

# ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



## *Instructed Eucharist* *Rite I*

We celebrate our life  
in Jesus Christ,  
proclaim our faith in Him  
through word and deed,  
and create a loving  
and caring  
environment  
that draws people  
to Jesus  
and equips them  
for ministry.

## An Instructed Eucharist

### St. Peter's Episcopal Church

Throughout the Christian centuries, the liturgy we use each Sunday has been known by many names: The Holy Eucharist, The Last Supper, The Lord's Supper, The Holy Communion, The Mass, and the Sacred Liturgy. Each of these names has in mind The Holy Meal of the Christian family, at which Jesus is the host. He has invited us to come as His guests to sup with Him.

The Holy Eucharist was instituted by Jesus at the Passover Seder on the night He was betrayed and the night before He was crucified. The Seder was a family meal in the Jewish household that had deep religious significance. It was a reminder of God's deliverance of their ancestor's from their slavery in Egypt. Bread and wine, common foods of the people were shared in love and communion with family members. Jesus chose this occasion for His last meal with his disciples. The next day he Himself, through his sacrificial death on the cross would deliver us from our slavery to sin.

The service itself has two main parts- the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of Holy Communion. The word "*liturgy*" means "*the corporate worship of the Church.*" It comes from two ancient Greek words- "*laos*" meaning "*the people*" and "*ergon*" meaning "*work.*" And so the liturgy is the "*work done for the people and by the people.*" It is both God's gracious work given to us and our work in response to His love. And so, we are not to be a passive audience here. Rather, we are to be active participants.

Our liturgy begins on page 323 of the **Prayer Book** with an opening **ACCLAMATION** of praise to the Trinity. Following the acclamation, the priest will then offer, on our behalf, an opening prayer called the **COLLECT FOR PURITY**, asking the Holy Spirit to cleanse and inspire us with God's own Spirit of love. This same prayer has been offered by Christians since the 11<sup>th</sup> century. We, like them, quite naturally desire to approach God with clean hearts and pure thought.



**THE SUMMARY OF THE LAW** that follows **THE COLLECT FOR PURITY** are the words of Jesus in His response to the question, *"Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"* (Mark 12:28-31) As His disciples, we are to commit ourselves to keeping these commandments as we live out our faith in our daily lives.....

### **Acclamation, Collect for Purity, and Summary of the Law**

Yet, we know that we have fallen short of what is pure and right in the sight of God and of what is expected of us. And so the human cry in response to this is the **GLORIA IN EXCELSIS**, an ancient hymn that acknowledges our sinful nature and our desire for forgiveness from a majestic and merciful God.....

### **Gloria in Excelsis**

Having made our necessary preparations for worship, we turn

our focus to the first part of our service-The Liturgy of the Word.

The **COLLECT OF THE DAY** is a prayer which speaks to the theme of this Sunday (Trinity Sunday) and focuses our attention on the readings that will follow.

The **LESSONS** which follow come from the ancient sources of our faith- the Holy Scriptures. These words enlighten our minds and direct our wills according to God's holy wisdom. God speaks to us through His teachers and prophets of **THE OLD TESTAMENT**, through the **PSALMS**, through the **LETTERS (OR EPISTLES)** of the earliest church leaders, and then (most importantly) through the **HOLY GOSPEL**, which recounts the life and teachings of His Son Jesus and which is read by a deacon or priest. To show our reverence for Jesus and His story we stand for the **GOSPEL** reading. ....

### **Collect of the Day, Scripture Lessons, and Gospel**

The **HOMILY** or **SERMON** is a commentary on the Scriptures just read. While some teaching may necessarily occur in the course of a sermon or homily, the primary purpose for the preacher is to proclaim the Good News found in the Scriptures. As such, it is not designed to be used as a means for the preacher to share his/her own opinions or agendas. A sermon should also challenge those listening to examine their own lives in terms of what God expects of us as disciples of His Son Jesus.....

### **The Sermon**

The **NICENE CREED** follows the sermon and is said or sung on all Sundays and major feasts. It is our "*Pledge of Allegiance*" to God and comes from the Latin word "*credo*"- I believe. The Creed was first formulated by the Church in 325 A.D. at the Council of Nicea (in modern day Turkey). It was completed at the later Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D. Together, we say aloud what we as Christians believe about the Trinity of God.....

### **The Nicene Creed**

Inspired by the Word of God, and having once again proclaimed our "***Credo***", we reach out and pray for the Church, our nation, and the world. We do this through **THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**. Typically led by a lay person (a LEM or a lector) we also pray together for the needs of those people we know and hold dear, and for the departed. Those seated in the pews are given the opportunity (and are encouraged) to include their own special concerns and thanksgivings at the appointed time.....

## The Prayers of the People

The **CONFESSION OF SIN** is a time of personal preparation for participation in the **Liturgy of Holy Communion**, the second part of the service. Having offered our prayers for others, we turn to our own needs. In response to the Word of God, we acknowledge our own faults and our own shortcomings and tell God we are sorry for the wrong we have done. During the time of silence, we bring to mind our personal sins, so that we can offer them up before God's throne of grace in the **GENERAL CONFESSION**.

The **ABSOLUTION**, proclaimed by the priest in the Name of Jesus Christ, is the assurance of God's forgiveness of our sins. It is a reminder that, In Christ, we are cleansed and restored to the relationship we had with Him beginning with our baptism. **THE COMFORTABLE WORDS** that follow the **ABSOLUTION** are drawn from the passages of Scripture. They are a further reminder to us that God forgives us our sins when we approach Him with a sincere and contrite heart.....

### Confession of Sin, Absolution, and Comfortable Words

Having made our confession and having received God's forgiveness, we move immediately into the sharing of **THE PEACE**. In various cultures, the passing of **THE PEACE** has taken different forms- a hug, a kiss on the cheek, a handshake, or a formal bow. It is used in one form or another in most liturgical churches throughout the world. Through it, we are reminded that we worship corporately as a body and that we greet one another, not only as friends, but as brothers and sisters in Christ. Sometimes sharing the **PEACE** with someone who has hurt us or made us angry can be part of the healing process in that relationship. It reminds us that God loves us unconditionally and that we, as Christians, are called to love each other in the same way.....



## **The Peace**

We have now come to the second part of the service-

**The Liturgy of Holy Communion**, which begins with **THE OFFERTORY**.

The scene shifts from the lectern and the pulpit to the Lord's Table and its preparation. The offertory at this service has two parts: the offering of money, and the offering of bread and wine.

The collection of money (or alms) is a substitute for the food and clothing which in ancient days were brought by the congregation to be distributed to the poor and needy. Money later became more expedient, but it serves the same purpose- to extend the charitable work of the Church. In the money offering, we are returning a portion of what belongs to God in thanksgiving for His blessings and grace.

The bread and wine are a corporate offering. The grain and the grape are selected out of nature to represent all of nature, the whole creation, and our human work in turning them into bread and wine.

These two offerings- money, and part of creation are the symbols of you and me individually, collectively, and of the whole world in which we live- past, present, and future.....

## **The Offertory**

We now come to the heart of the liturgy- THE GREAT THANKSGIVING which begins on p.333 of the Prayer Book. The word "*eucharist*" is derived from the Greek word "*eucharistia*" which means "*thanksgiving*."

The GREAT THANKSGIVING is a reminder to us of the acts of redemption by our Lord Jesus. The night of the betrayal, the Last Supper, the Cross, the Tomb, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the Kingdom to come all merge together in the Eucharist.

When we "*Lift up our hearts*" we are lifted up out of time and space into the Divine presence. As we sing (or say) the **SANCTUS** ("*Holy, Holy, Holy*") we share the vision of John the disciple of the heavenly banquet in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> chapters of the Book of Revelation. The great events in the salvation story are recounted in the prayer that follows. The story of the Last Supper is retold in Jesus' own words. As we do these things by his command and "*in remembrance of Him*", we find our Lord Jesus present with His people. Christ is with us who gather in His Name as He promised he would be, and as a sure promise that He will come again.

In the **CONSECRATION**, we ask the blessing of the Holy Spirit, not only to make the bread and wine a sacramental sign of Jesus' presence, but to transform us as well to be signs of His presence in the world. The **CONSECRATION** concludes with the great **AMEN**.

Fittingly, whichever form of **THE GREAT THANKSGIVING** is used, it is always concluded with the prayer Jesus taught us- **THE LORD'S PRAYER**. Communion with God takes place when the gifts which we have offered (now blessed and made holy) come back to us as the Body and Blood of the Risen Christ.

In doing what Jesus did at the Last Supper, the celebrant **BREAKS THE BREAD**. It is symbolic of Jesus' Holy Body being broken in the crucifixion. So important is this action that "*The Breaking of the Bread*" was the earliest church's title for the Mass or Eucharist. **THE PRAYER OF HUMBLE ACCESS** which follows is our acknowledgement of our unworthiness to receive God's gifts of forgiveness and spiritual nourishment. But it is also a statement of our confidence in God's mercy and His desire to be in relationship with us.



At the Celebrant's invitation (beginning "*the gifts of God for the people of God*") you are directed to come forward without excessive noise or excessive haste. The clergy and LEM will make their Communion first, and then serve those who come to the altar rail.

Receiving Communion is a moment of special intimacy with Jesus. We feed on Him by faith. He nourishes our spirits as the bread and wine nourish our bodies. Receive the Body and Blood of Christ reverently and eagerly. Lift up your hands with palms open to accept the bread, take hold of the cup of wine at the base and guide it to your mouth, or (if you prefer) dip the bread into the wine. This is called **Intinction**. Many people find it helpful to pray a short prayer as they receive the Sacrament. It is appropriate to add your firm and happy "*Amen!*" to the minister's words of distribution.....

### **The Great Thanksgiving**

Our worship climaxes with the Holy Communion and so the service closes quickly. The ministers clear the Table after the meal. Then we offer a short prayer of thanks to God for making us part of His Body (the Church) and for feeding us so that we can go out and love others in His Name.

After the Celebrant pronounces a final blessing, we are dismissed by the priest and sent from the Holy Table to carry into the world what we have received here today. We are sent out as our Lord's disciples, with joy in our hearts, to carry forward Jesus' own work to change the world and to reflect more and more the Kingdom of God.....

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving, Blessing, and Dismissal**