



Pastor's Notes

Dear Friends,

In keeping with the past few week's theme of "the way we worship is the way we believe," I thought I'd mention some other religious items that are central to, or enhance our worship experience. From the Baptismal Font, to the Communion Veil, the small and large parts of worship matter. They help us give our finest sacrifice to our Lord and remind us that during worship, we are in a holy and sacred time, different from any other we experience during the week.

The Baptismal Font: The starting point of the Christian life, where we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, and Christ's promise of eternal life, sealed with the sign of the cross on our foreheads. The water in the font has been blessed by the pastor; the faithful may choose to touch the blessed water and make the sign of the cross on their foreheads, in remembrance of their baptisms. You are a beloved child of God!

The Eternal Flame: Originally lit when a tabernacle (see next page) held consecrated elements, this candle in a red glass reminds us today of the presence of the Holy Spirit among us.


The Lectern and Pulpit: Traditionally, the lectern is slightly lower and used by a lay reader, assisting minister, or cantor to read the scriptures, lead prayers, and make announcements. The pulpit is sometimes more elevated and used by clergy to read the Gospel and for preaching on the Gospel message.

The Paschal Candle: Church tradition was for this very tall candle to burn for the entire 50 days of Easter. Today, it's lit for worship services during the Easter season, as well as on high feast days of the church (the days when the church and pastor are adorned in white paraments and vestments), as well as weddings and funerals.

The Processional Cross: Designed to be carried by a crucifer at the beginning and end of worship services. It represents Christ leading the congregation into God's presence. Some show a crucifix, representing the suffering and death of Christ for humanity, and others have an empty cross, representing Christ's resurrection.

Items related to Holy Communion:

- **Chalice:** Traditionally, parishioners drank from a common cup, often lined with silver or gold. Since the COVID epidemic, most churches have used individual cups of some kind, with only the presiding pastor drinking from the "common cup."
- **Elements:** Typically, churches use unleavened bread or wafers. A gluten free option is available as well. Wine and grape juice are available to receive the blood of Christ, with the ecclesiastical rule being that the blood of Christ is to be consecrated "fruit of the vine."
- **Pall:** A stiffened, square piece of linen or board used specifically to cover the top of the chalice to protect its contents.
- **Paten:** A small plate or shallow dish used to hold the bread or wafers. Church tradition is for the paten to be held under the chin of the communicant, ensuring that no small amounts of host are profaned by touching the ground.
- **Purificator:** A small linen cloth used by the clergy to wipe the chalice clean after use. Tradition dictates that because they are stained with the blood of Christ, they are to be washed in a sink that flows directly to the earth.
- **Tabernacle:** Not found at Immanuel or in many other Lutheran churches today, this cabinet is located near the altar. The consecrated elements are kept there instead of returning them to a supply area or consuming them, and are available for distribution to the homebound, etc.
- **Veil:** A square, draped cloth used to cover the chalice and paten on the altar until they are needed. The Veil highlights the distinction between the two main parts of our worship service, Word and Sacrament. The removal of the veil is one of the first actions in preparation for Holy Communion, and invites us to enter into the celebration of Christ being "in, with, and under" the bread and wine. As Lutherans, we believe in the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper.

Wishing you the Lord's peace,
 *Pastor Brian Moeller*