



## Pastor's Notes

Dear Friends,

On occasion, I'm asked about the various liturgical garments I wear, or why the church is decorated in a particular color. Other times, people ask why I chant parts of our service from the hymnal, or how I choose when to stand in front of or behind the altar. To sum up, people are often curious why some pastors and priests bring a certain amount of ritual to the worship service.

Back in the 5th century, St. Prosper of Aquitaine famously said "lex orandi, lex credendi." Today, we translate this as "The way we worship is the way we believe." For many of us, we began learning this as children when we wore our "Sunday clothes" to church, or how we were expected to be on our best behavior while we were there. There is something different about time in worship, something sacred and holy.

Worship is a time set apart from the rest of the world and its concerns. And liturgical worship has its own vocabulary - words like altar, mass, eucharist, alb, stole, chasuble, censer, and more.

"Liturgy," for example means a structured form of worship, usually referring to the words and actions used and added to by the faithful over the millennia to our own day. It's based on the Greek word "leitourgia," which we translate as "work of the people." Since people have existed, they have found ways to express their feelings to God. Those words and actions are added to and made relevant for the time, while still retaining their connection to our ancestors.

The traditional liturgy of the church is performed to the best of our ability, as we seek to offer the finest sacrifice that we are capable of to our Triune God.

Remember the quote from earlier, about how the way we worship is the way we believe? Well, not all people imagine themselves standing before God in the same way. For some, the reverence and connection to the historical church isn't as powerful as speaking and moving in ways that reflect a more jovial and familiar relationship. A more contemporary style of worship is preferred with modern music, hands in the air and shouts of "Amen!" And again, from a theological standpoint, the goal is to offer our finest sacrifice to God in this medium. Just as different artworks move people, so do differing styles of worship.

Throughout the years our the congregation at Immanuel has used the practices of the centuries of believers, from the most ancient to the most modern. Currently, our worship has a bit of a "hybrid" design, utilizing the foundations of a Lutheran liturgical mass with music and music and technology of a more contemporary style. You might say we have a little bit of something for everyone.

This summer, we will be trying out another audio system that allows us to use all the parts of the hymnal via a recorded pipe organ. We will use that for Sunday worship, while using the more contemporary option for Wednesday services. As always, your feedback is needed and appreciated!

In closing, let's go back to St. Prosper of Aquitaine. When you think of how you prefer to worship, what comes to mind? Try to imagine the wall behind the altar was a window into the place where all the saints are found, as well as the throne of God (more on this later). Would this change the way you would dress? The words would you speak? What actions would you find most appropriate?

In the coming weeks, I'll share with you about some of the items that make up our worship space, and the significance of our words and actions.

Wishing you the Lord's peace,

 *Pastor Brian Moeller*