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Selected Worship Services

Mark Love
mlove@rc.edu

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Selected Worship Services

APPENDIX

The following service was centered around the themes presented in the sermon. The text was a hope oracle from the book of Micah. This passage describes God as the Good Shepherd who gathers his scattered sheep. When gathered together they are noisy with the bleating of sheep -- the sound of praise. A second image in the text is of God breaking down the walls of Jerusalem to lead the besieged people on a journey of hope where they will learn to trust only in him. The sermon will develop the point that God has gathered a scattered and besieged people at the Park Row Church of Christ. He continues to gather us each Sunday despite those things that would scatter us. What can this people do but praise God?

The service leads to this climax in the sermon. The congregation is to respond in the same way Israel responded in the sheep fold -- with the noise of celebration and praise. Following this season of praise, the family meditates on the lamb slain who is also their shepherd. The celebration of the Lord's Supper is followed by an invitation to the scattered and besieged to give their lives to Jesus. The service ends in bold praise.

GOD'S FAMILY GATHERED TOGETHER- PARK ROW CHURCH OF CHRIST, SEPTEMBER 24, 1989

"We Gather Together" (v.1/vv. 2-3) #1

A Time of Preparation and Sharing

GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD FOR HE IS GOOD

Reading - Psalm 107:1-9 Joe Lanciaux
 Offering
 Prayer for the Church Don Thomas

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Lesson
 "We are Gathered Together" Mark Love
 (Text: Micah 2:12-13)

LET THE WORLD REJOICE

"Let Every Heart Rejoice and Sing" (v.1) # 49
 "We Praise Thee, O God" (vv. 1,2,4) # 61
 "Praise the Lord" (vv. 3,4) #100
 "Come, Thou Almighty King" (vv. 1,3) # 88
 "O Lord, Our Lord" # 54

THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN IS OUR SHEPHERD

A Celebration of the Body and Blood of Christ
 "Like a Shepherd Tender True" (vv. 1,2)..... #272
 "He Leadeth Me" (vv. 1,2)..... #133

THE INVITATION OF GOD

"God Would Gather You Too"..... Mark Love
 "Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us" (vv. 1-3)..... #606

OUR HOPE AND BENEDICTION

"On Zion's Glorious Summit " #177

Service Concentrating on the Lord's Supper

At least once a year, I build a service directly around the Lord's Table. All of the songs, readings, prayers, and reflections focus on the Lord's Supper and its meaning. This particular service does not contain a "sermon." Instead, a series of reflections on "The Meaning of the Eucharistic Meal" allow an opportunity for concentrated thinking or several aspects of the Lord's Supper. Reflections are on The Meal as a meal of thanksgiving, as a meal of invocation of the Spirit, as a meal of remembering, as a meal of communion, and as a meal of the kingdom.

This framework allows for an introduction to many elements important to meaningful participation in The Supper; e.g., historical backgrounds, historical development, the theological meaning of terms ("eucharist," "presence," "remembering," "participation," "Body of Christ," etc.), as well as practical matters, can be touched on in a context of learning, experience and praise. The introduction of unfamiliar elements from the tradition of the early church (e.g., blessings, the bringing of the gifts of bread and wine) also awaken interest in more serious reflection on the meaning of this very central Gospel ordinance.

Lynn E. Mitchell, Jr.
Prepared for the Bering Drive Church,
Houston.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

The Lord's Supper begins and ends in the Body of Christ, and it is only the presence of that Body which makes it what it is.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

Two Blessings (in the style of the Synagogue, with Christian meaning)

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has kept us in life and has preserved us and has enabled us to reach this moment.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of Universe, who has sanctified us by the blood of your son Jesus and has commanded us to meet and eat with Him at this table.

Hymn: "O Praise the Lord" No. 470 (*Great Songs of the Church II*)
—Be Seated—

Reflection: "The Meaning of the Eucharistic Meal" (I Corinthians 10: 16-17 and 11:23-29)

I. "A Meal of Thanksgiving"

(Précis) Thanksgiving was, evidently, the predominant mood and theme of The Meal in the earliest church (Acts 2: 46-47). The Greek term by which the The Meal came to be known is *Eucharist* ("thanksgiving"). The Eucharist was not merely a repetition of the Last Supper, but also a continuation of the hundreds of other suppers Jesus had with His disciples—and especially those He had with them after His resurrection (Read Luke 24:28-35).

* He is risen, He is alive, He is here. We are saved—we are safe. Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ Our Lord.

II. "A Meal of Invocation of the Spirit" "Father of Mercies" No. 373

(Précis) At the Eucharist, the early church prayed "Maranatha"—O Lord Come ("Come Lord Jesus, Be our Guest"—old Lutheran table blessing). Come Holy Spirit. The early church was convinced of the presence of the Spirit at the Lord's Supper. More specifically, they were convinced of the presence of Jesus Christ—the One who died but who is now alive. The presence of the Spirit—the presence of Christ—is not an experience—like seeing a ghost. It is not feeling a warm spot. It is a fact of promise. It is true when I feel it and when I don't. It is even true if I never "feel" it at all. It is not a feeling at all, though it should make us feel a great many things, such as thanksgiving, joy, sorrow for sin, love. The presence of the Spirit in the Church and the presence of Christ at this table is a reality without which

wishes, hopes, and feelings are nothing but illusions.

* Come Holy Spirit. Cleanse us and make us fit to eat and drink at this Table. Come Lord Jesus, Be Our Guest.

III. A Meal of Remembering “Open My Eyes: No. 643

(Précis) “Do this in remembrance of Me” does not mean merely to try very hard to visualize the crucifixion scene while pinching off a piece of bread. Remembering had a very specific meaning to Jews. It was not merely a mental picture—it was an event. The Passover meal was not merely an occasion for thinking back to the events of the Exodus. It was a participation in them. Every Jew has participated in the Exodus, or he or she is not Jew. Every Christian has participated in the death of Christ on the cross and His resurrection from death, or he or she is lost, still in sin. This is the meaning of both baptism and the Eucharist. (Read Rom. 6:3-4).

* “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?” “Do this in remembrance of Me.”

IV. A Meal of Communion

(Précis) Communion—Fellowship—Sharing. The Church is the real presence of Christ. It is the Body of Christ which Paul solemnly warns us to “rightly discern.” It is not trying to visualize the corpse of Jesus; it is to properly treat His Body, the Church. This communion with the Body may be more properly experienced when the Lord’s Supper is more like that of the early church—a complete meal of fellowship (the context of I Cor. 11 as well as the context of the Last Supper). He who does not discern the Body of Christ (both vertically and horizontally) eats and drinks damnation to himself. If you have anything between you and your brother, leave your gift at the altar and go first to your brother or sister.

* Let a person examine himself and only then let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

V. A Meal of the Kingdom “When We Meet in Sweet Communion” No. 668

(Précis) “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.” The Eucharistic prayer for the bread in the Didache (early second century?) goes like this: “As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and being gathered together became one loaf, so may your church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your Kingdom.” The Lord’s Supper reminds us to keep our eye out for the Messianic Banquet of choice food and wines and exquisite fellowship, when He shall come to bring His own to sup with Him forever.

* Show forth His death until He comes. Maranatha. Even so come Lord Jesus.

Hymn: “I Know That My Redeemer Lives” No. 404

Explanation of the Bringing of the Gifts (Bread and wine, the most ordinary of gifts, brought from believers’ homes to be blessed for use in the Supper of the Lord, brought by children of the families)

Blessings (from the Jewish liturgy)

Blessed are thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe,
Who brings forth bread from the earth.

Blessed are thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe,
Who created the fruit of the vine.

Words of Institution

(After sorting the bread) Take, eat. This is the body of Christ which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Him. (Pass the bread to each steward to eat—then pass to the congregation).

(After pouring into cup) Drink of this cup, all of you. This is Christ’s blood of the new covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. (Pass one cup to all stewards—partake of it— then trays to the congregation).

THE MEAL

Communion Hymns “O Sacred Head Now Wounded” and “Jesus Thy Name I Love” (to be sung by the Chorus)

Collection

Sharing and Pastoral Prayer

Benediction

SERVICE OF GRATITUDE AND REMEMBRANCE -- The close of the year is an especially appropriate time to reflect upon those key events of life during a year. This service is planned to do so with a focus upon thanksgiving to God for his presence and blessings to us.

Dec 27, 1989 -- South National Church of Christ, Springfield, Missouri

Opening Reading (Psalm 93)

“Rock of Ages”

“A Mighty Fortress”

Reading: Psalm 78:1-8

Prayer of Thanksgiving for New Life

“Jesus Loves the Little Children”

“Shepherd of Tender Youth”

Reading: Psalm 23

Prayer of Thanksgiving for New Christians

“Blessed Assurance”

“More Holiness Give Me”

Reading: Psalm 90

Prayer of Thanksgiving for Departed Christians

“Faith of Our Fathers”

“Here we are but straying Pilgrims”

Word of Encouragement

“If Jesus Goes With Me”

Benediction: Numbers 6:24-26

A SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving is both a major national and family occasion that intends to lead us to reflection upon God’s providence. This service has been structured to do this in some specific ways. It is also planned for active participation.

Opening Reading:

Psalm 95:1-7a

Opening Hymn:

“Come Ye Thankful People Come”

For God’s Gift in Christ

Reading:

Colossians 2:6,7 and Romans 7:23-25

Hymns:

“Fairest Lord Jesus”

“Love Divine”

Prayer of Thanksgiving for Christ

For God’s Creation

Readings:

Psalm 98; 136:1-9

Hymn:

“For the Beauty of the Earth”

For the Church:

Readings:

Psalm 100; 2 Th. 2:13-17

Hymns:

“Faith of Our Fathers”

“The Church’s One Foundation”

Prayer of Dedication for the Church

Giving Our Gifts (At this point in the service, all members are encouraged to bring to the front of the auditorium non-perishable food items used to restock our benevolence pantry. This is a unique opportunity for active participation by all present, rather than just those who speak or lead songs)

For Our Nation

Reading:

1 Timothy 2:1-3

Hymn:

“God of our Fathers”

Dismissal Song:

“Father we Thank you”

Closing Prayer