**The History of Christian Worship**

*Based on “The Western Rite” by Prof. Tiefel, WLS 2016*

**SEW District Worship Conference – July 13, 2019**

1. List some changes which have taken place in worship forms throughout your life.
	* What are some things you wish had not been changed?
	* What are some things that you feel are best left in the past?
2. Why do people, especially confessional Lutherans, generally dislike change?
3. Why is change in worship forms necessary?

Jesus promised that his church would endure to the end and that he would always be with us. Reviewing the history of Christian worship gives one a keen appreciation for how Jesus has been directing his church for centuries. In spite of heresies and wars, he has preserved his Church so that his elect worship in spirit and in truth.

*Objective 1 – Gain an understanding of worship forms Christians have used over the last 2000 years, especially Lutherans, and particularly WELS*

*Objective 2 – Realize that worship forms have always been changing as they build on what came before and adjust to current circumstances.*

*Objective 3 – Gain an appreciation for the gift we have inherited in our worship forms.*

*Objective 4 – Understand and appreciate what we can expect in our next WELS Hymnal.*

**Course Outline**

**1. The Early Christian Church**

A. Temple worship

B. Synagogue worship

C. Jesus and worship

D. Apostolic Age

E. Early Church

Even though at times frustrating to our curiosity, why is it probably good that we don’t have too many details about what worship was like in the early Christian church?

**2. A Growing Church, 300-600**

A. From Persecution to Popularity

B. Eastern Rite

C. Western Rite

As the pastor was discussing the new WELS hymnal with his elders and others, someone sighed, “More and more change. More and more arguing about what to use in each service. Why don’t we just go back to what the original Christian church used for their worship? It obviously worked for them. That should be good enough for us too.” What is so impossible about his suggestion? What is so wrong about his suggestion?

What is the benefit of a Pericope and a Church Year? What might be a problem of following a Pericope and a Church Year? How steadfast should we be in preserving the “historic” Pericope and Church Year? Should we ever make changes to it? Why or why not?

What is the benefit of using all the arts in worship. How can worship engage all five senses? What could be the danger of that?

**3. The Medieval Church, 600-1500**

A. From Sacrament to Sacrifice

B. The Mass without Communicants

The larger and larger churches / cathedrals added to the “other-worldliness” of God and a sense of mystery. What are some good and bad effects of a huge, imposing house of worship?

**4. Luther’s Reforms**

A. A Pastoral Matter

B. Luther’s qualifications for reforming the Mass

C. Luther’s Reforms

***Luther’s greatest contribution to worship was not the worship forms, but the pastoral approach!***

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| **Historic** | **Formula Missae, 1523** | **Deutsche Messe, 1525** |
| Introit | Retain for Sundays and festivals | Hymn or a psalm in German |
| Kyrie | In its customary forms | Three-fold Kyrie |
| Gloria in excelsis | In its customary form but optional | Not mentioned. Cf. Luther’s Gloria in Excelsis and that of Nicholas Decius |
| Collect | One of the customary collects | Facing the altar |
| Epistle | Especially those about faith | Facing the people |
| Gradual | Graduals of two verses but not the longer Lenten tracts | A German hymn, We Now Implore God the Holy Ghost or another hymn |
| Gospel | With or without ceremonies | Facing the people |
| Nicene Creed | Sung | In One True God We All Believe |
| Sermon | In its usual place or before the Mass | Sermon on the Gospel; |
|  |  | Paraphrase of the Lord’s Prayer |
|  |  | Admonition to communicants |
| *Offertory – for the merit of the saints* | Eliminate but prepare the host and chalice |  |
| Preface and Proper Preface | Continue to “through Jesus Christ our Lord……Who on the day before he suffered (Institution Narrative) spoken audibly. | Institution Narrative of the Bread and ElevationDistribution of the Host |
| Sanctus | The choir sings the SanctusThe Elevation of the bread and wine | Isaiah, Mighty Seer During the distribution of the Host |
|  |  | Institution Narrative of the ChaliceDistribution |
| *Canon* *Prayers for the living* *Remembrance of martyrs* *Acceptance of the offering* *Institution Narrative* *Offering of Christ* *Invocation of the Holy Spirit* *Intercessions for the dead* *Lord’s Prayer* *Merits of the saints* *The Fraction* *The commixture*  | Eliminated except for the Lord’s Prayer | Eliminated |
| Peace of the Lord | Continue facing the people |  |
| Agnus Dei | Continue | German Agnus Dei |
| Confession of the priest | Continue but spoken for all |  |
| Confession of communicants |  |  |
| Distribution | First the priest and then the people. Perhaps the host separate from the chalice | Men first, then women |
| Final Collect | Yes, but a collect that doesn’t sound like an offering | We give thanks to thee… |
| Salutation | Continue |  |
| Go, the mass is ended | Continue or use Numbers 6:24-26 | Numbers 6:24-26 |

1. Catholic vs. Lutheran. What are the benefits and negatives to each side of the spectrum?

So familiar that a Catholic would not find anything different.

So different that a Catholic would not find anything familiar.

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-10 -8 -6 -4 -2 0 +2 +4 +6 +8 +10

1. Sameness vs. variety. Where do you think our worship should be on this scale?

Within 20 years, nothing is changed at all.

Within 20 years, everything is completely changed.

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-10 -8 -6 -4 -2 0 +2 +4 +6 +8 +10

1. Old vs. New. Where do you think our worship should be on this scale? Why?

Only New

Only Old

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-10 -8 -6 -4 -2 0 +2 +4 +6 +8 +10

Explain: When Luther set out to “reform the Mass,” it was more than just teaching people a new order of worship and new music.

**5. Post-Luther Germany, 1500’s-1800’s**

A. The Lutheran Landscape

B. Hurdles and Hardships

What became the goal of churches under the influence of Pietism? How can that goal be a threat to the gospel today? What can we do to avoid the pitfalls of Pietism?

What cultural and religious forces seem to be a big threat to the gospel in the 21st century? How do those forces compare to the societal forces during the age of Rationalism?

T/F – All music played in worship should have some sort of religious connection. (Should we ever play music in worship that doesn’t have some connection to God and salvation, for example, Pachelbel’s Canon?)

**6. America 1800-1941**

A. Religious Landscape in a young USA

B. Confessional Lutheranism in a New Land

C. Common Service

**7. America, 1941 – Present**

A. Winds of Change across Christendom

B. Lutheran Hymnals in America

C. WELS Hymnals

Considering our WELS history and the different hymnals we have used, would you describe WELS worship as static or changing? Why? Why should there always be sameness as well as variety?

Should we eliminate the high cost of printing a hymnal and simply make it available for tablets and screens? Why or why not?

For the full class (class worksheets, leader’s guides, PowerPoints), contact:

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