal preparation before he would minister to the congregation during corporate worship.

After the Reformation, this personal preparation was expanded to the whole congregation in large part because of the understanding that all the saints assembled in the congregation belong to the priesthood. Corporate confession and absolution looked pretty similar to what we would see in some of our congregations in the AFLC today. The pastor would face the congregation to invite them to confess their sins, but then would turn and face the altar in the sanctuary, effectively joining in the confession of the congregation. After confessing their sins together, the pastor would then turn back toward the congregation as he spoke forth the forgiveness of sins on behalf of God in the absolution.

Now, just to pause for a second, I want to point one thing out. There are distinctions between an absolution and a declaration of grace, which is what is listed in the Morning Worship and the Common Service mentioned above. Those differences are worth while to those who are liturgically minded, but for many readers, I don’t suspect this is the case. Suffice it to say, both an absolution and a declaration of grace do the same thing and for my purposes, I am using them interchangeably. They pronounce the forgiveness of sins for the sake of Jesus Christ to all who believe in him.

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The purpose of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church is to worship God in a Bible-based, Christ-centered ministry, evangelizing, discipling, nurturing and equipping people for the spiritual well-being of every life.

Pastor Schultz



Volunteer Schedule

**If you are interested in serving in any of these areas, contact the church office.
425-821-2424 or orlckirkland@hotmail.com**

Please mark your calendars and if there are any conflicts with your schedule for the nursery, please find someone to fill your spot and let Kristine Dootson know of the substitution. If you are unable to find someone to switch with you for the nursery, call Kristine Dootson @425-753-2020.

Date	Nursery	Lay Reader	Flowers	Coffee
3/1	Joy Coy	Duane Leach	Open	WMF Celebration Sunday
3/8	Kristi Crum	Prosper Ruberwa	Open	Open
3/15	Diana Daum	Pam Jussel	Open	Deaconess St. Pat's Celebration
3/22	Sue Malone	Joe Bottem	Open	Open
3/29	Pam Jussel	Kristine Dootson	Open	Open

March Birthdays

George Hartlein	March 3
Marty Crowther	March 4
Diana Daum	March 7
Kristine Dootson	March 7
Amie Olson	March 20
Nichole Clark	March 20
Griffin Watson	March 20
Piper Slonecker	March 21

March Birthdays

Robert Paige	March 21
Ida Miller	March 22
Bernie Kowalewski	March 23
Julie Marovich	March 31
Amber Kemmerling	March 31



The Absolution can take the form of the pastor saying, “I... announce the grace of God unto all of you... and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins...,” or, “1 John 1:9 tells us that if we confess our sin, Jesus is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,” or “Because of the completed work of Christ upon the cross where he died in your place, taking your sins upon himself, and by his command, I announce to you the forgiveness of all your sins, in Jesus’ name.” There is room for freedom here as to what words are said, as long as it is based in God’s Word and in Jesus’ work upon the cross.

The declaration of Grace in the Common Service is a beautiful statement which I want to share with you.

“Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us, and has given His only Son to die for us, and for His sake forgives us all our sins. To them that believe on His name, He gives power to become the sons of God, and bestows on them His Holy Spirit. He that believes, and is baptized shall be saved. Grant this, O Lord, unto us all.”

By beginning the service in this way, the entirety of the congregation’s worship is firmly anchored in the forgiveness of sins that Jesus paid for upon the cross.

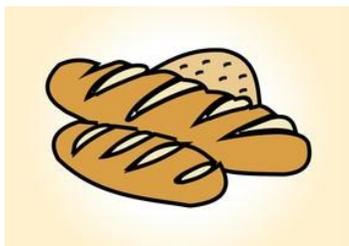
Since it has been awhile since I have written about liturgy for you, I think it is appropriate to revisit something that has already been said. Many of the different forms and elements in a worship service are a matter of freedom for the congregation. If your congregation doesn’t use this form or do that something you’ve heard of, it doesn’t mean you have to worry. The true followers of God worship in spirit and truth, not necessarily from the same page in a hymnal.

Where we are not free, I believe, is to gather and proclaim the gospel in a disorderly way. Take a look at 1 Corinthians where Paul takes a good deal of time talking about order in the congregation.

My hope in sharing just a little bit about the various parts of the historic liturgy is to broaden your appreciation for some of these traditional elements. Regardless of whether or not your congregation practices them, what they show us is that everything within the congregation’s worship service ought to point us to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of the faith.

May the peace of Christ be with you all.

There will be a soup and bread fellowship meal at 6:00 pm before Lent services Wednesdays through April 1st. Sign up now to provide soup and bread!



All offerings for Lent’s evening services will be going into the Deacon’s fund .This fund is used to help people in need in our community. We do have a specific need in mind as Prosper is expecting to have his family travel to join him this summer. If you are interested in more information, or would like to help, speak to Pastor or the Deacons.

You're invited!

ORLC will be having a St. Patrick's Pasta Potluck on Saturday, March 15th at 5 pm. Funds raised during this potluck will go to remodeling the church kitchen. Bring a pasta dish to share. Salad, bread, drinks, and dessert will be provided.



The *Christian Connection* is edited and published for ORLC . It is also available on our website www.orkirkland.org . If you do not want to receive it in your inbox, please let us know by calling (425)821-2424 or emailing orkirkland@hotmail.com.

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