

We Worship Biblically and Historically (cont'd):

Our voices are united in the best of song, hymnody and prayer to the church past, present, and future, through the worship of the saints on earth and those now at rest in heaven. We observe many feasts and festivals according to the historical church calendar, to increase our knowledge of Christ and help us learn better.

Our Sunday worship service is formal and liturgical. Other than the sermon and the announcements before the prayers, everything follows a set, regular pattern of words and actions. This might seem strange and unfamiliar the first time you encounter it, but over time it becomes second-nature.

Sometimes what goes on at a church service is referred to as “worship.” The word worship means “to ascribe worth or value to something or someone.” In this case, the “someone” is God. Now there’s nothing wrong with this word. It however is not found in the Bible, at least in the original languages. Sometimes the Bible speaks of bowing or prostrating oneself before God. This is oftentimes translated into English with the word worship.

Worship is not the best word to use then talking about a church service because it emphasizes what we are doing for God. The implication is that the most important thing is for the worshiper to be doing all the work. It’s my job to praise and thank God for all He has done for me.

As Lutherans we prefer Divine Service to describe what happens in church. The word “divine” referring to God or “Coming from God.” Combining this with “service” means that when we gather for church most importantly it is God who is doing the work, not us. God (the Divine) is serving us. God is giving to us. The German word for this is Gottesdienst – God’s Service. This is how Martin Luther, renown for reforming the Western Church from abuses and corruption, would have defined worship in his day.

And what does God give us? He gives us the gifts of His Word and the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Through these means or instruments God makes known to us all that He has done so that we might have a place there in heaven.