

Worship, Liturgy, and Ceremonies in the Lutheran Confessions and in the Lutheran Church



Woodcut, Lucas Cranach the Younger, 1545

An Anthology Compiled and Edited by David Jay Webber

*Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”
(John 8:31-32, New King James Version)*

*But all things should be done decently and in order. Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you – unless you believed in vain.
(1 Corinthians 14:40–15:2, English Standard Version)*

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.
(Colossians 3:16, New International Version)*

*Now they who received his word were baptized, and ... they continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles and in the communion of the breaking of the bread and in the prayers.
(Acts 2:41-42, Confraternity)*

*Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings...
(Hebrews 13:7-9, New American Standard Bible)*

*Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our “God is a consuming fire.”
(Hebrews 12:28-29, NIV)*

*Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.
(Hebrews 10:19-25, ESV)*

*Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.
Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength!
Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts!
Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth!
(Psalm 96:6-9, ESV)*

*Live with all humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in the one hope of your calling. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in us all.
(Ephesians 4:2-5, Evangelical Heritage Version)*

*“Everything is permissible” – but not everything is beneficial.
“Everything is permissible” – but not everything is constructive.
(1 Corinthians 10:23, NIV)*

Worship, Liturgy, and Ceremonies in the Lutheran Confessions

The churches among us teach with complete unanimity...that one holy church will remain forever. The church is the assembly of saints in which the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly. And it is enough for the true unity of the church to agree concerning the teaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. It is not necessary that human traditions, rites, or ceremonies instituted by human beings be alike everywhere. As Paul says [Eph. 4:5, 6]: “One faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all...” (Augsburg Confession [Latin] I:1; VII:1-4, in *The Book of Concord*, edited by Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000], pp. 37, 43)

Concerning church rites they [our churches] teach that those rites should be observed that can be observed without sin and that contribute to peace and good order in the church, for example, certain holy days, festivals, and the like. However, people are reminded not to burden consciences, as if such worship were necessary for salvation. (Augsburg Confession [Latin] XV:1-2, Kolb/Wengert p. 49)

As can be seen, there is nothing here that departs from the Scriptures or the catholic church or the church of Rome, in so far as the ancient church is known to us from its writers. ...for even the canons are not so severe as to demand that rites should be the same everywhere, nor have the rites of all the churches ever been the same. Among us the ancient rites are for the most part diligently observed, for it is false and malicious to charge that all ceremonies and all old ordinances are abolished in our churches. But it has been a common complaint that certain abuses were connected with ordinary rites. Because these could not be approved with a good conscience, they have to some extent been corrected.

...our churches dissent from the church catholic in no article of faith but only omit some few abuses which are new and have been adopted by the fault of the times although contrary to the intent of the canons... However, it can readily be judged that nothing contributes so much to the maintenance of dignity in public worship and the cultivation of reverence and devotion among the people as the proper observance of ceremonies in the churches. (Augsburg Confession [Latin], Conclusion of Part One: 1-5; Introduction of Part Two: 1, 6, in *The Book of Concord*, edited by Theodore G. Tappert [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959], pp. 47-49)

Our churches are falsely accused of abolishing the Mass. In fact, the Mass is retained among us and is celebrated with the greatest reverence. Almost all the customary ceremonies are also retained, except that German hymns, added for the instruction of the people, are interspersed here and there among the Latin ones. For ceremonies are especially needed in order to teach those who are ignorant. Paul advised [1 Cor. 14:2,9] that in church a language that is understood by the people should be used. The people have grown accustomed to receiving the sacrament together – all who are fit to do so. This also increases reverence and respect for public ceremonies. ... The people are also reminded about the dignity and use of the sacrament – how it offers great consolation to anxious consciences – so that they may learn to believe in God and expect and ask for all that is good from God. Such worship pleases God, and such use of the sacrament cultivates piety toward God. So it does not appear that the Mass is held with greater devotion among our adversaries than among us. ...

Since the Mass is such an imparting of the sacrament, among us one common Mass is held on every holy day, and it is also administered on other days if there are those who desire it. Nor is this custom new in the church. For the ancient teachers before the time of Gregory...often speak of the common Mass. ... Since, therefore, the Mass as we conduct it has on its side the example of the church, from Scripture and the Fathers, we are confident that it cannot be disapproved,

especially since the customary public ceremonies are for the most part retained. (Augsburg Confession [Latin] XXIV:1-5, 7-9, 34-35, 40, Kolb/Wengert pp. 69, 71, 73)

It has been a general conviction, not only of the people but also of those who teach in the churches, that distinction of foods and similar human traditions are useful works for meriting grace and making satisfaction for sins. That the world thought so is evident from the fact that daily new ceremonies, new ordinances, new holy days, and new fasts were instituted and that the teachers in places of worship exacted these works as necessary worship for meriting grace and viciously terrified consciences if people omitted any of them. Much misfortune has ensued in the church from this conviction concerning traditions. ...these traditions obscured the precepts of God because traditions were preferred far more than the precepts of God. All Christianity was thought to consist of the observance of certain holy days, rites, fasts, and vestments. ...

Nevertheless, many traditions are kept among us, such as the order of readings in the Mass, holy days, etc., which are conducive to maintaining good order in the church. But at the same time, people are warned that such acts of worship do not justify before God and that no punishable sin is committed if they are omitted without offense. Such freedom in human rites was not unknown to the Fathers. For in the East, Easter was kept at a different time than in Rome, and when the Romans accused the East of schism because of this difference, they were admonished by others that such customs need not be alike everywhere. (Augsburg Confession [Latin] XXVI:1-3, 8, 40-43, Kolb/Wengert pp. 75, 77, 81)

Moreover, it is debated whether bishops or pastors have the right to institute ceremonies in the church and make laws concerning food, holy days, ranks or orders of ministers, etc. ...concerning this question, our people teach...that bishops do not have the power to establish anything contrary to the gospel. ...it is not lawful for bishops to institute such acts of worship or require them as necessary, because ordinances that are instituted as necessary or with the intention of meriting justification conflict with the gospel. ... It is necessary to retain the chief article of the gospel: that we obtain grace through faith in Christ, not through certain observances or through acts of worship instituted by human beings.

What, therefore, should one think of Sunday and similar rites in places of worship? To this our people reply that it is lawful for bishops or pastors to establish ordinances so that things are done in the church in an orderly fashion, not so that we may make satisfaction for our sins through them or so that consciences may be obliged to regard them as necessary acts of worship. ... It is fitting for the churches to comply with such ordinances for the sake of love and tranquillity and to keep them insofar as they do not offend others. Thus, everything may be done in an orderly fashion in the churches without confusion, but in such a way that consciences are not burdened by thinking such things are necessary for salvation or that they sin when violating them without offense. ... Such is the case with the observance of Sunday, Easter, Pentecost, and similar festivals and rites. (Augsburg Confession [Latin] XXVIII:30, 34, 50, 52-53, 55-57, Kolb/Wengert pp. 95, 97, 99, 101)

...nothing has been accepted among us, in teaching or ceremonies, that is contrary to Scripture or the catholic church. For it is manifest that we have most diligently been on guard so that no new or ungodly doctrines creep into our churches. (Augsburg Confession [Latin], Conclusion: 4-5, Kolb/Wengert p. 105)

...God's Word is the treasure that makes everything holy. ... At whatever time God's Word is taught, preached, heard, read, or pondered, there the person, the day, and the work is hallowed, not on account of the external work but on account of the Word that makes us all saints. Accordingly, I constantly repeat that all our life and work must be based on God's Word if they are to be God-pleasing or holy. Where that happens the [third] commandment is in force

and is fulfilled. Conversely, any conduct or work apart from God's Word is unholy in the sight of God, no matter how splendid and brilliant it may appear...

Note, then, that the power and force of this commandment consists not in the resting but in the hallowing, so that this day may have its special holy function. ... Places, times, persons, and the entire outward order of worship have therefore been instituted and appointed in order that God's Word may exert its power publicly. (Large Catechism I:91-94, Kolb/Wengert p. 399)

For although the holy Fathers themselves had rites and traditions, they still did not maintain that these things were useful or necessary for justification. They did not obscure the glory and work of Christ. Instead, they taught that we are justified by faith on account of Christ and not on account of these human acts of worship. Moreover, they observed these human rites on account of their usefulness for the body, so that people may know at what time they should assemble, so that they may have an example of how all things in the churches might be done decently and in order, and finally, so that the common people may receive some instruction. (For different seasons and various rites are valuable in admonishing the common people.) For these reasons the Fathers retained the rites...

We also figure that traditions can be rightly preserved for the following reasons. The people may more soberly concern themselves with sacred matters, as Jehoshaphat [2 Chron. 20:30] and the king of Nineveh [Jonah 3:7] proclaimed fasts. The order and governance of the church may instruct the ignorant about what may be conducted at which time. Hence, there are the festivals of Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and the like. ...for political causes traditions have been instituted, namely, for the sake of order and so that order may instruct people about the history and benefits of Christ. For it is much more effective to instruct the common people using concrete things as depicted in rites and customs than using writings. Traditions have the purpose of demonstrating and illustrating things for the people. However, out of some Pharisaical persuasion our adversaries attach to these purposes something different, namely, that such observances merit the forgiveness of sins; that such worship rites are necessary for salvation; that on account of such things human beings are reckoned righteous before God. Clearly, this is "to honor with gold and silver, with precious stones": to hold that God is conciliated by a variety of clothing, ornaments, and similar things without number in human traditions or that the worship of God consists of things like the distinction between times, foods, vessels, or clothing. (Apology XV:20-21, Kolb/Wengert pp. 225-26)

We gladly keep the old traditions set up in the church because they are useful and promote tranquillity, and we interpret them in an evangelical way, excluding the opinion which holds that they justify. Our enemies falsely accuse us of abolishing good ordinances and church discipline. We can truthfully claim that in our churches the public liturgy is more decent than in theirs... Among our opponents, unwilling celebrants and hirelings perform Mass, and they often do so only for the money. When they chant the Psalms, it is not to learn or pray but for the sake of the rite, as if this work were an act of worship or at least worth some reward. Every Lord's Day many in our circles use the Lord's Supper, but only after they have been instructed, examined, and absolved. The children chant the Psalms in order to learn; the people sing, too, in order to learn or to worship. ...

Among our opponents, there are many regions where no sermons are preached during the whole year, except in Lent. But the chief worship of God is the preaching of the Gospel. When our opponents do preach, they talk about human traditions, the worship of the saints, and similar trifles. This the people rightly despise and walk out on them after the reading of the Gospel. A few of the better ones are now beginning to talk about good works, but they say nothing about the righteousness of faith or about faith in Christ or about comfort for the conscience. In their polemics they even attack this most salutary part of the Gospel. In our churches, on the other hand, all sermons deal with topics like these: penitence, the fear of God, faith in Christ, the righteousness

of faith, comfort for the conscience through faith, the exercise of faith, prayer and our assurance that it is efficacious and is heard, the cross, respect for rulers and for all civil ordinances, the distinction between the kingdom of Christ (or the spiritual kingdom) and political affairs, marriage, the education and instruction of children, chastity, and all the works of love. From this description of the state of our churches it is evident that we diligently maintain church discipline, pious ceremonies, and the good customs of the church. (Apology XV:38-40, 42-44, Tappert pp. 220-21)

...it is evident that many foolish opinions about traditions have crept into the church. Some thought that human traditions were necessary acts of worship for meriting justification. ... Likewise, some churches excommunicated others on account of such traditions as the observance of Easter, images, and similar things. From this the inexperienced have concluded that faith or righteousness of the heart before God cannot exist without these observances. ...

But just as the different lengths of day and night do not undermine the unity of the church, so we maintain that different rites instituted by human beings do not undermine the true unity of the church, although it pleases us when universal rites are kept for the sake of tranquillity. Thus, in our churches we willingly observe the order of the Mass, the Lord's day, and other more important festival days. With a very grateful spirit we cherish the useful and ancient ordinances, especially when they contain a discipline by which it is profitable to educate and teach [the] common folk and [the] ignorant. ...

The opponents say that universal traditions ought to be observed because they are thought to have been handed down from the apostles. ... They ought to interpret these rites in just the same way as the apostles themselves interpreted them in their writings. For the apostles did not want us to think that through such rites we are justified or that such rites are necessary for righteousness before God. ... They observed certain days not as if that observance were necessary for justification, but in order that the people might know at what time they should assemble. Whenever they assembled, they also observed some other rites and a sequence of lessons. Frequently, the people continued to observe certain Old Testament customs, which the apostles adapted in modified form to the gospel history, like Easter and Pentecost [see Acts 18:21; 20:16], so that by these examples as well as by instruction they might transmit to posterity the memory of those important events. (Apology VII/VIII:32-33, 38-40, Kolb/Wengert pp. 179-81)

...we do not abolish the Mass but religiously retain and defend it. Among us the Mass is celebrated every Lord's day and on other festivals, when the sacrament is made available to those who wish to partake of it, after they have been examined and absolved. We also keep traditional liturgical forms, such as the order of readings, prayers, vestments, and other similar things.

The opponents include a long harangue about the use of Latin in the Mass, in which they childishly quibble about how it benefits hearers who are ignorant of the church's faith to hear a Mass that they do not understand. Apparently, they imagine that the mere act of hearing itself is a useful act of worship even where there is no understanding. ... We mention it only in passing in order to point out that our churches retain the Latin readings and prayers.

Ceremonies should be observed both so that people may learn the Scriptures and so that, admonished by the Word, they might experience faith and fear and finally even pray. For these are the purposes of the ceremonies. We keep the Latin for the sake of those who learn and understand it. We also use German hymns in order that the [common] people might have something to learn, something that will arouse their faith and fear. (Apology XXIV:1-3, Kolb/Wengert p. 258)

Consciences were tormented by enumeration of sins and satisfactions. The opponents never mentioned faith, by which we freely receive the forgiveness of sins. All their books and sermons were silent about the exercise of faith in its struggle with despair or about the free forgiveness of sins on account of Christ. In addition, they horribly profaned the Mass and introduced many other godless acts of worship into the churches. ...

By contrast, due to God's blessing, our priests attend to the ministry of the Word. They teach the gospel about the blessings of Christ, and they show that the forgiveness of sins takes place on account of Christ. This teaching offers solid consolation to consciences. In addition they teach about the good works that God commands, and they speak about the value and use of the sacraments. ...among them [our opponents] the priests use the sacrament to make money. Among us it is used more frequently and more devoutly. For the people use it, but only after they have been instructed and examined. They are taught about the proper use of the sacrament, that it was instituted as a seal and testimony of the gracious forgiveness of sins and therefore as an encouragement to sensitive consciences in order that they may be completely convinced and believe that their sins are freely forgiven. ...

Moreover, if we must speak about outward appearances, attendance in our churches is greater than among the opponents'. Practical and clear sermons hold an audience. But neither the people nor the theologians have ever understood the opponents' teaching. The true adornment of the churches is godly, useful, and clear doctrine, the devout use of the sacraments, ardent prayer, and the like. Candles, golden vessels, and similar adornments are appropriate, but they are not the distinctive adornment of the church. (Apology XXIV:46-51, Kolb/Wengert p. 267)

But let us talk about the term "liturgy." It does not really mean a sacrifice but a public service. Thus it squares with our position that a minister who consecrates shows forth the body and blood of the Lord to the people, just as a minister who preaches shows forth the gospel to the people, as Paul says (1 Cor. 4:1), "This is how one should regard us, as ministers of Christ and dispensers of the sacraments of God," that is, of the Word and sacraments; and 2 Cor. 5:20, "We are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." Thus the term "liturgy" squares well with the ministry. (Apology XXIV:80-81, Tappert p. 264)

We should not regard as free and indifferent, but rather as things forbidden by God that are to be avoided, the kind of things presented under the name and appearance of external, indifferent things that are nevertheless fundamentally opposed to God's Word (even if they are painted another color). Moreover, we must not include among the truly free *adiaphora* or indifferent matters ceremonies that give the appearance or (in order to avoid persecution) are designed to give the impression that our religion does not differ greatly from the papist religion or that their religion were not completely contrary to ours. Nor are such ceremonies matters of indifference when they are intended to create the illusion (or are demanded or accepted with that intention), as if such action brought the two contradictory religions into agreement and made them one body or as if a return to the papacy and a deviation from the pure teaching of the gospel and from the true religion had taken place or could gradually result from these actions. ...

In the same way, useless, foolish spectacles, which are not beneficial for good order, Christian discipline, or evangelical decorum in the church, are not true *adiaphora* or indifferent things. ...

Therefore, we believe, teach, and confess that the community of God in every time and place has the right, power, and authority to change, reduce, or expand such practices according to circumstances in an orderly and appropriate manner, without frivolity or offense, as seems most useful, beneficial, and best for good order, Christian discipline, evangelical decorum, and the building up of the church. ...

We also believe, teach, and confess that in a time when confession is necessary, as when the enemies of God's Word want to suppress the pure teaching of the holy gospel, the entire community of God, indeed, every Christian, especially servants of the Word as the leaders of the community of God, are obligated according to God's Word to confess true teaching and everything that pertains to the whole of religion freely and publicly. They are to do so not only with words but also in actions and deeds. In such a time they shall not yield to the opponents even in indifferent

matters, nor shall they permit the imposition of such *adiaphora* by opponents who use violence or chicanery in such a way that undermines true worship of God or that introduces or confirms idolatry. (Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration X:5,7,9-10, Kolb/Wengert pp. 636-37)

We also reject and condemn it when such indifferent things are abolished in such a way as if the community of God did not have the liberty to use, in a manner appropriate for specific times and places, one or more such things in Christian freedom as best serves the churches.

For this reason the churches are not to condemn one another because of differences in ceremonies when in Christian freedom one has fewer or more than the other, as long as these churches are otherwise united in teaching and in all the articles of the faith as well as in the proper use of the holy sacraments. (Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration X:30-31, Kolb/Wengert p. 640)

Worship, Liturgy, and Ceremonies in the Lutheran Church

...a Christian congregation should never gather together without the preaching of God's Word and prayer, no matter how briefly, as Psalm 102:1 says, "When the kings and the people assemble to serve the Lord, they shall declare the name and the praise of God." And Paul in I Corinthians 14[:26-31] says that when they come together, there should be prophesying, teaching, and admonition. Therefore, when God's Word is not preached, one had better neither sing nor read, or even come together. This was the custom among Christians at the time of the apostles and should also be the custom now. (Martin Luther, "Concerning the Order of Public Worship," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 53 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965], pp. 11-12)

Until now I have only used books and sermons to wean the hearts of people from their godless regard for ceremonial... Therefore, I have used neither authority nor pressure. Nor did I make any innovations. For I have been hesitant and fearful, partly because of the weak in faith, who cannot suddenly exchange an old and accustomed order of worship for a new and unusual one, and more so because of the fickle and fastidious spirits who rush in like unclean swine without faith or reason, and who delight only in novelty and tire of it as quickly, when it has worn off. Such people are a nuisance even in other affairs, but in spiritual matters, they are absolutely unbearable. ...

Therefore..., we will deal with an evangelical form of saying mass (as it is called) and of administering communion. And we will so deal with it that we shall no longer rule hearts by teaching alone, but we will put our hand to it and put the revision into practice in the public administration of communion, not wishing, however, to prejudice others against adopting and following a different order. Indeed, we heartily beg in the name of Christ that if in time something better should be revealed to them, they would tell us to be silent, so that by a common effort we may aid the common cause.

We therefore first assert: It is not now nor ever has been our intention to abolish the liturgical service of God completely, but rather to purify the one that is now in use from the wretched accretions which corrupt it and to point out an evangelical use. We cannot deny that the mass, i.e., the communion of bread and wine, is a rite divinely instituted by Christ himself and that it was observed first by Christ and then by the apostles, quite simply and evangelically without any additions. But in the course of time so many human inventions were added to it that nothing except the names of the mass and communion has come down to us.

Now the additions of the early fathers who, it is reported, softly prayed one or two Psalms before blessing the bread and wine are commendable. Athanasius and Cyprian are supposed to be some of these. Those who added the *Kyrie eleison* also did well. We read that under Basil the Great, the *Kyrie eleison* was in common use by all the people. The reading of the Epistles and

Gospels is necessary, too. Only it is wrong to read them in a language the common people do not understand. Later, when chanting began, the Psalms were changed into the *introit*; the Angelic Hymn *Gloria in Excelsis: et in terra pax*, the graduals, the alleluias, the Nicene Creed, the *Sanctus*, the *Agnus Dei*, and the *communio* were added. All of these are unobjectionable, especially the ones that are sung *de tempore* or on Sundays. For these days by themselves testify to ancient purity, the canon excepted. (Martin Luther, “An Order of Mass and Communion for the Church at Wittenberg,” *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 53, pp. 19-21).

...in all these matters we will want to beware lest we make binding what should be free, or make sinners of those who may do some things differently or omit others. All that matters is that the Words of Institution should be kept intact and that everything should be done by faith. For these rites are supposed to be for Christians, i.e., children of the “free woman” [Gal. 4:31], who observe them voluntarily and from the heart, but are free to change them how and when ever they may wish. Therefore, it is not in these matters that anyone should either seek or establish as law some indispensable form by which he might ensnare or harass consciences. Nor do we find any evidence for such an established rite, either in the early fathers or in the primitive church, but only in the Roman church. But even if they had decreed anything in this matter as a law, we would not have to observe it, because these things neither can nor should be bound by laws. Further, even if different people make use of different rites, let no one judge or despise the other, but every man be fully persuaded in his own mind [Rom. 14:5]. Let us feel and think the same, even though we may act differently. And let us approve each other’s rites lest schisms and sects should result from this diversity in rites – as has happened in the Roman church. For external rites, even though we cannot do without them – just as we cannot do without food or drink – do not commend us to God, even as food does not commend us to him [I Cor. 8:8]. Faith and love commend us to God. Wherefore here let the word of Paul hold sway, “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost” [Rom. 14:17]. So the kingdom of God is not any rite, but faith within you, etc.

We have passed over the matter of vestments. But we think about these as we do about other forms. We permit them to be used in freedom, as long as people refrain from ostentation and pomp. For you are not more acceptable for consecrating in vestments. Nor are you less acceptable for consecrating without vestments. (Martin Luther, “An Order of Mass and Communion for the Church at Wittenberg,” pp. 30-31)

... I have heard from reliable witnesses that faction and disunion have arisen among you, because some of your preachers do not teach and act in accord, but each follows his own sense and judgment. And I almost believe this; for we must remember that it will not be any better with us than it was with the Corinthians and other Christians at the time of St. Paul, when divisions and dissension arose among Christ’s people. Even as St. Paul himself acknowledges and says, “There must be factions and sects among you so that those who are genuine become known” [I Cor. 11:19]. For Satan is not satisfied with being the prince and god of the world. He also wants to be among the children of God, Job 1[:6], and “prowls about like a roaring lion seeking some one to devour,” I Peter 5[:8].

This causes confusion among the people. It prompts both the complaint, “No one knows what he should believe or with whom he should side,” and the common demand for uniformity in doctrine and practice. In times gone by, councils were held for this purpose and all sorts of rulings and canons made in order to hold all the people to a common order. But in the end these rulings and canons became snares for the soul and pitfalls for the faith. So there is great danger on either side. And we need good spiritual teachers who will know how to lead the people with wisdom and discretion.

For those who devise and ordain universal customs and orders get so wrapped up in them that they make them into dictatorial laws opposed to the freedom of faith. But those who ordain

and establish nothing succeed only in creating as many factions as there are heads, to the detriment of that Christian harmony and unity of which St. Paul and St. Peter so frequently write. Still, we must express ourselves on these matters as well as we can, even though everything will not be done as we say and teach that it should be.

And first of all, I hope that you still hold pure and unblemished the teachings concerning faith, love, and cross-bearing and the principal articles of the knowledge of Christ. Then you will know how to keep your consciences clear before God, although even these simple teachings will not remain unassailed by Satan. Yes, he will even use external divisions about ceremonies to slip in and cause internal divisions in the faith. This is his method, which we know well enough from so many heresies.

Therefore, we will deal with factions in our time as St. Paul dealt with them in his. He could not check them by force. Nor did he want to compel them by means of commands. Rather, he entreated them with friendly exhortations, for people who will not give in willingly when exhorted will comply far less when commanded. Thus he says in Philippians 2[:1-4]: “So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing through strife or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.” Then he adds the example of Christ, who in obedience to the Father made himself the servant of all.

Accordingly, I also shall exhort. First, I exhort your preachers with the same words as St. Paul, that they would consider all the good we have in Christ, the comfort, the encouragement, the Spirit, the love, the mercy, and in addition the example of Christ. In praise and thanksgiving for all these gifts, let them so conduct themselves that they establish and preserve unity of mind and spirit among themselves. They should be on their guard lest the devil sneak in through vainglory, which is especially dangerous, and chiefly attack competent men who hold the office of the Word. There is no better way to do this than for each not to take himself too seriously and to think little of himself, but very highly of the others, or – as Christ teaches in the Gospel – to seat himself in the lowest place among the guests at the wedding [Luke 14:7-10].

Now even though external rites and orders – such as masses, singing, reading, baptizing – add nothing to salvation, yet it is un-Christian to quarrel over such things and thereby to confuse the common people. We should consider the edification of the lay folk more important than our own ideas and opinions. Therefore, I pray all of you, my dear sirs, let each one surrender his own opinions and get together in a friendly way and come to a common decision about these external matters, so that there will be one uniform practice throughout your district instead of disorder – one thing being done here and another there – lest the common people get confused and discouraged.

For even though from the viewpoint of faith, the external orders are free and can without scruples be changed by anyone at any time, yet from the viewpoint of love, you are not free to use this liberty, but bound to consider the edification of the common people, as St. Paul says, I Corinthians 14[:40], “All things should be done to edify,” and I Corinthians 6[:12], “All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful,” and I Corinthians 8[:1], “Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.” Think also of what he says there about those who have a knowledge of faith and of freedom, but who do not know how to use it; for they use it not for the edification of the people but for their own vainglory.

Now when your people are confused and offended by your lack of uniform order, you cannot plead, “Externals are free. Here in my own place I am going to do as I please.” But you are bound to consider the effect of your attitude on others. By faith be free in your conscience toward God, but by love be bound to serve your neighbor’s edification, as also St. Paul says, Romans 14 [15:2], “Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to edify him.” For we should not please ourselves, since Christ also pleased not himself, but us all.

But at the same time a preacher must watch and diligently instruct the people lest they

take such uniform practices as divinely appointed and absolutely binding laws. He must explain that this is done for their own good so that the unity of Christian people may also find expression in externals which in themselves are irrelevant. Since the ceremonies or rites are not needed for the conscience or for salvation and yet are useful and necessary to govern the people externally, one must not enforce or have them accepted for any other reason except to maintain peace and unity between men. For between God and men it is faith that procures peace and unity.

This I said to the preachers so that they may consider love and their obligation toward the people, dealing with the people not in faith's freedom but in love's submission and service, preserving the freedom of faith before God. Therefore, when you hold mass, sing and read uniformly, according to a common order – the same in one place as in another – because you see that the people want and need it and you wish to edify rather than confuse them. For you are there for their edification, as St. Paul says, “We have received authority not to destroy but to build up” [II Cor. 10:8]. If for yourselves you have no need of such uniformity, thank God. But the people need it. And what are you but servants of the people, as St. Paul says, II Corinthians 2 [1:24], “We are not lords over your faith, but rather your servants for the sake of Jesus Christ.”

At the same time, I also ask the people to have patience and not to be astonished if differences in teaching and practice are caused by factions and sects. For who can stop the devil and his legions? Remember that tares always grow amidst the good seed, as every field of God's work shows and Christ confirms, Matthew 13[:24-30]. Again, no threshing floor can have only clean corn, but there must be also hulls and straw. And St. Paul says, “In a house there are not only vessels for noble use, but also vessels for ignoble uses” [II Tim. 9:20]. Some are for eating and drinking, others for carrying and cleaning out rubbish and filth. Thus among Christians there must also be factions and heretics who pervert faith and love and confuse the people.

Now if a servant should become disturbed because he found that not all the cups in the house were of silver, but that there were also chamber pots and garbage cans, and he could not endure this discovery, what would happen? Who can keep house without unclean vessels? The same thing is true in Christendom. We cannot expect only to find noble vessels, but we must tolerate the ignoble ones as well, as St. Paul says, “There must be factions among you” [I Cor. 11:19]. And indeed, my dear friends, from the very fact that you discover factions and disunity among you, you can tell that God gave to you the true Word and knowledge of Christ. For when you were under the pope, Satan certainly left you in peace, and though you might have had none but false teachers, he did not cause much dissension among you. But now that the true seed of God's Word is with you, he cannot bear it; he must sow his seed there too, even as he does here among us through the enthusiasts. God also tests you thereby to discover if you will stand fast. Nevertheless, both you and your preachers should diligently seek to promote unity and to hinder this work of the devil, because God appoints the devil to do this in order to give us occasion to prove our unity and in order to reveal those that have stood the test. For in spite of all our efforts, enough factions and disunity will remain. St. Paul also points this out when he says, II Timothy 2[:20], that there are both noble and ignoble vessels in the same house, and immediately adds, “If a man purge himself of such people, he shall be a vessel sanctified for noble use, useful to his master and ready for every good work” [v. 21].

Receive this my sincere exhortation kindly, dear friends, and do your part to follow it as well as you can. This will prove needful and good for you and be to the honor and praise of God, who called you to his light. (Martin Luther, “A Christian Exhortation to the Livonians concerning Public Worship and Concord,” *Luther's Works*, Vol. 53, pp. 45-50)

With respect to what troubles you – whether a cope or alb is to be worn in the procession during Rogation week and on Saint Mark's Day, and whether a procession around the churchyard is to be held with a pure responsory on Sundays and with the *Salve festa dies* on Easter without, however, carrying the Sacrament about – this is my advice: If your lord, the margrave and elector,

etc. [Joachim II, Elector of Brandenburg], permits the gospel of Jesus Christ to be preached with purity and power and without human additions and the two sacraments of Baptism and the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ to be administered and offered according to their institution, if he is willing to abolish the invocation of saints (as if they were mediators, intercessors, and deliverers) and the carrying about of the Sacrament in procession, and if he is willing to discontinue daily Masses, vigils, and Masses for the dead and the consecration of water, salt, and herbs and allow only pure responsories and hymns, Latin and German, in procession, go along in God's name and carry a silver or gold cross and wear a cope or alb of velvet, silk, or linen. And if one cope or alb is not enough for your lord, the elector, wear three of them, as the high priest Aaron did when he put on three vestments, one on top of the other and all of them beautiful and attractive [cf. Lev. 8:7] (after which ecclesiastical vestments were called *ornata* in the papacy). Moreover, if His Grace is not satisfied that you go about singing and ringing bells in procession only once, go about seven times, as Joshua compassed the city of Jericho seven times with the Children of Israel, making a great shout and blowing trumpets [Joshua 6:4,5,16]. If your lord, the margrave, desires it, let His grace leap and dance at the head of the procession with harps, drums, cymbals, and bells, as David danced before the Ark of the Lord when it was carried into the city of Jerusalem [II Sam. 6:14,15]. I am fully satisfied, for none of these things (as long as no abuse is connected with them) adds anything to the gospel or detracts from it. Only do not let such things be regarded as necessary for salvation and thus bind the consciences of men. How I would rejoice and thank God if I could persuade the pope and the papists of this! If the pope gave me the freedom to go about and preach and only commanded me (with a dispensation) to hitch on a pair of trousers, I should be glad to do him the favor of wearing them.

As concerns the elevation of the Sacrament in the Mass, this is an optional ceremony and no danger can come to the Christian faith as a result of it, provided nothing else is added. Accordingly you may lift up the Sacrament in God's name as long as it is desired. We had ample cause to abolish the elevation here in Wittenberg, and perhaps you do not have such cause in Berlin. Nor shall we restore the ceremony unless some urgent reason requires us to do so, for it is an optional thing and a human exercise rather than a divine commandment. Only what God commands is necessary; the rest is free. (Martin Luther, Letter to George Buchholzer [December 4, 1539], *Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel* [Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960], pp. 306-07)

The ceremonies of the Mass are not all of one kind. For some have a divine command and examples of Scripture that they should be done at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, being as it were essential, e.g., to take bread and the cup in the public assembly, to bless, distribute, eat, drink, proclaim the death of the Lord. Some indeed do not have an express command of God, that they must of necessity be done thus in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, nevertheless they are in their nature good and godly if they are used rightly for edification, such as psalms, readings from Scripture, godly prayers and giving of thanks, confession of the Creed, etc. Some are *per se* superstitious and ungodly, for instance the sacrifice of the Mass for the living and the dead, invocation of the saints, satisfaction for the souls in purgatory, the private Mass, consecration of salt, blessing of water, etc. Some ceremonies indeed are *adiaphora*, such as vestments, vessels, ornaments, words, rites, and things which are not against the Word of God.

Things which are of the first kind must of necessity be observed, for they belong to the substance of the Lord's Supper. Of the things that belong to the second and fourth kind, many which make for the edification of people are observed in our churches without infringing on Christian liberty. The third kind, however, being superstitious and godless, has deservedly, rightly, and of necessity been abrogated and done away with. ...

...the fathers...In the celebration of the Lord's Supper...observed such ceremonies as might aid and explain the proclamation of the Lord's death, which was made by means of the public preaching of the Word; such ceremonies, together with the Word, would usefully teach

men something about the doctrine and use of the sacrament and would incite them to give heed more attentively to the doctrine of the Word and the things which belong to the substance of the Lord's Supper. Such ceremonies were observed in Christian liberty, for they were not the same and alike everywhere, nor did any force others to the observation of their ceremonies. We gladly approve and observe good and useful rites in such liberty. (Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978], pp. 524-26)

And though Christians are not everywhere bound to the same specific ceremonies – for Christian freedom has its place in this article, as the ancients say, “Dissonance in rites does not harm consonance in faith” – nevertheless, because there is still all manner of benefit inherent in keeping ceremonies as uniform as possible, and because this also serves to maintain unity in doctrine, also because common, simple, weak consciences are all the less offended and rather the more improved, it is therefore viewed as good that, as much as possible, uniformity in ceremonies with the neighboring Reformation churches should be achieved and maintained. And for this reason, in the matter of ceremonies, all pastors in the churches of our [Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel] principality shall henceforth strictly abide by and conform to the [Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel church] order..., and it shall not be neglected without exceptional and considerable cause. (*Church Order for Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel* [prepared by Martin Chemnitz and Jacob Andreae] [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2015], p. 79)

With the superstitions removed, the true and useful festivals of the ancient church are celebrated among us for church gatherings, with such devotion and piety that there is no doubt that under the blessing of God piety is kindled and increased, since the people are taught that the Holy Spirit wants to be efficacious through the ministry of Word and Sacrament, and that Christ wants to be in the midst of those who are gathered together in His name (Matt. 18:20).

To speak in particular of the church at Braunschweig, in the schools daily exercises of piety have been instituted in such a way that some chapter is always read to the boys who are gathered there, either from the Old or from the New Testament, with a brief explanation added. Thereafter every hour a number of pious hymns are sung. Besides, at a certain hour the scholars go to the church every day and publicly recite some chapter either from the Scripture or from the catechism, with pious praying of psalms, responsories, hymns, canticles, and collects.

The people come together twice every day at a certain hour in the morning and evening, and after a number of psalms have been chanted, a sermon is held, with readings distributed in an orderly manner, in part from the Old, in part from the New Testament. The preaching is always concluded with common prayers, and with some hymn of thanksgiving. Besides, every week on a certain day a larger number of people come together for public and solemn supplications called litanies.

However, on Sundays a multitude of people assemble with great regularity to sing the praises of the Lord, to hear and meditate upon the Word, for use of the sacraments, for public prayers, for the gathering of alms, and for other exercises of piety. The order of the time and of the readings is arranged in such a way from five o'clock in the evening that, according to the nature of the household, every member of the family is able to be present at certain gatherings, and that each is able to hear and learn something according to his own power of comprehension. Moreover, solemn festivals about the chief benefits of Christ, and of the principal points of the heavenly doctrine are celebrated with great devotion and piety, with explanation of the doctrine, and public praise of the benefits of God. Thus the feast of the birth of Christ is celebrated in a religious manner, and in order that the whole doctrine about this article can be set forth and explained, a three-day period is devoted to this festival, as also to certain other festivals. On the day of the circumcision the teaching is explained how Christ was made under the Law, also the topic of Christian liberty is treated, and there are added reminders about the beginning of the new year. On the day of the Epiphany there is treated the doctrine of and thanksgiving for the calling

of the Gentiles. On the feast of purification the doctrine is explained how Christ is the firstborn among many brethren; useful reminders are given for the benefit of women who have given birth, and the very lovely chant of Simeon is explained. On this festival, as also on others, the abuses and superstitions brought in by the papalists are censured and refuted. On the day of the Bacchanals [the day before the beginning of Lent] the story of the baptism of Christ is set forth in order that people may be reminded of their profession, lest they imitate the excesses of the heathen on those days. We keep the festival of the Annunciation of Mary on account of the article about the conception of Christ; we celebrate the memory of the institution of the Eucharist on Maundy Thursday. On Good Friday we celebrate a solemn meditation on the Lord's Passion. For the same reason we solemnly celebrate the feast of the resurrection of Christ, of His ascension, of the sending of the Holy Spirit, and of the Trinity. We retain the festival of John the Baptizer and of the Visitation of Mary, because the stories contain very useful teachings. On the day of Michaelmas the papalist fables and superstitions about the dedication and invocation of Michael are refuted. However the doctrine of Scripture about the services of the angels is presented, and thanks is given for the fruits of the earth received throughout the year. On the days of the apostles the Bible stories about these men are set forth to the people, and then everyone is dismissed to the labors of his calling.

Thus, since regular assemblies of the church take place every day, reminders are also given about other festivals according to the occasion indicated on the calendar, about which we have true histories containing some useful teaching. Besides these festivals, the doctrine of true repentance and the history of the passion is customarily treated during the 40 days of Lent. Besides, a certain number of days has been set aside during each quarter of the year for the customary treatment of the catechism. Also, we are not ashamed to imitate the custom of the ancient church by treating certain readings on the festival days, as Augustine says in the preface to the Epistle of John: "You remember that we are accustomed to treat the Gospel of John according to the order of readings, but because now the observance of saints days has come in between, on which we must recite certain readings of the Gospel in the church, which are annual affairs that there is no room for others, the order with which we began is of necessity a bit interrupted, but not omitted." The same Augustine says, *Tract. 6, in Johannem*: "You know that at an annual festival, after the Passion of the Lord, the book of the Acts of the Apostles is read aloud in the church every year." In *Tract. 13* he says that Ps. 21 is read every year during the final week in the hearing of the whole people.

Concerning the true celebration of the ancient and useful festivals the papalists have nothing they can deservedly censure in our people. Would that they themselves would rightly give attention to the godly and devout celebration of the ancient festivals in such a way that, once the superstitious opinions had been cast off, they could serve to increase true piety. (Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part IV [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986], pp. 436-38)

At 7:00 we entered the church [in Eisenach] where the Office of the Mass, as they call it, was held in the following manner:

First the boys and the headmaster sang the Introit for Cantate Sunday in Latin, set apart in the chancel in an entirely papistical fashion. Then came the *Kyrie eleison* with the organ being played in alternation. Thirdly a deacon, dressed entirely according to the papistical fashion and standing by the altar, which was likewise adorned with candles and other things, sang in Latin "*Gloria in excelsis Deo*" (Glory to God in the highest); this canticle the choir and organist again completed. When this was finished the deacon sang a collect, as they call it, in German, facing the altar with his back turned toward the congregation, and appended a reading from the Epistle of James, facing the congregation, also in German.

Again the organ was played while the choir sang, "*Victimae paschali*" and the congregation

sang responsively, “*Christ ist erstanden!*” Upon this the deacon sang a portion of the Gospel in German, “But now I am going to Him who sent Me,” etc. (John 16:5), while facing the congregation. After this reading the organ was played as the congregation sang, “We All Believe in One True God.” When this was finished Justus Menius preached, dressed in the usual manner [in a black academic robe], not in any special [ecclesiastical] robe.

After the sermon the deacon, standing at the altar in priestly garb, exhorted the people to prayer for some particularly enumerated concerns and closed with Christ’s promise: “Whatever you ask the Father,” etc. (John 15:16, 16:23). Next he briefly recalled the institution of the Lord’s Supper, then he sang the Words of Institution first over the bread, whereby he elevated it entirely according to the papistical fashion while genuflecting away from the people; then over the chalice, which he likewise elevated after finishing the Words of Institution. When this was over the organ played and the choir sang the *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God). Meanwhile Communion began. A deacon dressed in the usual manner administered the chalice. Not a single man was seen going to Communion, but a few little women were communed. Following this, the deacon communed himself at the altar, after having first adored the bread, although he did not do so with the chalice. This he carefully emptied and then washed with newly poured wine, so that nothing of the blood remained.

After Communion he sang a prayer while facing the altar. When this was finished he dismissed the people with a benediction that he sang while facing them. Finally, as the congregation left the church the choir sang *Da pacem, Domine* in German. And with that this celebration was ended.

Vespers was held at 1:00 in the afternoon, entirely after the papistical fashion, in the chancel, except that a boy sang the Sunday Gospel down to the congregation from the loft in the ordinary manner. After Vespers there was a sermon on the Second Commandment, “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain,” etc., after which “Christ is arisen” was sung. (Wolfgang Musculus, travel diary [1536]; quoted in Ernst Walter Zeeden, *Faith and Act: The Survival of Medieval Ceremonies in the Lutheran Reformation* [translated by Kevin G. Walker] [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2012], pp. 12-14)

At the seventh hour we returned to the city church [in Wittenberg] and observed by which rite they celebrated the Liturgy; namely thus: First, the Introit was played on the organ, accompanied by the choir in Latin, as in the mass offering. Indeed, the minister meanwhile proceeded from the sacristy dressed sacrificially [in traditional mass vestments] and, kneeling before the altar, made his confession together with the assisting sacristan. After the confession he ascended to the altar to the book that was located on the right side, according to papist custom.

After the Introit the organ was played and the *Kyrie eleison* sung in alternation by the boys. When it was done the minister sang *Gloria in excelsis*, which song was completed in alternation by the organ and choir. Thereafter the minister at the altar sang “*Dominus vobiscum,*” the choir responding “*Et cum spiritu tuo.*” The Collect for that day followed in Latin, then he sang the Epistle in Latin, after which the organ was played, the choir following with *Herr Gott Vater, wohn uns bei*. When it was done the Gospel for that Sunday was sung by the minister in Latin on the left side of the altar, as is the custom of the adherents of the pope. After this the organ played, and the choir followed with *Wir glauben all an einen Gott*. After this song came the sermon, which [Martin] Bucer delivered on the Gospel for that Sunday in the presence of [Martin] Luther and Philipp [Melancthon]. After the sermon the choir sang *Da pacem domine*, followed by the prayer for peace by the minister at the altar, this in Latin as well. ...

The communion followed, which the minister began with the Lord’s Prayer sung in German. Then he sang the words of the Supper, and these in German with his back turned toward the people, first those of the bread, which, when the words had been offered, he then elevated to the sounding of bells; likewise with the chalice, which he also elevated to the sounding of bells.

Immediately communion was held. [Johann Bugenhagen] Pomeranus went first, then Fabricius Capito, and after him Bucer. During the communion the *Agnus Dei* was sung in Latin. The minister served the bread in common dress but [the minister who served] the chalice dressed sacrificially [i.e. in mass vestments]. They followed the singing of the *Agnus Dei* with a German song: *Jesus Christus [unser Heiland]* and *Gott sei gelobet*. After the sermon the majority of the people departed. Even Luther himself, because he felt dizzy during the communion, had to leave attended by Philipp. The minister ended the communion with a certain thanksgiving sung in German. He followed this, facing the people, with the Benediction, singing “The Lord make his face to shine on you, etc.” And thus was the mass ended. (Wolfgang Musculus, travel diary [1536]; quoted in Joseph Herl, *Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2004], pp. 195-96)

The All-Holy Communion is celebrated among us today [in Württemberg] with a minimum of ceremonial. The church assembles at an appointed time. Hymns are sung. Sermons are preached concerning the benefits of Christ for mankind. Again, hymns are sung. An awesome exhortation is read, which in part explains the words of institution of the Most-Holy Supper, and in part demands that each person should prepare for a worthy communion. A general but sincere confession of sins is made. Forgiveness is publicly pronounced. With devout prayers we ask the Lord to make us partakers of the heavenly gifts and benefits. The Words of Institution of the sacrament are read, after which the congregation approaches with reverence and receives (offered by the holy minister) the body and the blood of Christ. Again we give thanks to God in prescribed words for the heavenly gifts. Finally, the holy minister of God says the blessing over the assembled congregation, and all are dismissed to go to their homes. We think that these rites are sufficient, because a multitude of distracting customs, beyond those which are necessary, prevent the people from properly paying attention to the important and necessary ones. Certainly, we do not contend with anyone about customs so long as they do not include anything which contradicts the Word of God, or (contrary to Christian freedom) is insisted upon as necessary for salvation. (Lucas Osiander, Jacob Andreae, and Martin Crucius, letter to Jeremiah, Patriarch of Constantinople [1577]; in George Mastrantonis, *Augsburg and Constantinople* [Brookline, Mass.: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1982], p. 144)

The Lutheran Church has peculiar capacities for adaptation to diverse gifts, and degrees of culture, and preferences of men, with respect to the externals of worship. Laying all stress upon unity in faith and confession, it is thankful that it is able to express this one faith in so many diversified forms both of government and cultus. ... Lutheranism knows how to discriminate between what is desirable and what is essential. Uniformity in worship, if attainable, is often highly desirable; but there are greater questions at stake than that of mere external conformity to a given model. ...no less than one hundred and thirty-two Lutheran orders were published between 1523 and 1555. Nevertheless this does not indicate general confusion. In every respect, many of these orders are identical, and may be regarded as substantial reprints. A very few became the standards, which some with more, and others with less, revision, followed. They have been classified according to three distinct types: –

1. *The Ultra Conservative*, where the effort is the greatest to reproduce the Mediæval Service, with only such changes as seem to be imperatively demanded for doctrinal reasons. Of this type, the Mark-Brandenburg Order of 1540, the Pfalz-Neuburg of 1543, and the Austrian of 1571, are types. In the first of these, the chants are sung in Latin; the prayers are made in German; the Gospel and Epistle are first chanted in Latin, and then read in German, with the preface: “This is the Epistle, beloved, which you have heard sung in Latin.” In the consecration, both the bread and the cup are elevated *cum modica inclinatione*. The words of Institution and the Lord’s Prayer are sung in German; while, following the *Agnus Dei*, are three Collects, said in Latin, for the forgiveness of sins. The service ends with a German, followed by a Latin, Collect. ... While in 1539, Luther declares his indifference as to the extent to which external conformity with Roman

ceremonies may be carried, provided only that the gospel be purely preached, the sacraments be properly administered, and no invocation of saints, or consecration of holy water, or Masses for the dead, or sacramental processions be admitted, nevertheless, at other times, he speaks freely concerning his apprehensions as to whither merely archaistic tendencies may lead. Problems were presented by the *Leipzig Interim* of 1548, concerning which the *Formula of Concord* had to make a definite statement as to the limitations with which ceremonies should be regarded as mere *adiaphora*. Rites which, of themselves, are matters of indifference, may become marks or badges of a false Confession. ...

2. *The Conservative type*, following the principles set forth by [Martin] Luther in his liturgical treatises. The general structure of the Gregorian Order which underlies the Latin Mass is here retained, but with important changes and adaptations. Of these, the most influential, probably, was the Brandenburg-Nürnberg, prepared by [Andreas] Osiander and [John] Brentz in 1533, and revised by the Wittenberg Faculty. The Orders prepared by [John] Bugenhagen for a number of States and cities in Northern Germany, as Brunswick (1528), Hamburg (1529), Lübeck (1531), Pomerania (1535); the Hanover Order (1536), prepared by [Urbanus] Regius; and the Order prepared in 1536 for Duke Henry of Saxony by Justus Jonas, belong to the same class. So also do the Swedish Order, and the Danish Order, prepared by Bugenhagen. Another most important Order of this type was the one prepared by [Philip] Melancthon and [Martin] Bucer in 1547 for Archbishop Hermann in his proposed Reformation of Cologne. It was based upon the Brandenburg-Nürnberg Order, and, although never introduced, lives in the Prayer Book of the Church of England, through the first Prayer Book of Edward VI., which drew largely upon it, and which we claim as one of the members of this group of Lutheran liturgies.

3. *The liturgies of Southwest Germany*, the Brandenburg-Nürnberg excepted. While Lutheran in doctrine, they show the influence of the earlier efforts of Dr. John Brentz, the Würtemberg reformer, in the revision of the service, in which he had less regard for historical precedents than at a later period. ... These liturgies are recognized, therefore, as mediating between the Lutheran and Reformed types. They assume a fixed form in *The greater Würtemberg Order* of 1553, providing for two orders, one for communion days, and the other for other occasions. On communion days, the order is: 1. Hymn to the Holy Spirit, a German Psalm, or any hymn suitable to the time. 2. Sermon, followed by the General Prayer. 3. Creed (German). 4. Admonition concerning the Lord's Supper. 5. Brief prayer read. 6. Chanting of the Lord's Prayer. 7. Words of Institution. 8. Administration, a hymn being sung while communicants go to the altar. 9. Prayer of thanksgiving. 10. Patriarchal Benediction. For other Sundays: 1. A Latin Introit or a German Hymn. 2. Sermon. 3. Reading of the General Prayer. 4. Psalm or Hymn. 5. Benediction. Some elements are omitted in the enumeration, clearly because the pastors were assumed to understand that they were inseparable from elements that are mentioned, as, for example, the reading of the Gospel, before the sermon. Here the responsive features of the service have vanished, except that the Litany may be used for the General Prayer, or at special services on appointed days.

In all these Orders, however, even in those of the first class, provision is made for a considerable degree of flexibility, by express directions in the Rubrics, that, in the country churches and villages, a much simpler form might be followed, without destroying the organism of the worship, while a more elaborate rendering of the service was desirable in the cities, where the necessary musical resources were accessible. In thus seeking to adapt the principles of the service to the conditions of the people, while at the same time preserving all its parts, Bugenhagen's Order provides for no less than seven hymns, as *Introit*, *Gloria in Excelsis*, and *Agnus Dei* assume a hymnal form.

Underlying the Lutheran conception of the service are certain principles, necessary to be kept in mind in order to appreciate the mutual relations of its several parts. All true worship is the communion of man with God, in response to an assurance of favor and a divine invitation encouraging such approach. Upon some word and promise of God every prayer must rest. Two

factors, therefore, are found in all true worship; namely, the divine invitation and the human response. God is ever graciously giving, and man is ever thankfully receiving. The former is the sacramental, and the latter the sacrificial, element of worship. A clear statement of this distinction is made by Melancthon in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession. The sacramental element is not limited to the two Sacraments, but, in a general sense, comprises every act in which God brings man a blessing, and thus belongs to the preaching and reading of the Word, as well as to Baptism and the Lord's Supper. A sacrifice, however, is any act whereby man brings something to God, in order to afford Him honor. Sacrifices are of two kinds. The propitiatory sacrifice, whereby God's wrath is appeased and His favor gained, is found only in the sacrifice of Christ for us on the Cross. But eucharistic sacrifices of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving are to be continual, offered by those who, through the one propitiatory sacrifice once offered, are reconciled to God. ...

The Reformed and Lutheran conceptions of the public service are alike based upon a combination of the thought of the eucharistic sacrifice with that of the sacrament. The proportion, however, is different; or there is a variation in the side emphasized. The question involved is, as to whether the main end be the rendering to God of the sincere offering of grateful hearts, or the receiving of God's riches of forgiving, renewing, enlightening, and strengthening grace. Are the hearing of God's Word and the reception of the Holy Supper chiefly incentives to prayer and praise? Or do prayer and praise only prepare for and accompany Word and Sacrament, and help us to receive them? Is the Lord's Supper principally an act whereby man professes his faith, or one whereby God comes, with a peculiar blessing, to man? Which part of the minister's duty is the more important, that whereby he stands before God as the leader of the congregation, or that whereby he stands before the congregation as the representative of God?

According to the Lutheran conception, the sacramental is the main element. Not the prayers and chants and hymns of the people, or even the word of the pastor, testifying from the depth of his Christian experience, but the Word of God, is itself the chief part of every service. The reading and repeating of this Word have a sacramental force; as with the Word, and only through the Word, comes the divine blessing. The Lord's Supper is no sacrifice that the worshipper offers, or that any priest offers for him. He thanks God for the sacrifice made for him, once for all, ages ago, when his Lord declared: "It is finished." Of this complete redemption he finds a sure pledge in the gift to him, with the bread and wine, of the very Body and Blood that have paid the price for his sins, and bought him back from the bondage of Satan to the sonship of God. ...

The entire life of the service is dependent upon the reciprocal action of these two elements; just as the life of the body continues by the twofold process of inhalation and expiration. God speaks. Man responds; and then God speaks again. In the eucharistic sacrifice the heart turns to God, and opens for the blessing, which is immediately followed by the word of divine grace. But no sooner is the blessing received than it immediately awakens new emotions. The heart overflows with gratitude, with the sense of unworthiness of the blessings received, and with the desire for closer union with God, and a more worthy service of so gracious a benefactor. The expression of this is another eucharistic act, to which God responds in a new blessing.

Thus the entire service is a conversation between God and man; a continual giving and receiving. Now the pastor acts as the representative of the people before God, when he leads their prayers; and then, as the representative of God to the people, as he reads or proclaims the Word, or administers the sacrament. Now the people exercise the function of their spiritual priesthood, in their united hymns and prayers, – the eucharistic act; and then, again, stand and speak in God's name, as, in their responses, they announce to one another the consolations and admonitions of God's Word, – the sacramental act.

So also the various parts of the service are directed towards a common end. The entire plan of salvation, from its beginnings in the counsels of eternity to its completion in the new heavens and the new earth, is gradually unfolded. A portion of the service, like the needs of the Christian life and their supply, is permanent; while another portion is variable with the change of times and

seasons; yet so as to present each year (such, at least, is the aim) the leading features of the life of Christ, all the doctrines of the Christian faith, and all the duties of the Christian life. (Henry Eyster Jacobs, "The Liturgies of the Lutheran Church," *Christian Worship: Ten Lectures Delivered in the Union Theological Seminary, New York, in the Autumn of 1896* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897], pp. 149-59)

The first completely revised worship services, which were fully in the spirit of the reformation, were conducted in Bardejov in 1525. Luther's *Formula Missae* served as the pattern which was followed. The *Deutsche Messe* was basic but it did not serve successfully everywhere. Certain liturgical parts were supplanted with material taken from the *Formula Missae*. This service order then was gradually completed in the city church of Wittenberg and then sent out to other territories such as in Germany, Scandinavia, and Slovakia, and became known as the Wittenberg Order of Service in the year 1533. This service was codified in the Saxon Agenda from the years 1536 until 1539. The Slovak students in Wittenberg appropriated this service and then brought it to Slovakia. Three examples of the Wittenberg-Saxon Agenda have been preserved in Slovakia. These were the 1536, 1564, and 1584 editions. The Slovak evangelicals became bound to this liturgical order of service. Documented evidence of this is found in the resolutions passed at the Prešov synodical meeting in 1546; the liturgical canons which were written and adopted at the synod which met in the mining cities district in 1580; the conclusions of the synod which met in Žilina in 1610, and finally the Order of Service which appeared in the Tranovský Hymnal (*Tranoscius*) since 1636. The Wittenberg type service has been adhered to faithfully until the present time, just as it appeared from the beginning of the reformation in Slovakia. The Czech liturgical works were also kept within the spirit of the reformation. A Czech Agenda [which] appeared in 1581 and another publication, "Principles of Church Worship," in 1607, were used also in various areas of Slovakia. A hard Reformational line was kept in the liturgical contributions, agendas, hymnals, and collections of prayers which were published. Many of Luther's hymns also were translated and placed in such hymnals as the *Tranoscius* (1636), with Pastor Juraj Tranovský being the main translator.

The chief function of the pastor in the service is to preach the Word of God. ... It was as if the Reformational preachers untied their tongues when they began to preach the great acts of God in their own vernacular. ... The spirit of the Reformation pealed in the spiritual hymns of...gifted poets and hymnists... (August A. Skodacek, *Lutherans in Slovakia* [1982], pp. 50-51)

In appearance the [Danish-Norwegian Lutheran] service looked very much like the pre-Reformation liturgy. The pastor was vested in the usual vestments (alb, chasuble). The altar was also vested with the usual paraments, chalice, candles, etc.

The pastor, kneeling at the altar, would read his *Confiteor*, and pray for the preaching of the Gospel, for the king, and for the government, while the *Introit* or Psalm proper to the day was sung. Where there was no choir a Norwegian hymn was sung.

The *Kyrie eleison* was sung according to the melody proper to the day or season. Then the pastor would intone the Song of the Angels (in Norwegian on regular Sundays or Latin on the festivals) and the congregation would continue the song until its conclusion.

The pastor, turning to the congregation, would sing the salutation and the choir would respond. Then, turning to the altar, he would pray one or two collects, proper to the day, or appropriate for the needs of the time. The people answer "Amen".

Then the pastor would turn to the congregation and read the Epistle for the day, in Norwegian, after which the children would sing *Alleluia* (the eternal song of the church) and the appropriate verse. Then a *Gradual* of two verses, or a Norwegian hymn would be sung. On Festival days one of the old (but pure) Sequence hymns (Christmas to Presentation: *Grates nunc omnes*; Easter to Pentecost: *Victimae paschali laudes*; Pentecost: *Veni Sancte Spiritus*) would be sung in alternation with the appropriate vernacular hymn.

Then the pastor would turn to the people and read the Gospel for the day, in Norwegian, after which he would turn again to the altar and sing, “*Credo in unum deum*” followed by the congregation singing, “We All Believe in One True God, Who Created...”.

The sermon would follow, in the vernacular, of course, but never to last longer than one hour. At the end of the sermon the pastor would bid the people to pray, including petitions for all spiritual and temporal needs, concluding with the Lord’s Prayer. Then the schoolmaster would lead the singing of a vernacular hymn for peace (Grant peace, we pray) or another hymn. At times the Litany and a Collect would have been sung or said, the people responding, “Amen”.

If there were any communicants the pastor would go to the altar to prepare the bread and wine. He would then turn to the communicants and read an Exhortation. Then, facing the altar, he would sing the Lord’s Prayer in a loud voice followed by the Words of Institution, which of all parts of the service must always be in the vernacular. On the high festivals the Preface, proper preface and *Sanctus* would have been sung (in Latin) between the Exhortation and the Lord’s Prayer, and the *Agnus Dei* would follow the Words of Institution.

It was very important that the sacristan would have prepared the right amount of elements for the number of communicants so that the Institution would not need to be sung or said again during the communion.

The schoolmaster directed the singing of “Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior” and other hymns during the communion, as they were needed for the duration of the distribution.

Then the pastor would turn again to the people for the Salutation and, facing the altar, pray the Collect of Thanks, and the people would answer “Amen”. Finally, facing the people, the pastor blessed the congregation according to the form of Numbers 6. The cantor would then lead the singing of a short closing hymn, in Norwegian, while the pastor removed the mass vestments and knelt at the altar for a private prayer of thanks.

...if there were no communicants there would be no consecration, for a consecration without communicants would be a misuse of the sacrament. Instead the pastor, vested in an alb without the chasuble, would stand in the pulpit for the pulpit service and prayers, and the service would conclude with the singing of one or two hymns and the usual Benediction. (Johannes Bergsma, *Die Reform der Messliturgie durch Johannes Bugenhagen* [Hildesheim: Bernward Verlag, 1966], pp. 121-27; quoted in Dennis W. Marzolf, “Mass Appeal: Discernment in Liturgical Innovation” [2010])

The order of the liturgy from the Danish *Kirchenordnung*:

The Priest, kneeling before the altar, offered the *Confiteor* (“Confession”) and prayer. Meanwhile the people sang the *Introit* (this could be read if necessary) or Psalm in Danish. During High Festivals an *Introit* in Latin was to be used. The *Kyrie* was sung. The Priest here inserted the *Gloria* in Latin or in Danish. The People sang the *Gloria* to the end. During High Festivals it was to be done completely in Latin. The Priest, facing the People, offered the *Dominus vobiscum*. Then he read one or two Collects in Danish, facing the altar. The People responded with *Amen*. The Priest read the Epistle in Danish while facing the People. Children sang the *Alleluia* with verse. Then the *Gradual* was offered with two verses or a Psalm in the vernacular Danish. During the festival seasons there was to be a Sequence in Latin with Danish interpolated. The Priest, facing the People, read the Gospel in Danish. The Priest, facing the altar, inserted the Creed. The Sermon was preached from the pulpit. A Pulpit Text was read. The General Prayer of the Church was offered. There followed the Lord’s Prayer and a song of peace.

The Priest prepared the Bread and Wine. Communicants then assembled by the altar. The Priest, facing the People, offered the Exhortation of the Sacrament. During the High Festivals the Latin Preface or the Latin *Sanctus* could be done, but this was optional. The Priest, facing the altar, sang the Lord’s Prayer in Danish. During High Festivals the Lord’s Prayer was sung in Latin. The Priest, facing the altar, sang the Words of Institution using the Danish language. At the point of Elevation, the altar bells were rung. Distribution of the Sacrament *sub utraque* (in

both kinds). Meanwhile songs were sung in Danish. During High Festivals, an optional addition was the Latin *Agnus Dei* or a similar form. The Priest, facing the People, offered the *Dominus vobiscum* and then, facing the altar, he read a Collect of Thanks in the vernacular Danish. The People responded with *Amen*. The Priest, facing the People, offered the *Dominus vobiscum* again and concluded with a Blessing or Benediction. A short Danish song came here at the end of the worship service. Meanwhile the Priest took off his vestments and belt in silent thanksgiving before the altar. (Loui Novac, *An Historical Survey of the Liturgical Forms in the Church Orders of Johannes Bugenhagen* [Denver: Iliff School of Theology, 1974], pp. 184-85)

When the [Lutheran] Martinists [in Antwerp] began public worship [in 1566], their Calvinist neighbors could look in, and they did not like what they saw. They were offended, for one thing, that there were services on Saints' days. ... Although the Calvinists had not yet got around to serving Holy Communion, they were displeased that the Martinists scheduled it every Sunday. They did not like it that the "vleescheters" (flesh-eaters) and "bloetdrinkers" (blood-drinkers), as they called the Lutherans, knelt to receive it. The latter, for their part, hurled back their own epithets, calling the Calvinists *swermers* (enthusiasts, ravers) and *bilderstormers* (iconoclasts). (Oliver K. Olson, "The Rise and Fall of the Antwerp Martinists," *Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. I [new series], No. 1 [Spring 1987], p. 103)

Their [the Dutch Lutherans'] public service was very similar to that of their Reformed neighbors; and yet it had some noteworthy features. The gospels and epistles for the church year were read in course and explained. ... The church prayers of the Dutch Lutheran churches of the sixteenth century were not extemporaneous, but those which the church appointed were read before and after the sermon. ... Before communion, instead of the private confession that had been usual in other portions of the Lutheran Church, a preparatory service with public absolution was held the preceding Friday. ... The church constitution of 1597, as revised in 1614, 1644, and 1681, ...directs that the morning sermons must always be on the gospel for the day, and the afternoon sermon on the epistle, Luther's Catechism, or some other edifying text. The Sunday morning service is limited to two hours, and the afternoon and weekday services to an hour. ... The Lutherans of that purer period, which the emigrants who founded our church in America represented, during Lent heard the Passion History explained... To prevent those from coming to the Lord's Supper who had not been properly instructed and been present at the preparatory service, or otherwise privately conferred with the pastor, the custom widely prevalent in the Reformed Church had been adopted by the Lutherans. Those entitled to commune were furnished with "tokens," which the elders standing by the side of the Lord's Table received as the communicants approached. At the previous distribution of the tokens by the elders to applicants, one or more of the pastors was present to see that none received them who should not commune. As they received the communion they knelt, and psalms and hymns were sung by the rest of the congregation. (Henry Eyster Jacobs, *A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States*, Fifth Edition [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907], pp. 40-42)

...among early Lutherans..., the Lord's Supper was the center around which all other services revolved. Except for a few areas in the south that were influenced by the Swiss Reformation, the Supper was offered every Lord's day and holy day throughout Lutheran Germany. Several practices highlighted the importance of the sacrament:

1. Private confession before each reception of the sacrament was required in nearly all Lutheran territories. ...in eighteenth-century Leipzig there were so many penitents that confessional stations had to be set up in the church on Saturdays and eves of holy days from 8:00 in the morning until late afternoon. This practice not only assured the pastor that communicants were prepared for the sacrament, but also enabled him to count the communicants before consecrating the bread and wine. Thus the problem of what to do with the body and blood of Christ that remained after all

had communed was avoided, as only enough for the announced communicants was consecrated.

2. The traditional vestment for Mass, the chasuble, was retained in many Lutheran churches.

3. With few exceptions, the Consecration, as it was called in the sixteenth century, was always sung. This practice was new with Luther; prior to his time in western Christianity, the priest said the Consecration softly so the people could not hear it.

4. Many Lutherans retained the Elevation, in which the priest raised the consecrated body of Christ aloft for the people to view.

5. In many Saxon churches, according to a contemporary report, the ringing of the Sanctus bell at the consecration of the bread and cup was retained into the eighteenth century.

6. Only ordained pastors distributed the sacrament.

7. Some churches used a houseling cloth to catch any crumbs that might fall from the host while it was being distributed. It was carried by an assistant and held underneath the chin of each communicant. (Joseph Herl, “Seven Habits of Highly Effective Liturgies: Insights from the Sixteenth through the Eighteenth Centuries,” *Thine the Amen: Essays on Lutheran Church Music in Honor of Carl Schalk* [Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2005], pp. 144-45)

On the basis of Acts 2:42 and 1 Corinthians 11, and following the pattern of the Ancient church, the Lutheran church considers the *Communion service* the most glorious and most important of all public services, having also fitted it out liturgically in the richest and most thoughtful manner. There is therefore a distinction between the *chief service* and the *incidental service* [*Haupt- und Nebengottesdienst*]. It is not by the Sunday or festival nor by the season nor by the liturgical richness that a service becomes a *chief service*, but (as determined by the scriptural relationship of Word and Sacrament), *when the proclamation of the Word of the Gospel is immediately followed by the administration of the sacrament of Christ’s body and blood, so that this, as the seal of the Word, forms the goal and keystone of the service.* All other services in which the administration of the Sacrament is not intended from the outset are rendered incidental services, however richly many of these may have been ordered liturgically in the past. Having regard for the interconnectedness of Word and Sacrament, as well as for Christian antiquity, when even in the days of Augustine (AD 400) the Supper was received by the whole congregation every Sunday at least, assuming there was a longing for it – the *mid-morning service* which followed the early Matins service in the Reformation era and long afterward *was regularly a Communion service, and thus a Chief Divine Service*, at least in congregations of greater number. In contrast to the private masses of the papacy in which only the officiating priest receives the Sacrament, the Apology, Article VIII [33] emphasizes: “Among us, however, the people partake of the Holy Sacrament every Sunday willingly, without compulsion”; likewise Article XXIV [1]: “Masses are celebrated in our churches every Sunday and on all festivals, in which the Sacrament is offered to those who wish to use it, provided they have first been examined and absolved.” Thus it was that, when for lack of communicants the Supper could not be celebrated in such a service, there was still an attempt to leave the form of the Divine Service intact in all other respects. In a number of places, however, the sermon was followed by the reading of a prescribed exhortation, such as in Pomerania (1563), Liegnitz (1594), or the delivery of a freer exhortation, as in Wittenberg (1559, 1565) and Mecklenburg (1540, 1552). In such exhortations, the lack of the communicants was lamented and a frequent use of the most worthy supper was exhorted and encouraged (yet without constraint of the Law). (Friedrich Lochner, *The Chief Divine Service of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church* [translated by Matthew Carver] [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2020], p. 5. Emphases in original.)

Should anyone request my counsel in this way, then I would give this advice: ... that you should celebrate one or two Masses in the two parish churches on Sundays or holy days, depending on whether there are few or many communicants. Should it be regarded as needful or good, you might do the same in the hospital too. ...you might celebrate Mass during the week on whichever

days it would be needful, that is, if any communicants would be present and would ask for and request the Sacrament. This way we should compel no one to receive the Sacrament, and yet everyone would be adequately served in an orderly manner. If the Ministers of the Church would fall to griping at this point, maintaining that they were being placed under duress or complaining that they are unfitted to face such demands, then I would demonstrate to them that no merely human compulsion is at work here, but on the contrary they are being compelled by God Himself through His Call. For because they have the Office, they are already, in virtue of their Call and Office, obliged and compelled to administer the Sacrament whenever people request it of them, so that their excuses amount to nothing; just as they are under obligation to preach, comfort, absolve, help the poor, and visit the sick as often as people need or ask for these services. (Martin Luther, Letter to Lazarus Spengler [August 15, 1528]; quoted in John R. Stephenson, "The Holy Eucharist: At the Center or Periphery of the Church's Life in Luther's Thinking?", in *A Lively Legacy: Essays in Honor of Robert Preus*, edited by Kurt E. Marquart, Stephenson, and Bjarne W. Teigen [Fort Wayne, Indiana: Concordia Theological Seminary, 1985], pp. 161-62)

I wish, and it ought to be so, that no mass at all would be celebrated except at such times as the people were present who really desired the sacrament and asked for it, and that this would be only once a week or once a month. For the sacrament should never be celebrated except at the instigation and request of hungry souls, never because of duty, endowment, custom, ordinance, or habit. (Martin Luther, "Receiving Both Kinds in the Sacrament," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 36 [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959], pp. 256-57)

...Christ...did not want to permit believers to use Communion arbitrarily, so that it would make no difference whether they used it occasionally or not at all or when they pleased, as one does in matters indifferent. For He does not say: "When it pleases you," as in indifferent matters, but says: "As often as you do this." It is not the same as with Baptism; we are baptized only once, but it is not sufficient to use the Lord's Supper only once. For He says: "As often as," in order that we may eat of that bread and drink of that cup as often as we recognize and feel that that medicine and remedy which our Good Samaritan pours into our wounds is useful and necessary to us, so long only as we examine ourselves lest we receive it to judgment. For the rule about when and how often one should go to Communion must be taken: I. From the teaching about the fruit and power of the Eucharist, namely, when and as often as we recognize that we have need of this power; II. From the teaching about self-examination, lest we receive it unworthily. On this basis people are to be taught, admonished, and exhorted to more diligent and frequent use of the Eucharist. For because Christ says: "As often as you do this," it is wholly His will that those who are His disciples should do this frequently. Therefore those are not true and faithful ministers of Christ who in any manner whatever lead or frighten people away from more frequent use and reception of the Eucharist. There are beautiful examples of frequent use of the Eucharist from the true antiquity. Some had the custom of receiving the Eucharist daily, some twice a week, some on the Lord's day, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, some only on the Lord's Day. Testimonies to this are found with Jerome, in the epistle to Lucinius; with Ambrose, on 1 Tim. 2; with Augustine, Letter No. 118; *De fide ad Petrum*, ch. 19; *De ecclesiasticis dogmatibus*, ch. 53; with Socrates, Bk. 5, ch. 22. (Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II, pp. 330-31)

A notion of the extent to which the Lutheran Church retained and purified olden ceremonies may be got from the following description of its usages so late as the eighteenth century: According to the Brunswick Agenda of Duke Augustus, 1657, the pastors went to the altar clad in alb, chasuble, and mass vestments. Sacristans and elders held a fair cloth before the altar during the administration, that no particle of the consecrated Elements should fall to the ground. The altar was adorned with costly stuffs, with lights and fresh flowers. "I would," cries [Christian] Scriver, "that one could make the whole church, and especially

the altar, look like a little Heaven.” Until the nineteenth century the ministers at St. Sebald in Nuremberg wore chasubles at the administration of the Holy Supper. The alb was generally worn over the Talar, even in the sermon. [Valerius] Herberger calls it his natural *Säetuch* [seed-cloth], from which he scatters the seed of the Divine Word. The alb was worn also in the Westphalian cities. At Closter-Lüne in 1608 the minister wore a garment of yellow gauze, and over it a chasuble on which was worked in needlework a “Passion.” The inmates and abbesses, like Dorothea von Medine, were seen in the costume of the Benedictines. The “Lutheran monks” of Laccuna until 1631 wore the white gown and black scapular of the Cistercian order. Still later they sang the Latin Hours. The beneficiaries of the Augustinian Stift at Tübingen wore the black cowl until 1750. The churches stood open all day. When the Nuremberg Council ordered that they should be closed except at the hours of service, it aroused such an uproar in the city that the council had to yield. In 1619 all the churches in the Archbishopric of Magdeburg were strictly charged to pray the Litany. In Magdeburg itself there were in 1692 four *Readers*, two for the Epistle, two for the Gospel. The Nicene Creed was intoned by a Deacon in Latin. Then the sermon and general prayer having been said, the Deacon with two Readers and two Vicars, clad in Mass garment and gowns, went in procession to the altar, bearing the Cup, the Bread, and what pertained to the preparation for the Holy Supper, and the *Cüster* [Verger] took a silver censer with glowing coals and incense, and incensed them, while another (the *Citharmeister*?) clothed and arranged the altar, lit two wax candles, and placed on it two books bound in red velvet and silver containing the Latin Epistles and Gospels set to notes, and on festivals set on the altar also a silver or golden crucifix, according to the order of George of Anhalt in 1542. The *Preface* and *Sanctus* were in Latin. After the Preface the communicants were summoned into the choir by a bell hanging there. The Nuremberg *Officium Sacrum* (1664) bids all the ministers be present in their stalls, in white *Chorrocken*, standing or sitting, to sing after the *Frühmesse* [Morning Mass], “Lord, Keep Us Steadfast.” The minister said his prayer kneeling with his face to the altar, with a deacon kneeling on either side. He arranged the wafers on the paten in piles of ten, like the shewbread, while the *Introit* and *Kyrie* were sung. The responses by the choir were in Latin. Up to 1690 the Latin service was still said at St. Sebald’s and St. Lawrence’s [in Nuremberg]. Throughout this (eighteenth) century we find daily Matins and Vespers, with the singing of German psalms. There were sermons on weekdays. There were no churches in which they did not kneel in confession and at the Consecration of the Elements.

These ceremonies yielded finally to the attacks of the Reformed and the influence of Rationalism. In our own age we feel an increased respect for the dignified worship of the Reformers. But in the work of liturgical amendment their principles must be respected. Only that should be retained in the Church or restored to the Church which serves to edification. The clear proclamation of the Word of God and the application of it should be an aim, and all ceremonies, whether venerable or recent, which hinder it, should be done away. (Edward T. Horn, “Ceremonies in the Lutheran Church,” *Lutheran Cyclopedia* [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1899], p. 83. The quotation is from Rudolf Rocholl, *Geschichte der evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland* [1897], pp. 300-02.)

...vestments, altar cloths, gold and silver vessels, candles, etc., are free, and do not at all affect faith and conscience. Therefore, inasmuch as we already have them, they are to be retained and used, *especially the vestments*, in order that the ministers may not be in their ordinary clothes, but may fitly minister to the congregation. (Edward T. Horn, “Liturgical Work of John Brenz,” *The Lutheran Church Review*, Vol. I, No. 4 [October 1882], pp. 280-81. Horn is here summarizing one of the provisions of the Brandenburg-Nürnberg Church Order of 1533. Emphasis in original.)

In 1543 Veit Dietrich, preacher at St. Sebald’s [Church in Nürnberg], was directed by the [Nürnberg City] Senate to revise the *Agenda*, and published his *Agendbüchlein für die Pfarrherrn*

auf dem Land, of which many editions have appeared up to 1755. The same year Dietrich took the lead in abolishing the *Elevation of the Host*, inasmuch as he had seen the people idolatrously crowding at the moment of Elevation, then leaving the church as if they thought their part of the service was over. Dietrich's *Agendbüchlein* is founded on the *Brandenburg-Nürnberg [Church Order]* of 1533, and doubtless was used from the beginning in the city. In 1548 it was displaced by the *Interim*, which restored the Elevation and many other ceremonies; but this lasted only until 1552; whereupon the Order of Dietrich was restored. It must be remembered, however, that neither the *B.N.*, 1533, nor the *Agendbüchlein*, contained all the provisions of the Service. These were provided, for instance, in the *Officium Sacrum* and the *Agenda Diaconorum Ecclesia Sebaldinae*; which give Introits, Versicles, Tractus, Responsories and Antiphons. We may appropriately close this paper by giving a description of the Nürnberg Service, as these set it forth.

First, as to Vestments. The ministers wore the old Mass vestments in the communion service, and at other times a white vestment, which, worn over the black, reached to the knee. These were in use until May 1, 1810. They were given up in Ansbach in 1798. From that time on the ministers have worn only the black gown, or *chorrock*.

On Sundays there was service in sixteen churches and chapels. These were served by about fifty clergymen. At St. Sebald's there were four services, the *Frühmesse* or principal service at quarter before 5 A.M., in Summer, and quarter before 7 A.M. in Midwinter; the early sermon, or *Frühpredigt*, *Officium ante Concionem*, the *Tagamt*, *Officium post concionem* and the Sunday Vespers. Four services were held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays; and on each of the other days of the week, three.

The Sunday Service really began at Vespers on Saturday. It began: 1. *Make haste*, etc., with Response. 2. *Gloria Patri. Hallelujah*. 3. A German Hymn. 4. Sermon. Followed by the Public Confession with Absolution and Retention. Then Intercessions for those who have confessed, and on the coming day will go to the Holy Supper, for the Emperor, the Franconian Circle, the Council and the Army. Then the Lord's Prayer and Aaronic Benediction. 5. A German Hymn. 6. *The Lord be with us all. Amen*. 7. Collects. 8. *Benedicamus*. In Advent and the Easter Season, instead of (5) a Responsory was sung, followed by the *Magnificat* and its Antiphon; then the Salutation, Collects and *Benedicamus*.

The Early Communion Service is thus described: The Minister comes to the altar between two deacons, kneels before the altar and says his prayer. Then he spreads the white cloth on the altar and puts on it the Cup which he has brought with him. The deacons take their places at the side of the altar. The Minister (*Wöchner*) uncovers the Cup and puts upon the great paten the wafers ("tenwise upon one another, like the loaves of shewbread"), while the Introit and Kyrie are being sung. 1. The Introit *pro tempore*, sung by the choir. 2. The *Kyrie*, by the choir. 3. *The Gloria in Excelsis*. The first words sung by the Minister, the next by the choir in response. 4. Salutation and Amen. 5. The Collect *for the Remission of Sins. Amen*. 6. A deacon at the foot of the altar, and before the desk, reads a chapter from the Epistles of St. Paul (*according to the table set in the Sacristy*). He then goes back to his seat. 7. A *Tractus* or *Hallelujah* or Sequence; or a German Song, varying with the season. 8. A deacon reads at the desk before the altar a chapter from the Gospels. He then turns [the pages on] the desk and finds the *Exhortation before the Communion*; then he returns to his seat and remains there until after the Creed. 9. The Minister: *I believe in one God*; the choir continues *The Nicene Creed*. Often the German hymn, *Wir glauben all an Einen Gott*, is substituted. 10. The deacon reads the *Exhortation*. Then both deacons kneel before the altar. 11. The Minister sings the *Words of Consecration*. At the end of it the ministers rise, and stand during the *Sanctus*. 12. The *Sanctus*. 13. The Minister sings the Lord's Prayer. *Answer, Amen*. The *Pax, Amen*. 14. Distribution, while German hymns are sung. 15. The Salutation. 16. Collect. 17. *Benedicamus*.

THE SECOND SERVICE: 1. After the *Frühmesse* is ended, the choir sings, *Vater unser in Himmelreich*. 2. The deacon reads a chapter from the Old Testament. Also a Summary. Then

announces the holidays of the week. Reads the *Exhortation to Prayer for all conditions of men*, the six Parts of the Catechism, and the Intercessions for the Poor and for the Scholars. Thereupon the Announcements, and a silent Lord's Prayer. 3. The *Litany*, and the Hymn, Lord, keep us steadfast in Thy Word. 4. Salutation and Amen. 5. Collect. 6. *Benedicamus*. The Minister now goes into the Sacristy, puts off the white vestments, and makes ready to preach. 7. Hymn, *Nun bitten wir den heiligen Geist*, or a hymn appropriate to the season. 8. Sermon. Followed by Public Confession, Absolution and Retention, General Prayer, Intercessions, Lord's Prayer, *The Peace of God*. 9. A General Hymn.

THE THIRD SERVICE, *Tagamt*. As at the *Frühmesse*, up to the *Exhortation* (No. 10). After the Nicene Creed: 10. Salutation and Amen. 11. Collect. 12. *Benedicamus*. *Hallelujah*. Response with *Hallelujah*. 13. Benediction.

THE FOURTH SERVICE, *Vespers*. 1. *Make haste*, etc. 2. *Gloria Patri*. *Hallelujah*. 3. Antiphon. 4. Four, five or six verses of a Psalm, sung antiphonally. 5. Antiphon. Meanwhile the Minister goes to the pulpit, reads the *Admonition to Prayer* and Intercessions, and thereupon says a silent Lord's Prayer. 6. Reads a chapter from the Old Testament. Goes back to his seat. 7. Choir sings, *Thanks be to God*. 8. A Responsory, or a Hymn of the Season. 9. A Versicle of the Season. 10. Antiphon. 11. The Magnificat. 12. Antiphon. 13. Salutation and Amen. 14. Collect (for the Ministers of the Word), sung in his place. 15. *Benedicamus*. 20. Sermon. 21. German Hymn.

Such was the service in the middle and end of the seventeenth century. (Edward T. Horn, "The Reformation of Worship in the City of Nürnberg," *The Lutheran Church Review*, Vol. XI, No. 2 [April 1882], pp. 141-44. Emphases in original.)

...the weekday services conducted in Leipzig may be summarized, liturgically, in the following basic forms: (1) The independent Matins of the "choralists" in St. Nicholas; (2) the pure Vespers in both main churches the evenings before festivals; (3) the greater prayer services with the "praying of the catechism," also in connection with the Vespers of the "choralists" (Tuesdays at St. Nicholas); (4) the lesser prayer services, also in connection with a special penitential exhortation, Thursdays except when in connection with the Vespers of the "choralists"; (5) the Bible and Catechism instruction periods; (6) pure preaching services both on Bible texts (Mondays in St. Nicholas) and on certain articles of faith (Fridays in New Church); (7) preaching services in immediate connection with Matins (Tuesdays in St. Thomas); (g) early services with Sermon and complete Communion liturgy (Wednesdays in St. Nicholas); (9) early services with Matins, Sermon, and complete Communion liturgy (Thursdays in St. Thomas); (10) special services on Fridays; (11) preaching services on the basis of the complete order of Vespers (Saturdays in both main churches), with polyphonic choral music (in St. Thomas).

In spite of the implementation of such a variety of orders of worship, Lutheran orthodoxy did not tolerate arbitrariness in setting up orders of service but with unswerving fidelity upheld the existing tradition from generation to generation and with a consistent observance of these orders mounted a determined resistance to all tendencies destructive of the liturgy.

This becomes most clearly evident when the order of the main service as practiced in Leipzig in the 18th century is subjected to a critical evaluation. This order shows clearly and without gaps the entire form of the Mass for every Sunday and festival. Its liturgical structure was so rich in its parts that even the sexton of St. Thomas, [Johann Christoph] Rost, kept a special notebook for the various peculiarities of the services of the individual Sundays and festivals in order not to forget anything in the customary discharge of his duties. ... The Leipzig order of the main service had in no respect become a fossilized and rigid form but still represented a live fabric. (Günther Stiller, *Johann Sebastian Bach and Liturgical Life in Leipzig* [translated by Herbert J. A. Bouman, Daniel F. Poellot, and Hilton C. Oswald] [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984], p. 116)

For the liturgical organization of the Service of the Sacrament there were two different orders [in Leipzig], one for the main services on ordinary Sundays and one for the main services on festival days. The order used on ordinary Sundays consisted of this, that after the conclusion of the “pulpit hymn,” so called by Rost, or after the presentation of the concerted music immediately “the liturgy of the Holy Communion was celebrated at the altar,” that is, “with the chanting of the Lord’s Prayer and the Words of Institution” [*Leipziger Kirchen-Staat*, 1710]. This form of Communion liturgy is without doubt a grave impoverishment of the richness originally present. But this curtailment of the Communion liturgy, which has been called a “torso,” must not be imputed to Lutheran orthodoxy. It was present in this form already in Luther’s *Deutsche Messe* (1526). On festival days, however, the Communion liturgy was essentially richer in its organization. In the *Leipziger Kirchen-Staat* we read: “When the priest leaves the pulpit, the deacon who will be the celebrant goes to the altar and intones the Latin Preface, or Antiphon, ‘Dominus vobiscum.’ This is then continued antiphonally by him and the choir.” The climax of the Preface was the polyphonic presentation of the Sanctus. In addition to the Prefaces for the various festivals in a unison setting, the *Neu Leipziger Gesangbuch* (1682) also offers the Sanctus separately in three additional forms, of which one is in six voices and the other two are in unison. Here we also find the sections of the Preface sung by the choir (but without the Sanctus), variously in four and six voices. In the second Communion liturgy, however, the one for festival days, the Lord’s Prayer was omitted, so that the Preface was immediately followed by the Words of Institution and then the distribution.

The second form of the Communion liturgy used in Leipzig also represents an old Lutheran tradition, for already [Johannes] Bugenhagen had made provision for a chanted Latin Preface on festival days, and Luther himself in his *Formula missae et communionis* (1523) indicated that he wanted the Preface kept by all means. Throughout Bach's tenure in Leipzig the Latin Preface always maintained its place on the following festivals: First and Second Christmas Days, New Year’s Day, Epiphany, Purification of Mary, Annunciation, First and Second Easter Days, Ascension Day, First and Second Pentecost Festivals, Trinity, St. John’s Day, Visitation of Mary, and St. Michael’s. ... Rost, too, confirms that on the festival days mentioned the Preface was chanted. He also mentions the fact that on Reformation Day no Preface was heard but the Communion liturgy of the order commonly used on ordinary Sundays was used. On the third festival days of the three great festivals of the church year “the Latin Preface was not chanted before the Communion, but in place of it a hymn was sung, or only several stanzas of it” [*Leipziger Kirchen-Staat*].

Also on Maundy Thursday it was still customary for some time in Leipzig “to chant the Latin Preface after the Sermon as on high festivals,” and the Preface used was the one customary for the Marian festivals [*Leipziger Kirchen-Staat*]. But the Communion liturgy for Maundy Thursdays represented a unique specialty in the church year, for on this day, in addition to the Latin Preface and immediately attached to it, “the paraphrase, or explanation, of the Lord’s Prayer, together with an exhortation to prayer for the people” was usually read, and beside that the Lord’s Prayer was also chanted before the Words of Institution [*Leipziger Kirchen-Staat*]. (Günther Stiller, *Johann Sebastian Bach and Liturgical Life in Leipzig*, pp. 125-26).

Inasmuch as the crucified Christ (Galatians 3:1) is the very heart and centre of the Christian faith, it is not to be wondered that, from the earliest times of the Christian Church, the cross is used as the most significant and eloquent symbol of Christianity. It is found everywhere, as Chrysostom testifies: “*Ubicunque sybolum crucis nobis adest.*” (Everywhere we have the symbol of the cross with us.) It stands – in the Greek Church it lies – on the altar. It is worn on the vestments of the priests and around the neck of the Christians. ... The crucifix, showing the figure of the Saviour himself, nailed to the cross, is found since the seventh century. In spite of the many abuses to which the cross and the crucifix were subject in the Middle Ages, the Lutheran Church retained those beautiful symbols of the common Christian faith in her churches. Even in

unliturgical Wuerttemberg, there is no altar found without a crucifix, and the prelates wear a golden cross around their neck as part of their official attire.

Older even than this use of the cross and the crucifix (*crux exemplata*) is the practice of making the sign of the cross (*crux usualis*). Tertullian mentions it as an ancient custom. “*Ad omnem progressum atque promotum, ad omnem aditum et exitum, ad vestitum et calceatum, ad lavacra, ad mensas, ad lumina, ad cubilia, ad sedilia, quaecunq[ue] nos conversatio exercet, frontem crucis signaculo terimus.*” (On every step we take, coming in or going out, putting on our dress and shoes, washing, taking our meals, lighting the candles, lying or sitting down, whatever we have to do, we make the sign of the cross on our forehead.) In the service of the Mediaeval Church the most extended and extravagant use was made of the sign of the cross. The Lutheran Church, while condemning any superstitious abuse of this symbolic act, retained it in her service, in baptism, in the consecration of the elements at the Lord’s Supper, and at the benediction. Luther, in his Small Catechism, recommends the ancient use of the sign of the cross, in connection with the morning and evening prayer of the individual believer. As he carried the substance of those simple prayers over from pre-Reformation times, he saw no reason to abolish this feature in the form of their delivery. (Adolph Spaeth, “Cross (Crucifix),” *Lutheran Cyclopaedia*, p. 146)

...the Lutheran religion so far differs from the Presbyterians, and the fond persuasions of other sectaries and dissenters from the Established Church [of England], that it carries matter[s] much higher than her, as the use of trumpets, drums and kettle drums, besides the organs, which the zealots in Scotland call a box of whistles, and other instruments of music, nay, they go much farther; and are not only more abundant in their ceremonies, but in the pomp and splendor of their churches, where images and pictures of saints and holy men are exposed to public view, on purpose to excite the frequenters of those sacred places to the imitation of their examples. (William Dawes, Archbishop of York, *An Exact Account of King George’s Religion: With the Manner of His Majesty’s Worship in the English and Lutheran Church; and the First Rise of the Lutheran Religion* [London: Printed for J. Churchell in Pater-noster-Row, 1714], p. 7. Spelling and capitalization modernized.)

From the Reformation century on, we can distinguish four general attitudes toward the ancient vestments.

The first rejects them unexceptingly as symbols of the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome and his detestable enormities; this was the viewpoint of the Anabaptists and other Enthusiasts, of the Sacramentarian Zwinglians and Calvinists, of the extremist partisans of Matthias Flacius in the Adiaphoristic Controversy, and, at a later date, of the Prussian Unionists who sought to deprive the Church of all of the inherited characteristic features of its worship. The Anabaptists and Enthusiasts came out for strictly lay dress for the leaders of divine service; the others settled for the black gown that was the street garb of sixteenth-century Continental academicians. ...

The second point of view regarded the alb or a cognate white vestment (surplice or rochet) as permissible, but tended to disapprove with greater or less vehemence of Eucharistic vestments (particularly the celebrant’s chasuble, the deacon’s dalmatic, and the subdeacon’s tunicle). Thus the proposal for reform put forth in 1526 by Landgrave Philip the Magnanimous of Hesse called for the officiant to be vested at least in a surplice; it forbade “Papistic” dalmatics and tunicles, and while it reluctantly permitted the continued use of existing chasubles, it expressly prohibited the acquisition of new chasubles or copes in the future.

A third point of view regarded all vestments as things altogether indifferent, to be retained or abolished as circumstances might require. Blessed Martin Luther held this view and so did his fellow Reformer, Blessed John Bugenhagen. Thus the latter wrote to M. Görlitz on September 27, 1530: “There is a twofold doctrine on chasubles . . . One is truth, namely, that chasubles can be used; this does not give scandal to those who are accustomed to hearing the Gospel. The other is a Satanic lie out of the doctrines of devils, namely, that it is never lawful to use chasubles; this

gives scandal to the people where they hear and believe such lies from the ministers.”

A fourth point of view regarded vestments as things indifferent, but held that the retention of some or all of the medieval vestments was a desirable thing as a symbol of the unbroken continuity of the Church of Augsburg Confession with her Catholic past and as a witness against Enthusiasts, Sacramentarians, and other radical reformers. This was the viewpoint of the Scandinavian national Churches in the sixteenth century and of the Lutheran theologians in many German and Central European communities, especially those that had been rescued from or were threatened by Calvinism. Thus Quensel points out that the preface, “To the Reader,” in Laurentius Petri’s Swedish Church Order of 1571, reveals the archbishop’s unambiguously “warm partiality for those features in the Roman mass which he reckoned as indifferent things and among which he specifically lists Mass vestments; altars and altar paraments; elevation; proper Psalms, hymns, antiphons, lessons and responsories; collects both in Latin and Swedish; etc.” Quensel goes on to say that in the archbishop’s defense of “‘these ceremonies (*thessa åthäffuor*),’ he turns upon the ‘Enthusiasts, Anabaptists, profaners of the Sacrament, Zwinglians, and Calvinists’, with no less sharpness and violence than just previously against the ‘Papists’.” (Arthur Carl Piepkorn, *The Survival of the Historic Vestments in the Lutheran Church after 1555*, Second Edition [Saint Louis: School for Graduate Studies, Concordia Seminary, 1958]. The quotation is from Oscar Quensel, *Bidrag till svenska liturgiens historia* [Uppsala: Akademiska Boktryckeriet, 1890], II, pp. 74-75.)

The usual clerical attire consisted of a long, ankle-length black *Priesterrock* [“priest’s robe”], now called the *Chorrock* [“choir or chancel robe”] or *Talar* [“ankle-length”], and a white linen garment worn over this, approximately of knee-length, called the *Alba* or *Chorhemd* [“chancel smock”]. The latter derives from the Ancient Church, in which the white garment was worn as a symbol of the peace, purity, and dignity of those persons involved in the Divine Service. Until the first quarter of our [nineteenth] century, the pastors in the Lutheran churches in Germany wore the *Chorhemd* during the administration of the Sacraments and the performance of the liturgy at the altar. It is still in use in certain churches, such as that of Thuringia, and even in a few places in liturgically impoverished Württemberg. In this country too it is, as far as I know, still being used in the handful of congregations which migrated into Texas and belong to the Missouri Synod, as well as among our local Norwegian brethren. In Saxony, in Braunschweig, in the region of Brandenburg-Nürnberg, and elsewhere, the liturgist appeared for the administration of the Supper in the proper eucharistic vestments, among which was, in addition to the *Chorrock* and *Chorhemd*, the *Casula* or chasuble, the sleeveless covering of various colors and decorated with a cross of gold brocade. For example, there is a description of the Divine service from Alt- Dresden from the time of the two hundredth jubilee of the Reformation [in 1717], which says: “After this [the sermon], Communion begins, for which purpose the deacon, dressed in the alb and chasuble [*Messgewand*], and accompanied by two boys specially vested for the purpose and appointed to hold the Communion cloths or veils [*Fächer*] approaches the altar [set with paten, chalice, and candles burning throughout the service and] adorned [with two linen cloths].” Similarly, in a description of the consecration of the new Friedrichstadt church in Dresden in 1730, at which Dr. Valentin Loscher gave the sermon, it says: “Then the *Te Deum laudamus* was intoned with trumpets and timpani ... Meanwhile, the ordained pastor of the church, Rev. David Mehner [1694-1756], in a green chasuble, approached the altar and sang both the Our Father and the Words of Institution for the Holy Communion.” In Nürnberg, the author’s [Lochner’s] native city, the chasuble was still in use during the celebration of the Supper until the year 1790. In fact, at the dedication of a Norwegian Lutheran church in Wisconsin, which the author attended about forty years ago, the synodical president at that time was vested in a chasuble. It was Rationalism which for “the improvement of religion” committed such vandalism even with regard to the office vestment, at least in the German Lutheran church. (Friedrich Lochner, *The Chief Divine Service of the*

Evangelical-Lutheran Church House, pp. 17-18. The quotations are from Paul Hilscher, *Etwas zur Kirchen-Historie in Alt-Dresden, etc.* [*A Little Something about the Church History in Alt-Dresden, etc.*] [1721], p. 150f.; and from Kurtze, *doch deutliche Nachricht, wie die Einweihung der neuen Kirche zu Friedrichstadt vollbracht worden* [Dresden: Mohrentaler, 1730], 13th unnumbered p.)

Lutherans continued to use the five ancient liturgical colors as well as the liturgical vestments in the service and for sacramental acts; this usage lasted amazingly long, partly up to the brink of the nineteenth century. Insofar as Calvinism hadn't discredited these earlier, they mostly disappeared first under the influence of the Enlightenment in the late eighteenth century. ...liturgical vestments enjoyed the greatest favor in [the] Lutheranism of northern and central Germany. ...the 1555 visitation in the archiepiscopal-Magdeburg subdistrict (*Amt*) of Querfurt...showed that only three parishes still had chasubles in use; after that, all churches in the county were required to use them again; the parsons whose chasubles had disappeared had to go to Querfurt Castle and there be given new vestments. As far as lifespan goes, the ecclesiastical vestments remain in Weissenfels until 1588 and in Silesia until 1811. In Hamburg the celebrants wore an ornate chasuble during the Lord's Supper until 1785; in Lusatia the choir boys wore surplices until 1850 (they wore these while holding the houseling cloths during Communion). Chasubles, which were regarded as a worthy ornament and therefore gladly retained, were also occasionally reinstated even in the later evangelical period. Thus they were used in 1740 in Silesia for consecrating new congregations; in 1659 they were reintroduced into Mecklenburg, in order thereby to serve a counterblow to the "libertinism and negligence of divine worship (*libertinismo und negligentia cultus divini*), which unfortunately are growing ever more prevalent from day to day." The chasuble was, like the ceremonies, regarded as a symbol of the difference between Calvinism [and Lutheranism] and as a criterion for pure Lutheranism, just as conversely, wherever Calvinism gained access, it immediately insisted on abolishing the surplice and chasuble. (Ernst Walter Zeeden, *Faith and Act: The Survival of Medieval Ceremonies in the Lutheran Reformation*, pp. 31-32)

... It was the professed purpose of Pietism to make the truth vital, and to convert "the outward orthodox confession into an inner living theology of the heart," the evidence of which was to be seen in a godly life. To bring about this result it adopted new methods and went new ways. Though at first by no means disposed to break with the confessions, institutions and usages of the Church, it nevertheless deemed it necessary to supplement these. To the public meetings for worship, public communion, and private confession and absolution, it added private religious meetings in houses (*collegia pietatis*), private communion, and private religious conversation in the pastor's study. Thus Pietism endeavored to bring the Church into the house, a living Christianity into everyday life, so that not only public worship might again become a worship in spirit and in truth, but that the whole walk and conversation of each one might be a sacrifice well-pleasing to God.

But the very methods by which the earlier Pietism hoped to revive spiritual life ultimately proved destructive to the Church's Cultus. ...the objective and sacramental elements came to be underestimated..., and public worship became more and more subjective and sacrificial. Its value and the value of its component parts were gauged altogether according to subjective results; the claim was made that spiritual life could be awakened only by those who were themselves spiritually alive; and edification was sought not so much in the worship of the whole congregation as in the exercises of the small private assemblies. ...

... The more the personal character and the spiritual ripeness of the officiating minister came to be looked upon as conditioning edification – and indeed the saving efficacy of the Word itself – the greater became the antipathy to everything that limited freedom of expression, and the higher was the estimate placed upon those acts of public worship that could serve as a channel for the utterance of individual reflections and emotions. Thus the fixed, liturgical element was made to yield to the subjective element; extempore prayer was substituted for the Church prayer; the objective Church hymn gave way to hymns descriptive of the soul's changing conditions,

experiences and feelings; the hymn-books were arranged according to the Order of Salvation instead of the Church Year; new melodies suited to the emotional character of the new hymns displaced the vigorous old Church tunes; the sentimental aria and strains patterned after the prevailing style in opera completely crowded out the noble polyphonic choir music of the early masters; the order of the Christian Year was broken in the choice of texts (Thus Gottfried Arnold spoke of the system of Pericopes as “a vicious and abominable mutilation of the Bible;” and [Philip Jakob] Spener himself declared: “How I wish, with all my heart, that our Church had never adopted the use of the Pericopes, but had either allowed a free choice, or else had made the Epistles instead of the Gospels the chief texts.”)... Public worship ceased to be a celebration of redemption, and became only an act of edification. ...the pendulum had swung to the...extreme of an emotional piety that regarded all fixed forms and churchly order as a detriment to spiritual life, and a hindrance to its expression.

But far more destructive was the influence of Rationalism. ...Rationalism could have no sympathy with a Cultus that was in every part a confession of the faith which it rejected. Whilst Pietism regarded the historic Service as too objective and sacramental, and therefore broke with its fixed forms rather than with its contents, Rationalism rejected both its forms and its contents. What sort of appreciation for the Church Year could a theology have that based its belief not on the great historic facts of redemption, but on its own speculations? How could such a religion of reason permit the Service on its sacramental side to remain what it originally was in the Lutheran Church – a real communication of Divine grace through the audible and visible Word? What spiritual pleasure could it find in the hymns and prayers and liturgical formularies in which the living faith begotten by Word and Sacrament was once wont to bring its sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise? Or how could it even understand the meaning of a Cultus with whose history it did not care to become familiar, and that stood for a past to which it was absolutely indifferent?

Like the later Pietism, so Rationalism could not tolerate the fixed and recurring, but was ever seeking something new, to the confusion of the congregation and the ever-increasing destruction of the Liturgy. Under its influence the Church edifice became a mere lecture-hall, and the minister a moral instructor, unfettered by anything traditional and fixed, and therefore free to say and do in public worship what he pleased; the Church Year was rearranged and to a great extent abolished; the Chief Service was mutilated beyond recognition; the Minor Services with their scheme of Lessons fell into decay; all the most ancient and beautiful liturgical parts – Introits, Kyries, Creed, Prefaces, Litany, Canticles, etc. – were consigned to oblivion; the brief, sententious old Collects were exchanged for verbose and sentimental new fabrications; the Words of Institution and Distribution, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Benediction were recast; the great Church hymns were diluted and “modernized,” or else gave way entirely to new ones reflecting the moralizing, sentimentalizing spirit of the age; and with the old hymns also disappeared the vigorous and fresh rhythm of the old melodies, and the very last trace of a proper churchly style in the music of the sanctuary. Even the so-called “Ministerial Acts” became individual products, and were “made up” in a moralizing fashion as the occasion and circumstances seemed to demand, or were taken from one or the other of the many private Agendas that made their appearance. Thus what Pietism began, but did not really mean to do, Rationalism finished, and the destruction of the Church Service was complete. ...

To such frightful and incredible depths had the Cultus of the Church sunk when the work of restoration was once more begun in the nineteenth century. That movement is still in progress, and to the impulse it gave and the literature it produced, we of the Lutheran Church in America are indebted for the revival of a Cultus that, like our faith, links us again with the purest and best period of the Church’s history. (J. F. Ohl, “The Liturgical Deterioration of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” *Memoirs of the Lutheran Liturgical Association*, Vol. IV [1901-1902], pp. 69-72, 78)

The Reformation came and stirred up much of ancient date. Zwingli did away with the vestments, considering them – together with Altar, Candles, Crucifixes, and Organ – to be an expression of ungodliness. The South Germans followed him generally and constructed the Service, not along the ancient Order of the Communion, but on that of the Preaching Service of the Middle Ages.

It was different in Wittenberg. Luther built the Communion Service on the Order of the Mass, and he retained the Communion vestments, which were considered an entirely neutral matter – doing neither evil nor good. It is not improbable that to this came the consciousness that it would seem strange to appear before the altar in ordinary dress – therefore the accustomed vestments might well be retained. In the Order of the Mass of 1523 Luther says that the vestments may be used unhindered, when pomp and luxury are avoided...

This position was, however, the very opposite of that of the Fanatics, who maintained it as a law of God that these things and many others – where Luther allowed full liberty – should be prohibited. This placed Luther in the peculiar position that he was forced to emphasize liberty in these matters by emphasizing the liberty to continue the use of the ancient Communion vestments. This is what he does in his writing *Against the Heavenly Prophets*, which writing is from the fall of 1524. ... In the Confession of the Communion (in 1528) – essentially against the same movements – he insisted on the same liberty, and in the German Mass of 1526 he retained the vestments, candles, and altar.

It was in full agreement with this that Bugenhagen retained the ancient vestments of the Church in the services in all the different countries where it became his duty to revise and order the services anew. ...

This plainly shows the mind of the parish priest of Wittenberg, the great Reformation practician Bugenhagen. When the South Germans in 1536 came to Wittenberg to close the Wittenberg Concord, they were therefore greatly shocked by the Communion Service on Ascension Day. Wolfgang Musculus from Constance confided to his journal: There were pictures in the church, candles on the altar, and a priest in “papistic” clothes! The Introit was played on the organ while the choir sang in Latin – as was the custom of earlier days – while the priest having the celebration proceeded from the sacristy wearing vestments. They (the South Germans) complained to Bugenhagen...

The general conception of these things was that the use of the Communion vestments was typically and distinctly Lutheran as over against the black gown of the Calvinists. ...

To form an idea of the richness of the vestments (*Gewandtpragt*) used in a German Lutheran church in the days of the strict Lutheran orthodoxy, we will go into the church of St. Nicolai in Leipzig about year 1650 (Paul Gerhardt, 1607-1676): The alb is used with amice, maniple and parurer, which latter the sexton’s wife must take off to launder and put on again. Then there is a surprising collection of chasubles for many varied occasions. For ordinary Sundays there are five: one green satin, one red patterned velvet, one dark red smooth velvet, one red satin, and one violet-brown velvet. Besides this there are sixteen most elaborate ones for festivals: For Advent one green velvet with Christ’s Entry in embroidery, for New Year one of gold cloth, for the Presentation one of white satin with a crucifix embroidered, for Palm Sunday one green with palm leaves, for Holy Thursday one of green satin, for Good Friday one of black velvet with a crucifix, for Easter Day (No. 2) one with a crucifix of pearls, for Whitsunday one of brown-red velvet with the Trinity in pearls and stones, and so on. There still remains a collection of “very old ones.” At the administration of the Sacrament four boys hold the Sacramental cloths, over which the Sacrament is handed to the communicants who pass the celebrating priests. The boys are in black cassocks with surplices over; but on festival days the boys wear “special cassocks of crimson velvet” donated by a widow. Rationalism sold this whole collection in 1776. ... The surplice, however, continued in use in Leipzig.

The Evangelical churches in Nuremberg received orders in 1797 to deliver their collection

of chasubles to the city treasury as a contribution to the taxes. In the churches of St. Sebald and St. Lawrence, the collection contained eighteen chasubles of very elaborate design, and many of them ornamented with pearls. There were also some Dalmatics. ... The surplice was abolished in 1810, as it had already been in 1798 in Ansbach, to save laundry expenses. (This certainly is the way of Rationalism in all its modifications.) ...

In Sweden all the Communion vestments were retained. Archbishop Laurentius Petri would not have it otherwise. Charles IX was of a different turn of mind and in the parliament of 1618 made an attack on the Communion vestments. The leading churchmen would not hear anything of this, however. They remarked in their reply to the king that some of the old customs were retained at the Reformation so that everything in the churches might be done decently and in order, and also to show liberty in these indifferent matters. It was but fitting that a poor priest celebrating the Holy Communion should also have a fitting garment and not his outworn clothes, making him a laughing stock for people. Everyone would know that it was not done to follow the pope. That decided it – as far as Sweden is concerned.

In the inventory of the Cathedral Church at Westeraas in 1620 are mentioned: a number of copes, chasubles, dalmatics, albs, humeralia, stoles, and cinctures. It shows that the alb was worn with all its belongings. The surplice was worn at all churchly acts outside of the Communion.

The Danish Reformation was very like that of Wittenberg. The question of vestments was not up at all – neither with regard to the Romanists nor the Evangelicals mutually. ... Hans Tausen (later Bishop) states in 1531 that he has so far observed all the usual ceremonies of the Mass and left all unchanged with regard to vestments, candles, elevation, etc. The *Ordinants* – the revised Order of the Danish Service, which bears the personal marks of Bugenhagen and Luther – prescribes “the usual Communion vestments, but the priest shall, when there is no Communion, close the service before a desk and not at the altar, neither shall he again put on the chasuble after the sermon” (Rørdam, *Danish Church Laws*).

The Bishop of Lund, Frantz Wormordsen, published, on this basis, an Altar-Book, *Handbook for the Proper Evangelical Mass* (Malmo, 1539). In it we find the following, defending and explaining: “The priest and the altar should be clothed with the usual vestments, clean and orderly – not for any service that we can render God by it, nor that there in any manner is any special holiness in it in regard to the use and effect of the Sacrament. But this shall be done as a good, proper, and fitting custom, as an honor, not to God, but to the Christian congregation, and as a service of unity. So must everything in the Christian congregation be done honestly, decently, and in order – were it for nothing else than for the sake of the angels of God who are there present amongst us.” ...

Rationalism impoverished the services in the use of the vestments as in everything else, but nothing was ordered discontinued. A later time, with a new spiritual revival, has also revived a new interest in the services of the sanctuary, and a renewed desire to revive the truly historic and beautiful service of the Lutheran Church of an earlier day. An intelligent Lutheran knows very well that while these things have an historic and oecumenic interest, and do not fail in inciting the devotional atmosphere of the Church Universal, they have nothing to do directly with the church of the Pope – only insofar as the popish church also is part of the Church Universal. ...

The Lutheran and the Roman churches parted ways after the Reformation, but both continued the ancient and historic use of the chasuble. ... The colors used for the Chasubles in the after-Reformation period were many. Numerous examples are found in the ancient churches – indeed a variegated collection... The material generally is silk, gold-cloth, gold-brocade. What applies to Denmark, applies equally to Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. Many ancient treasures are preserved in Iceland. ...

Lutheran customs were naturally criticized by the Reformed – but the times were conservative. Halle, however, was somewhat of an unquiet, restless corner. *A Legal Dispute About the Sabbath* was published in 1702 by a lawyer, Candidate Konrad Ludwig Wagner. Professor

Johann Samuel Stryk, who was *Praeses*, gave it his sanction by an introductory *Programma* about the unfortunate observance of feast days, which he declared ought to be abolished. ... Both men are forerunners of the period of Enlightenment (Rationalism). It is, according to the opinion of Wagner, a question whether it was right to continue to make use of the old “catholic” churches. No pictures should be tolerated. Crucifixes are idols. The church steeples remind us that we live among the Babylonians. The use of church bells should be discouraged, and the same applies to music. He has little use for the ordinary hymns. Chanting should by all means be prohibited. To decorate the altar and pulpit with velvet is a remnant from the days of Popery – as is the idea of using black in Lent! ... Is the observance of all this not an absolutely unnecessary luxury?

Then he comes to the Communion vestments, which, he declares, are without a doubt from the days of Popery. They have been invented by the priests in order to be different from other people and thus secure authority. Chasubles, copes, girdles, collars, cassocks, cloaks with big sleeves – it all comes from the same common source, the Pope. ... He (Wagner) advises that everything distinguishing the priest be abolished, but that if nothing else is, the chasuble must be, since it is manifestly from the days of the Pope. ... From this he proceeds to attack the texts of the Church Year, which also are “Papistic.” ...

After a couple of years things seem to have become quiet regarding this particular matter until Christian Gerber – after his death – appeared on the scene (in 1732) with his *Historie der Kirchen-Ceremonien in Sachsen*. The author died in 1731 as parish priest in Lockwisch, a little south of Dresden, and his son published the book. Gerber was a Pietist with Reformed sympathies... He (Gerber) is much offended at the use of the Communion vestments. He tells how he, as a young priest in Schönberg, was obliged to use the Communion vestments because the patron of the church demanded it. He then goes on to say that during the 40 years he had been at Lockwisch he had never used the Communion vestments belonging to the church, and the congregation did not miss them any more. He then proceeds to treat the question of altar candles, which he thinks are an unreasonable Papistic remnant that certainly ought to be abolished.

...Gerber’s book...found...sympathetic readers, for instance Bishop Peder Hersleb. Neither is it improbable that this book of 1732 has some connection with what happened in many of the lands under the king of Prussia in 1733. Stryk and Wagner had encouraged the princes to legislate against the ceremonies of the church and the temptation was big enough where the prince was Reformed, to take hold of the “Papistry” among the Lutherans.

It was a Reformed king who declared the war against the Communion vestments of his Lutheran subjects. The royal house of Brandenburg, Prussia, was Reformed, while the population was largely Lutheran. The condition had already caused trouble, of which the experience of Paul Gerhardt bears ample proof. The war against the Communion vestments was declared by the peculiar soldier-king, Frederick William I, who ruled in a very autocratic fashion. Through a Decision of 1733 he “prohibited the remnants of Popery in the Lutheran Church: copes, Communion vestments, candles, Latin song, chants, and the sign of the cross.” Many priests sanctioned this step, but conservatism was also very strong. Many complained and counted the whole event a “betrayal of genuine and pure Lutheranism.” Many reports were also given of the disappointments of the congregations.

The brutal king repeated the decision in 1737, with the addition: “Should there be those who hesitate or who desire to make it a matter of conscience, we wish to make it known that we are ready to give them their demission.” At least one priest was discharged for refusal to submit. ... In a supplement [to V. E. Löscher’s *Unschuldige Nachrichten*] of 1737, page 81, we find the following: ... These things are admittedly not of any inner necessity, but they have become no insignificant mark of our church, and must therefore be safeguarded under these circumstances. The king gives to the Papists and the Jews full liberty in matters of worship. Should then the Evangelical Lutheran Christians not be able to obtain the same protection and liberty from their *Landesvater* – their king? ...

One might think that the Pietists, with their dread of externalism, would wholeheartedly support the royal command. This is, however, not the case, for their chief city, Halle, was among those who protested against the royal dictatorship. The Danish Hallensian, Enevold Ewald, shows no sympathy in his account of the event. He says: "Some obeyed the royal decision, but a number of places protested, for instance, Königsberg, Pomerania, Magdeburg, Halle, etc. This led to a repetition and strengthening of the royal command in 1737. A number of priests chose to be dismissed from their office rather than make submission." ...

Frederick [William] I was succeeded in 1740 by his son Frederick II. Immediately on ascending the throne, he issued a cabinet order allowing the churches and their priests full liberty in the matter of religious services. A number made use of the liberty granted. The Communion vestments were restored in Berlin and other places. A number of Prussian churches, such as the Maria Church in Danzig and the Cathedral Church of Brandenburg, possess even today the greatest collections of Communion vestments in Christendom. They are possibly not in use now. Some years of prohibition put the vestments out of use in many places, and the time of Frederick II was the time of Rationalism. ... The time of Frederick II was not a time for pious sentiment. Rationalism flourished, and it had an infinite dread of all that was "mystic" or that was handed down from the "Middle Ages." The use of the Communion vestments was decidedly "catholic" to the mind of Rationalism. Rationalism completed what the Reformed king of Prussia had begun.

The white surplice or alb is still in use in Leipzig and the surrounding country; in a couple of churches in Berlin, for instance, the Church of St. Nicolai where Paul Gerhardt was the parish priest; in Lausitz; in Weimar; in Königsberg, in Old Württemberg, and probably in other places. The chasuble was still used in Dresden in the early part of the nineteenth century. It was discontinued in Nuremberg in 1810, and about the same time in Hannover, Grimma, and Lübeck. At the outbreak of the Great War [World War I] there was probably no church in Germany where the chasuble was in use. Its use is retained by the Lutheran Slovaks.

Taken as a whole the German Lutheran priest appears at the present time in the black Calvinistic cloak handed him by the Reformed king of Prussia. The whole affair proved one tremendous defeat – a colossal yielding and giving up of typical Lutheran ways and customs. The condition was reached through protests and objections on the part of the Lutheran population, and through dismissals and threats of dismissal from office on the part of the king. And the force of the tyrant was superior.

It should always be remembered that the Calvinistic *blackness* of the clergy in the present-day German Lutheran churches – and in her daughters – is not only not Lutheran, but is a remnant and constant reminder of a period of the greatest helplessness and degradation of the German Lutheran people. The brutal Prussian king, followed by the overwhelming power of Rationalism, did accomplish one thing (insofar as externals are concerned). They shifted the German branch of the Lutheran Church, and her daughter churches, from her natural position among the great historic communions of Christendom, to a place among the sectarian, Calvinistic denominations. Her place there has so far been one of continued yielding in order to make herself acceptable. Lutheran in theory and increasingly Reformed in practice...

The original and typical apparel of the German Lutheran – as of all Lutheran clergy when officiating in the sanctuary – is not that of *blackness and gloom*, but the festive apparel of the historic church through the ages. We of Scandinavian ancestry cannot be too grateful for the better conditions prevailing in the Mother-Countries [of Scandinavia]. ...

While these humiliations passed over the Lutheran church in Germany, things went peacefully and very dignified in the Scandinavian countries. ... But the spirit of Rationalism spread its chilling and deadening influence everywhere. It also passed over the Northern countries. Voices were raised in Denmark requiring "reform." Some took up the battle against the liturgy of the Church – because it was "antiquated" and "meaningless." Up to this time the Danish service had retained all the essential features of the beautiful and devotional service of the Reformation

period, but Rationalism had no use for it and succeeded only too well in getting the greater part of the Liturgy eliminated from the services of the church – creating a havoc which to the present day has but partly been overcome.

War was also started against the Communion vestments, but on this point no success was gained. The common people would not sanction the discontinuance of these ornaments of the service. Voices from all sorts and conditions of the people defended the continued use of these ancient heritages of the early days of Christianity. The attacks also seemed to neutralize themselves to a great extent by being directed at various objects. Some took up the battle against the candles on the Altar, arguing that it was more reasonable to place the money in the “school-fund” (how like the rationalistic mind! ...). Others wanted to retain the candles, but suggested that the Communion vestments be sold to provide the means by which to buy candles. There is no doubt that great neglect prevailed in many parishes where a virtually indifferent clergy was in office, but it was all of a temporary nature. Others would come into their places and restore what had been torn down. The general consciousness was a deep desire to maintain the ancient appurtenances of the services of the church.

The leading Rationalist in Denmark, court preacher Christian Bastholm, was a decided enemy of the traditional services, as well as of the vestments, which he calls “ridiculous ornaments.” Many and various opinions could be quoted as examples of the lack of spiritual perception of things having to do with spiritual matters. Probst Jensen in the Karlabo parish does not know “why the white vestments should be retained – except that it does not confine one to the use of black, which color we are not accustomed to ascribe to the Angels of Light.”

In spite of all the confusion the old was not discontinued anywhere, and a consciousness settled more and more that the Communion vestments should be retained, and, wherever lacking, should be restored. In 1803 a royal decision was issued declaring that the Communion vestments were necessary accessories of the altar and should be included in the regular inventory of all the churches. Another decision of September 1811 makes it obligatory on all patrons of churches “to provide new Communion vestments when the old ones are worn out.” This actually put an end to the devastating work of Rationalism [in Denmark]. ...

What has been said of Denmark applies equally to Norway and in a slighter measure to Sweden, where conservatism was so much stronger. Through the changes and the chances of the period of Rationalism, the historic and oecumenical character of the Lutheran Church of Scandinavia had been preserved. (J. Madsen, *The Proper Communion Vestments* [n.d.]; an English abridgement of P. Severinsen, *De rette Messeklæder* [1924]. Emphases in original. Edited for style.)

My sainted grandfather, Jacob Aall Ottesen, always celebrated the Communion, robed in the colorful, and, as it seemed to me, beautiful vestments of the Lutheran Church. On ordinary Sundays he wore the narrow-sleeved cassock, with its long satin stole, and the white “ruff,” or collar. But on “Communion days” and on all festival days he also wore the white surplice or cotta. As he stood reverentially before the altar with its lighted candles and gleaming silver, the old deacon, or verger, placed over his shoulders the scarlet, gold embroidered, silk chasuble. This ancient Communion vestment was shaped somewhat like a shield. As it was double, one side covered his back and the other his chest. Upon the side, which faced the congregation when he turned to the altar, was a large cross in gold embroidery; upon the other was a chalice of similar materials. As a child I instinctively knew that the most sacred of all observances of the church was about to be witnessed. As grandfather turned to the altar and intoned the Lord’s Prayer and the words of consecration, with the elevation of the host and the chalice, I felt as if God was near. The congregation standing reverentially about those kneeling before the altar, made me think of Him who, though unseen, was in our midst. I forgot the old, cold church, with its bare walls, its home-made pews, and its plain glass windows. I early came to know some words of that service, such as: “This is the true body, the true blood of Christ”; “Forgiveness of sins”; “Eternal life.” I

venture that all who, like me, early received such impressions of the Lord's Supper, will approach the altar or the Communion with a reverence that time will but slowly efface. (J. A. O. Stub, *Vestments and Liturgies* [n.d.], pp. 3-4)

The chasuble...I now use was presented to me by the president of our Church, Dr. J. A. Aasgaard. He had used it while pastor at Norway Grove. A former pastor of this congregation, the sainted [Norwegian Synod] President H. A. Preus, undoubtedly regularly used a chasuble at the Communion, as did so many of the fathers of our Church. Of one thing I am convinced by experience, and that is, that "Young America" will love and revere the historic and colorful vestments of our beloved Church. There can be no doubt, but that vestments and church usages are partly responsible for the loyalty and faithfulness so frequently found among the members of denominations and churches which revere and respect their own traditions. If possible I would like to prevent that any visitor at my services, departs with the impression that we Lutherans are one of the Reformed Church denominations. Particularly does this hold in reference to the Communion services. Though we are Protestants, we are a distinct communion with a doctrine, faith, hymnology, liturgy, and church practice all our own. We believe that historically and doctrinally we are the true heirs of the ancient Christian Church. ... Let us not be ashamed of, nor disinclined to confess in every way, the faith, usage, and practice of our fathers. Why should we American Lutherans be so influenced by the Calvinistic-rationalistic customs of the old countries, and the "kill-joy" usages of Puritanism, as to deny to ourselves and to our children the joy of beauty in color, music, and architecture? God certainly paints in glorious colors the works of nature, and the wonders of His creation are past finding out. (J. A. O. Stub, *Vestments and Liturgies*, p. 18)

Dr. Herman A. Preus of Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, in 1953 told this writer [Piepkorn] that the chasuble was used on occasion in the chapel there until the absorption of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church into the Norwegian (later Evangelical) Lutheran Church of America in 1917. (Arthur Carl Piepkorn, *The Survival of the Historic Vestments in the Lutheran Church after 1555*, Second Edition)

The liturgical practices of the Dano-Norwegian Church were carefully followed by the [Norwegian] Synod. Traditional forms of worship were maintained, including the chanting of the collects (prayers), the benediction, and the communion service. Five congregational hymns were standard for Sunday worship. Worship in Synod congregations was always very formal. The old forms were maintained. The entire worship heritage was scrupulously preserved. In all forms of worship, the Synod employed and contributed greatly to church music. The historic vestments of the Norwegian state church pastors were carefully preserved: the loose-fitting black cassock, the stole, and the white-fluted collar. (Photos show that pioneer pastor J. W. C. Dietrichson also wore a heavy chasuble.) (O. Rolf Olson, *The Norwegian Synod, 1853-1917: A Short History of a Premier Predecessor Church Body* [Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2016], p. 57)

First Christmas Day Evening. Today, before a large group of listeners, Vilhelm preached his first sermon. The service was held in the largest room they could find, at the home of Thorgrim Busness. ...

Epiphany. Beautiful sunshine, but nipping frost today. I was quite short of breath from the crisp air when we went to Thorgrim's this forenoon... A crowd gathered today, and there was communion for the first time. It is really remarkable that the service can be conducted with as much order and dignity as it is. (*The Diary of Elisabeth Koren, 1853-1855* [translated and edited by David T. Nelson] [Northfield, Minnesota: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1955], pp. 103 and 119. Elisabeth was the wife of pioneer Norwegian Synod Pastor Ulrik Vilhelm Koren.)

... According to the Koshkonong Parish Journal, “It was agreed that a synod should study the question of what changes should be made in the church ritual of our fatherland because of conditions existing in this country, though the delegates opposed any change whatever in the external customs of worship which can be performed here. In this connection, Pastor [J. W. C.] Dietrichson called attention to certain changes that he considered appropriate.” ...

An actual synod never took place during Dietrichson’s tenure in Wisconsin, so the issue of the constitution would rest in the hands of his successor at Koshkonong. A resolution concerning the basic constitution of the Koshkonong congregation was adopted on August 21, 1849. In this parish constitution the issue of liturgical order is presented...

The ceremonies, or outward rites of worship, as well as the church order in the congregation, shall be carried out in accordance with the *Ritual* of 1685 of the Church of Norway and Denmark and the *Altar Book* prescribed for use in the same kingdoms, modified by the pastor as he thinks necessary because of conditions existing in this country.

The members of the congregation had freely chosen to express their evangelical freedom by means of their voluntary subscription to a constitution which, among other things, required a recognizable form of worship according to an historic tradition. ...the laity at Koshkonong saw in their use of the *Ritual* a form which preserved and presented the doctrine “which is revealed in God’s Holy Word through our baptismal covenant and in the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, interpreted according to the symbolical books or confessional writings of the Church of Norway.” The liturgy, according to the “old” *Ritual*, was a funnel that could channel the rich and robust traditions of the evangelical Lutheran teaching into their new world and challenging circumstance.

Transplanting the liturgy was no easy task. There were a host of cultural forces in America which seemed to work against it. By the standards of the Methodists or the Mormons Dietrichson’s work can hardly be called a “success”. Yet his approach, which may seem bigoted and nordophilic, actually connected those nineteenth century pioneers with the teachers of the sixteenth century and those who had gone before in that great evangelical procession of liturgical expression in which the truth of the Gospel had been confessed, proclaimed and taught. This connection allowed them to rise above and avoid sectarianism in an embrace of genuinely catholic form and teaching.

Dietrichson’s program (to establish deep roots through an ordered practice) is not really so “out of date” when we consider it in light of current trends in the churches. ...we have, in our worship lives as two thousand years of church, moved from freedom in order to decency in uniformity, and then in the great Reformation, to freedom within form. How do we use that freedom today? Is our worship as rich and robust as our tradition? As we plan and execute our worship services are we captive to and limited by social sources or do we really engage in a conversation of traditions (and that conversation is represented in our hymnal where more than 2500 years of text and melody are drawn together from many corners of “church”)? What does it mean to us to be a member of a synod which has, throughout its history, claimed to be a church which voluntarily practices an ordered church life and liturgy?

Perhaps it means that our innovations are tempered by a form which, again and again, has God’s activity at the center, permeating our creativity. Consider the artistic creativity which flourished beneath the yoke of an ordered church life: the music editions of Georg Rhau, the poetry and music of Walter, Herman, Spengler and Speratus; the Latin music editions of Lossius and Spangenberg; the Biblical motets and liturgical settings of Schuetz; the harmonic forms of the chorale in the Cantionale of Osiander and others; the massive polychoral hymn settings of M[ichael] Praetorius; organ music, instrumental music, solo vocal music, choral music and congregational music by Eccard, Scheidt, Schein, Hammerschmidt, Crueger and hundreds of other composers; texts of Nicolai, Gerhardt, Kingo and other poets who were inspired by the form of liturgy and church year to produce new art in each generation; and finally, like the sun

focusing through a magnifying glass, the liturgical music of J. S. Bach: the masses, the cantatas, the passions, the organ chorales; the spirited “chorales reborn” of Grundtvig and Landstad; the lyric settings of the chorales by Lindeman; and even into the last [20th] century with the music of Distler, Bender and Manz. Consider the new era of creativity hinted at by the hymnals and supplements published by the member churches of the old Synodical Conference since the 1990’s. And ALL of this creative freedom happens not in spite of, but because of the yoke of an ordered church life and liturgy. (Do not forget the thousands upon thousands of Lutheran Gospel sermons which have been created within and under the boundaries of the liturgical tradition. It is staggering!) (Dennis W. Marzolf, “Mass Appeal: Discernment in Liturgical Innovation”)

Uniformity in ceremonies and liturgical customs is not, to be sure, necessary to preserve unity in faith, but it is indeed edifying while diversity in ceremonies often fosters deplorable antagonisms and the cooling of love. On the other hand, the inward bond and collaboration between congregations can be promoted by the greatest possible uniformity in liturgical customs and church order. (Herman Amberg Preus, *Vivacious Daughter: Seven Lectures on the Religious Situation Among Norwegians in America* [translated by Todd W. Nichol] [Northfield, Minnesota: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1990], p. 49)

...a *Church-Book* on behalf of the General Council is now [in 1868] being prepared by the Pennsylvania Ministerium. The book will include most of what our [Danish-Norwegian] *Altar Book* contains (liturgy), along with Luther’s *Small Catechism*, the *Augsburg Confession*, forms for home devotion, and a collection of hymns [or psalms]. Publishing such a book must now be regarded as very beneficial, if, as we have reason to hope, it is drawn from the glorious and rich sources which the Lutheran church in this respect has in its heritage from the 16th and 17th centuries. And it would be very beautiful and edifying if Lutherans everywhere in their churches could rediscover the same church customs, the same hymns and prayers, so that somehow they “could with one mouth praise the Lord.” But all this can help little if they do not first in fact have the same faith. It can help little that we “talk the same talk,” if we are not “united in the same mind and the same meaning” (1 Cor. 1:10. Phil. 2:2). (Ulrik Vilhelm Koren, “The First Meeting of the General Council,” in *U. V. Koren’s Works*, Vol. 3, edited by Mark DeGarmeaux [Mankato, Minnesota: Lutheran Synod Book Company, 2015], p. 74)

Calls for liturgical reform written from a Rationalist perspective began to appear in the 1780s. They called for drastic modifications to the traditional liturgy or even wholesale abandonment of it. ... Johann Wilhelm Rau argued in 1786 that the old formulas were no longer usable because the expressions in them were in part no longer understandable and in part objectionable. Fixed forms in general were not good, and even the Lord’s Prayer was meant only as an example to follow and not as a prayer to be repeated. Some said that liturgical formulas served to ease the task of the pastor and preserve order in the service. But [according to Rau] the advantages were specious: very few pastors had so little time left over from other duties that they could not prepare a service, and in Dortmund (for example) no liturgical formulas were prescribed, without disruption to the service. Each pastor used his own self-written order or spoke extemporaneously. According to Rau, the most important abuses to curb were the too-frequent use of the Lord’s Prayer, the making of the sign of the cross, the Aaronic benediction, chanting by the pastor, the use of candles on the altar, private confession, the use of the appointed lectionary texts for sermons, and various superstitious practices surrounding communion, such as carrying the houseling cloth to catch crumbs that might fall and referring to the “true” body and blood of Christ. ... Peter Burdorf, writing in 1795, argued that repetition in the liturgy weakened the attention of the listener and the impact of the form. The current liturgy did not hold people’s attention, nor did the sermon. ... Some liturgy was necessary for public services to be held, but it should be as simple as possible in order to meet the needs of contemporary Christians. Rationalist writers backed up their words with

deeds and produced a number of new liturgies written with the above concerns in mind. Luther Reed...offered the opinion that these liturgies “ranged in character from empty sentimentality to moralizing soliloquy and verbosity.” ... Hymns were rewritten as well with a view to removing “superstition” and outdated theology. ... This, then, was the situation around the turn of the nineteenth century. In 1817, the three hundredth anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, Claus Harms published his anti-Rationalistic Ninety-Five Theses, which marked the beginning of a revival of Lutheran theology and liturgy that was to continue for more than a century. (Joseph Herl, *Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism*, pp. 127-29)

Gradually a desire manifested itself to gain popularity for the Lutheran Church in this country. The hard dogmatical knots of the old Lutheran oak were to give way under the Puritan plane. The body was deprived of its bones and its heart, and the empty skin might be filled with whatever was most pleasing, if only the Lutheran name was retained! The statement of the seventh article of the Augsburg Confession, that “unto the true unity of the Church it is not necessary that human traditions, rites, or ceremonies instituted by men, should be everywhere alike,” was most extensively used, and in the desire to make the Lutheran Church as much as possible like others, her leaders were much more ready to adopt foreign elements than to retain her own distinctive features. Thus the Liturgy, the ancient lessons of the Gospels and Epistles, the festivals of the Church Year, the gown, and other usages were given up, in order that as little as possible might be seen of these Lutheran peculiarities. Hoping to gain others, they lost themselves. The Lutheran Church had given away her own spirit, her own original life and character. (William Julius Mann, “Blaetter aus dem Wanderbuche,” *Der Deutsche Kirchenfreund*, Vol. VIII [1855], pp. 386 ff.; quoted in Adolph Spaeth, *Charles Porterfield Krauth*, Vol. I [New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1898], pp. 354-55)

...the newly formed, so-called “Old Lutheran” synods of the Midwest simply could not recognise the General Synod as Lutheran. ... Nor was it simply a matter of doctrines on paper. The differences found expression also in the forms of church life and practice. Benjamin Kurtz’s *Lutheran Observer* crusaded for the emotional, revivalistic ways of the American Reformed churches. The “Old Lutherans” found these ways repulsive, and rejected them as unchurchly “new measures,” just as they opposed the bare ways of Puritanism generally. In opposition to revivalistic emotionalism Lutheran doctrine insisted that not personal feelings, experiences, “testimonies,” and the like, but only the objective means of grace, the Gospel and sacraments of Christ, should be central to the church’s worship and shape its practical life. Attention must be focused on God and His gifts, not on man and his moods. We catch an illuminating glimpse of this conflict in the Missouri Synod’s *Lutheraner* of September 23, 1856. Here [C. F. W.] Walther reprints, under the amused heading “Peter in der Fremde” (“Peter in a Strange Country”), a letter by a J. B. McAfee, which had recently appeared in the pro-revivalist *Lutheran Observer*:

I left Leavenworth City, Kansas Territory, on July 17, and arrived in St. Louis on Saturday night, July 19. Sunday morning at 5 o’clock I left the boat in order to search out a Lutheran church. First I went to Concordia College, but finding no church there, returned to the city, and wandered from place to place till nearly 11 o’clock, when I found the long-sought object. Upon entering I found all seats occupied, with the exception of one, which I took. Here I saw, for the first time in a Lutheran church, image and crucifix. I came to the conclusion that I had come to the wrong place and was in a Roman church. The preacher was attired in priestly vestments, the sacrament was to be distributed, wax candles burnt on the east side of the altar, wafers were used, etc. People bowed towards the images, and as I supposed, before them.*) Thus the ceremony ended. Rarely have I seen a preacher seemingly more solemn, serious, and zealous. But do not believe that because I admire the zeal of the man (Brother [Johannes Michael Gottlieb] Schaller) I also admire the ceremony. This is something to which I am totally opposed. ...

Besides inserting Schaller's name, Walther added only the following note at the place marked: "(*) That is untrue. We bow before no image, but we do begin the altar service bowing with a silent sigh to God." (Kurt E. Marquart, *Anatomy of an Explosion: A Theological Analysis of the Missouri Synod Conflict* [Grand Rapids: Bake Book House, 1978], pp. 22-23)

...[C. F. W.] Walther...with F. A. Schmidt...participated in a free conference with English Lutherans at Gravelton, Missouri, from August 16-20, 1872. They had been invited by Pastors Jonathan Moser and Polycarp Henkel, both of the Tennessee Synod. ... The two Synodical Conference leaders [Walther and Schmidt] took center stage at this historic meeting that would eventually result in the formation of the English Lutheran Conference of Missouri and, later on, the present-day English District of the Missouri Synod. Schmidt preached the opening sermon on Romans 1:16... Pastors Christian Kleppisch of the Missouri Synod, Andrew Rader of the Holston Synod, and Walther all preached during the conference as well. The latter preached in German on Sunday morning to the few German-speaking Lutherans in the area, basing his sermon on Acts 76:20-34. Moser also translated his words into English for the other congregants. The other three all preached their sermons in English. One eyewitness described the scene during Walther's homily years later:

When Walther preached he stood in the back of a buckboard wagon with a brush arbor over him for shade. ... He preached in a Prince Albert coat and we were all gathered outside the old meeting house, because there was no room within and it was cooler outdoors. We children sat on oak slab benches laid across short logs and the men and women sat apart.

These English Lutherans were a decidedly different lot than the German Lutherans who had grown up in Walther's shadow. One member of the Gravelton congregation recalled, "Polycarp Henkel was our pastor when the meeting was held with Walther. In those days our services were very simple: A prayer, a song, the Scripture reading, another song, the sermon, the prayers, and the doxology followed by the benediction. The pastors did not wear gowns." The St. Louis preacher's gownless sermon demonstrated his firm handle on matters of Christian freedom. (Peter M. Prange, *Wielding the Sword of the Spirit, Volume Two: The Doctrine & Practice of Church Fellowship in the Synodical Conference (1868-1877)* [Wauwatosa, Wisconsin: Joh. Ph. Koehler Press, 2022], pp. 222-24. The quotations are from Fred C. Stein and H. William Lieske, "Old Gravelton Revisited," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 4 [January 1948], pp. 165, 166.)

Whenever the divine service once again follows the old Evangelical-Lutheran agendas (or church books), it seems that many raise a great cry that it is "Roman Catholic": "Roman Catholic" when the pastor chants "The Lord be with you" and the congregation responds by chanting "and with thy spirit"; "Roman Catholic" when the pastor chants the collect and the blessing and the people respond with a chanted "Amen."

Even the simplest Christian can respond to this outcry: "Prove to me that this chanting is contrary to the Word of God, then I too will call it 'Roman Catholic' and have nothing more to do with it. However, you cannot prove this to me." If you insist upon calling every element in the divine service "Romish" that has been used by the Roman Catholic Church, it must follow that the reading of the Epistle and Gospel is also "Romish." Indeed, it is mischief to sing or preach in church, for the Roman Church has done this also...

Those who cry out should remember that the Roman Catholic Church possesses every beautiful song of the old orthodox church. The chants and antiphons and responses were brought into the church long before the false teachings of Rome crept in. This Christian Church since the beginning, even in the Old Testament, has derived great joy from chanting... For more than 1700 years orthodox Christians have participated joyfully in the divine service. Should we, today, carry on by saying that such joyful participation is "Roman Catholic"? God forbid!

Therefore, as we continue to hold and to restore our wonderful divine services in places where they have been forgotten, let us boldly confess that our worship forms do not tie us with

the modern sects or with the church of Rome; rather, they join us to the one, holy Christian Church that is as old as the world and is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. (C. F. W. Walther, *Der Lutheraner*, Vol. 9, No. 24 [July 19, 1853], p. 163)

...occasionally a division occurs because of a difference in ceremonies or practices. This frequently happens here in America. Those who have immigrated from Germany do not always find the ceremonies to which they were accustomed from home, and when they see the truly Lutheran practices of chanting at the altar, burning of candles, the crucifix, kneeling, etc., they often think: "That is all papistic." Now if they were reasonable, they would concentrate on the doctrine and be satisfied when they discover that it is sound. Those who sever their relationship with the church because of such ceremonial differences are committing a grievous sin. You see, every congregation has the right to establish whatever ceremonies it considers good and wholesome in its circumstances. Therefore a congregation of our Synod should not look askance at a sister congregation if it has not yet introduced the ceremonies of the ancient church. If that would happen, a schismatic attitude would arise. It would certainly be nice, if we could gradually introduce an ever greater similarity of ceremonies [and practices] in our midst.

Not everyone agreed with that wish, saying that love should always give in and that we must take into account the novelty that these practices create, especially for the South Germans. To this the answer was given:

We certainly should not bind the consciences of individuals. However, a congregation need not allow one or two individuals to keep it from introducing a beautiful practice. A person's conscience cannot feel violated, however, if the individuals are allowed not to participate in the ceremonies [or practices]. If despite this freedom someone insists on cutting himself off from the congregation, he will have to answer for his action.

Also for this reason there was no general agreement in favor of the expressed desire for greater uniformity of ceremonies – i.e., for a general introduction of the ancient church's liturgy. Some objected that these practices cannot simply be called "nicer" than what is practiced somewhere else. They felt that in such matters much depends on custom and on personal taste. In addition to that, they felt, you can't simply call these practices "truly Lutheran," since Luther inherited them from the papacy and let them stand as harmless. [The essayist] responded:

We most certainly can say that these practices are more beautiful; however, in order to make such a judgment, we must first of all develop our churchly taste. So far as the second objection is concerned, it is certain that Luther did not merely tolerate these practices, but he preserved them as practices of the ancient universal (*alkatholischen*) church. And so far as the often loudly voiced objection is concerned that these are Catholic practices, we bemoan the terrible lack of knowledge that still afflicts also so many in our congregations; otherwise they would not make that objection. If they were just a bit more informed, they would know that the primary difference between us and the Roman Church is solely and alone a doctrinal difference, especially in regard to the real chief article of faith, the doctrine of justification. It is truly sad that so many who call themselves Lutherans do not understand this basic difference but look for the difference in external ceremonies and still join in the cry of the ignorant, namely, that ceremonies make us Catholic. By reestablishing the old Lutheran ceremonies we could also counteract the American trend which sees nothing but the papacy in them. By such action we would be testifying that the ceremonies, regardless of how much they may resemble those of the papistic church, do not make our church papistic, for the simple reason that in our doctrine we are totally different and separated from the Roman church. (C. F. W. Walther, "Explanation of Thesis VI of the book *The True Visible Church*," delivered at Indianapolis, Indiana, Beginning August 7, 1867, at the Central District Convention; in *Essays for the Church* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992], Vol. I, p. 129)

We know and firmly hold that the character, the soul of Lutheranism, is not found in outward observances but in the pure doctrine. If a congregation had the most beautiful ceremonies in the very best order, but did not have the pure doctrine, it would be anything but Lutheran. We have from the beginning spoken earnestly of good ceremonies, not as though the important thing were outward forms, but rather to make use of our liberty in these things. For true Lutherans know that although one does not *have* to have these things (because there is no divine command to have them), one *may* nevertheless have them because good ceremonies are lovely and beautiful and are not forbidden in the Word of God. Therefore the Lutheran Church has not abolished “outward ornaments, candles, altar cloths, statues and similar ornaments” [Ap XXIV], but has left them free. The sects proceeded differently because they did not know how to distinguish between what is commanded, forbidden, and left free in the Word of God. We remind only of the mad actions of Carlstadt and of his adherents and followers in Germany and in Switzerland. We on our part have retained the ceremonies and church ornaments in order to prove by our actions that we have a correct understanding of Christian liberty, and know how to conduct ourselves in things which are neither commanded nor forbidden by God.

We refuse to be guided by those who are offended by our church customs. We adhere to them all the more firmly when someone wants to cause us to have a guilty conscience on account of them. The Roman antichristendom enslaves poor consciences by imposing human ordinances on them with the command: “You must keep such and such a thing!”; the sects enslave consciences by forbidding and branding as sin what God has left free. Unfortunately, also many of our Lutheran Christians are still without a true understanding of their liberty. This is demonstrated by their aversion to ceremonies.

It is truly distressing that many of our fellow Christians find the difference between Lutheranism and Roman Catholicism in outward things. It is a pity and dreadful cowardice when a person sacrifices the good ancient church customs to please the deluded American denominations just so they won’t accuse us of being Roman Catholic! Indeed! Am I to be afraid of a Methodist, who perverts the saving Word, or be ashamed in the matter of my good cause, and not rather rejoice that they can tell by our ceremonies that I do not belong to them?

It is too bad that such entirely different ceremonies prevail in our Synod, and that no liturgy at all has yet been introduced in many congregations. The prejudice especially against the responsive chanting of pastor and congregations is of course still very great with many people – this does not, however, alter the fact that it is very foolish. The pious church father Augustine said, “Qui cantat, bis orat – He who sings prays twice.”

This finds its application also in the matter of the liturgy. Why should congregations or individuals in the congregation want to retain their prejudices? How foolish that would be! For first of all it is clear from the words of St. Paul (1 Cor. 14:16) that the congregations of his time had a similar custom. It has been the custom in the Lutheran Church for 250 years. It creates a solemn impression on the Christian mind when one is reminded by the solemnity of the divine service that one is in the house of God, in childlike love to their heavenly Father, also give expression to their joy in such a lovely manner.

We are not insisting that there be uniformity in perception or feeling or taste among all believing Christians – neither dare anyone demand that all be minded as he. Nevertheless, it remains true that the Lutheran liturgy distinguishes Lutheran worship from the worship of other churches to such an extent that the houses of worship of the latter look like lecture halls in which the hearers are merely addressed or instructed, while our churches are in truth houses of prayer in which Christians serve the great God publicly before the world.

Uniformity of ceremonies (perhaps according to the Saxon Church order published by the Synod, which is the simplest among the many Lutheran church orders) would be highly desirable because of its usefulness. A poor slave of the pope finds one and same form of service, no matter where he goes, by which he at once recognizes his church.

With us it is different. Whoever comes from Germany without a true understanding of the doctrine often has to look for his church for a long time, and many have already been lost to our church because of this search. How different it would be if the entire Lutheran church had a uniform form of worship! This would, of course, first of all yield only an external advantage, however, one which is by no means unimportant. Has not many a Lutheran already kept his distance from the sects because he saw at the Lord's Supper they broke the bread instead of distributing wafers?

The objection: What would be the use of uniformity of ceremonies? was answered with the counter question: What is the use of a flag on the battlefield? Even though a soldier cannot defeat the enemy with it, he nevertheless sees by the flag where he belongs. We ought not to refuse to walk in the footsteps of our fathers. They were so far removed from being ashamed of the good ceremonies that they publicly confess in the passage quoted: "It is not true that we do away with all such external ornaments."

In this connection it was also remarked that it does not indicate a good disposition when people do not want to kneel at confession and at Holy Communion. Who would not be willing to bow the knees before the great God? And would it be wrong to teach Christians in this manner? Of this Luther says fittingly that when Christians kneel when they receive the Sacrament it seems to him as though everyone had his censer with which he approaches the throne of grace (Ps. 95:6). (C. F. W. Walther, "Explanation of Thesis XVIII, D, of the book *The True Visible Church*," delivered in Indianapolis, Indiana, Beginning August 9, 1871, at the Central District Convention; in *Essays for the Church*, Vol. I, pp. 193-94)

First, in regard to the ceremonies of the Lutheran Church, for which it is charged that she is related to the Roman Church and has inclinations towards the same, every reasonable person must admit that if the Lutheran Church has a few things that are also found in the Catholic Church, this, in and of itself, could not prove that the former has inclinations towards the latter. For, if that were so, this charge would apply to every Christian denomination. For don't all parties in Christianity also have the same Bible, the same Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds, the same Baptism, the same preaching office, the same Sabbath observance, etc., as the Romanists? Don't even other so-called Protestants also have church buildings with steeples on them, bells, organs, the custom of folding hands, kneeling, uncovering the head when praying, and the like? Who would charge the Reformed, the Methodists, the Evangelicals, etc., with Catholic tendencies for those things? Certainly no one. Whoever regards the mere acceptance of certain innocent ceremonies...as papism cannot possibly know what papism actually is, and no one would be happier with that than the papists themselves, as they would be asserting that the mystery of lawlessness of the Anti-Christ consists in the use of wax candles, in priestly vestments and in the priest standing behind the altar and the like! ...

In what cases would it be right to draw the conclusion that those specific ceremonies in the Old Lutheran Church would lead to Rome? Our answer: 1. If the Lutheran Church, along with the churchly ceremony, had also accepted the false doctrine of the Roman Church regarding it, and 2. if the Lutheran Church also has retained the ceremonies of the Roman Church that, in and of themselves, are against God's Word, and, indeed, just those that embrace any of the unique character[istics] of the Roman Church that are unique to the very essence of the papacy and have been introduced to win their favor and to undergird them. By applying a detailed examination and comparison, please see for yourself that the Lutheran Church teaches something much different in her ceremonies than does Rome, the one, the truth, the other a lie. Test for yourself that Lutheranism has only retained the good, salutary ceremonies of the Roman Church according to I Thess. 5:21, which are completely free of any tie to the papacy, that actually predate the papacy, having been used during the best age of the church. So also prove for yourself that the charge is obviously false that through her ceremonies Lutheranism leads to Rome, but it only goes to show that the Lutheran Church at the time of the Reformation had not hastily acted in ignorance, or as

we Germans say, she did not throw the baby out with the bath water. (C. F. W. Walther, “Does Old Lutheranism Lead to Rome?,” in *Missouri Synod in Formation: Essays of the Founding Fathers (1844- ‘47)*, translated by Joel R. Baseley [Dearborn, Michigan: Mark V Publications, 2012], pp. 266-67. Punctuation slightly revised. This essay was originally published [in several parts] in *Lehre und Wehre*, Vol. 3, pp. 20 f., 27 f., 33 f., 39 f., 45 f., 60 f., 77 f., 79 f., and 130 f.)

...it...says explicitly in our symbols:

Our people also teach clearly and plainly that Christian freedom must be exercised in these matters so as not to offend the weak or the uninstructed, and that no one, in any way, abuse freedom so that the weak are frightened away from the Gospel, but rather for the sake of peace and unity customs must be retained that can be retained without sinning and without burdening the conscience. (*Apol.* Art. 15).

But as, by these words, the *Apology* first warns against offending the weak by doing away with the ancient ceremonies that had been used before, so the *Formula of Concord* just as seriously warns against introducing ceremonies from the false believing Churches for the sake of causing offense with the following words:

So also through such concessions and similitude in these external matters, one is first uniting in their doctrine which is not Christian, strengthening the idolaters in their idolatry, disturbing and offending those who rightly believe, and weakening their faith, for both of which every Christian will be responsible to give an account upon his soul’s welfare and salvation, as it is written: Woe to the world for the sake of offense. Or: Whoever has offended the least one who believes in me, it would be better for him that a millstone be hung around his neck and he be drowned in the sea, where it is the deepest. (*Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration* Art. 10)

Oh that these preemptive woes had been taken to heart by those who wanted to be servants of the Lutheran Church but who, without ever thinking about their offending the weak, set out to abolish practically every ancient Lutheran practice, and have received in their place the ceremonies of Reformed Churches. They will someday have to give an account before God for that, as through such misleading they cause many Lutherans to wander from their old mother church and have strengthened those who are Reformed-minded in their dream that the ancient Lutheran Church had been semi-Catholic and that the Reformed are the truly cleansed and purified Church. Preachers who mislead people like that obviously actually think they’re the ones acting thereby on behalf of the weak, but they err badly by thinking so...

...if a Lutheran preacher gets rid of the old ceremonies of his Church and replaces them with the ceremonies of the falsely believing parties – since those heterodox bodies condemn the Lutheran ceremonies, turning them into a matter of the conscience and condemning them as sinful, superstitious, idolatrous, papistic, and since they declare that their own ceremonies (as the Reformed for instance with their breaking the bread) are the only right ones and require them as necessary – then such a preacher denies the important article of Christian freedom, lets himself again be caught under an Old Testamental yoke of slavery and thereby even denies Christ himself, who purchased our freedom at such a great cost. It doesn’t matter if the preacher had good intentions in this, as if he were misleading them in deference to the weak. Truth cannot give way, nor the purity of the Gospel endangered for the sake of the weak; much rather, everything must give way to God’s truth. ... Here a Lutheran preacher sees what he’s obligated to do if he wants to remain faithful to his Church.

...especially relevant to our times, when the acceptance or rejection of an otherwise innocuous rite is *not* indifferent...is this: If, in one way or another the appearance is given as if one is deferring to the opponents of pure doctrine, or as if one is now united with them or as if one is saying orthodoxy and false faith are essentially the same. The sacred duty to be most careful to diligently suspend the use of this freedom in this case is based, amongst others, on the

following passage from 2 Cor. 6.14: “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what use has righteousness for unrighteousness? What fellowship has light with the darkness? What agreement is there between Christ and Belial? Therefore come out from among them and separate from them, says the LORD.” Rom. 16.17: “I admonish you, dear brothers, that you mark those who cause division and offenses alongside the doctrine you have learned, and withdraw from them.” In this connection confer with 1 Thess. 5.22: “Avoid every appearance of evil.”

Now, according to these declarations of the Holy Ghost, if the orthodox must sever fellowship with unbelievers and the heterodox, separate from them and depart from them and thus, according to that last passage, also avoid any appearance that fellowship was established between them, then those who receive the sorts of rites that are characteristic of a heterodox faith, that likewise have become trademarks of certain sects by which those who are heretical in faith want to express and confess their heresies with their rites, obviously act against God’s Word: For by that [reception of these rites] the members of the orthodox church give the appearance of having become one (united) with those of that heretical faith, as if they had become one with them, as if they had quit their accusation against the heretical doctrine, and as if they had now become one church body with the enemies of pure doctrine. ...

We do not deny that we are geared up to retain the external worship service as it has long been retained for centuries by the ancient Lutheran Church, in its characteristic, constituent parts, and to certify it as such to our congregations. We do not deny, however, that we intend to have no connection at all with the other church fellowships, nor to conform to any of the ceremonies characteristic of the Reformed, Methodists or others. Finally, we in no way consider those who nowadays abandon all the distinctive ceremonies of our church and in their place accept those of foreign churchly fellowships to be true Lutherans. But we do not do this because we believe that any ceremony instituted by man is, in itself, necessary for the Church to be true, as do the papists, or that we do not have the authority under every circumstance to use any non-offensive ceremony, whatever it might be. Much rather we only treat it that way because we won’t let our freedom in ceremonies be taken from us, we don’t want to deny any truth, especially in this important doctrine of Christian freedom, but want to confess it by our deeds, not wanting to offend the weak, nor confirming any seemingly innocuous rite tied to any heretical doctrine, lest we strengthen anyone in his error, or even give the slightest hint that by doing so we agree with the opponents of our Lutheran Church and her doctrine, nor that we were merging together into one church with them. We are dead serious about this. That’s what we want to do and what we are contending for. But it has nothing to do with the ceremonies, as such, whose use or abolition in other circumstances we would consider and declare with all our hearts to be a matter of complete freedom.

Those who oppose our employing the Lutheran confession of freedom in ceremonies are boxing with shadows against us when they assert these things are, of themselves, free, and necessitate no schism. The question they are raising is much rather this, if we now are in circumstances where, according to God’s Word and the confession of our Church, we must not concede to opponents even in certain indifferent matters. But since *we are* now in exactly those circumstances, it is what we believe that dictates our response. For others, that is, for the Reformed, they want to make what a Lutheran Church does a matter of conscience, since Lutherans have altars, images, crucifixes and the like in their Churches; that they use the oblation, or hosts and candle-lighters with their administration of the holy Lord’s Supper and require people to kneel at the reception of the most holy Sacrament; that the pastor chants the Words of Institution of the holy Supper, the liturgical verses, collects and the Aaronic benediction at the altar; that at Baptism, consecration, blessing, [and] absolution they like to make the sign of the cross; to bow one’s head at the Name of Jesus, etc. On the other hand, the Reformed have insisted, as indispensable for a valid celebration of the holy Lord’s Supper, on the use of common bread, breaking it, giving the bread and the cup into the hand of the communicant, etc. But it is just for this reason – partly because they portray these practices of the

Lutheran Church as sinfully superstition, papistic and idolatrous, and partly because they want to demand that their innovations are necessary – just for that reason the Lutheran Church has not given way to her opponents for a moment, but rather has retained her relief against these lies imposed upon the conscience so that this important article of Christian freedom would not be darkened and that she would not lose it.

But has anything changed since then [i.e., since the time of “the ancient Lutheran Church”]? Are not the innocuous rites of the Lutheran Church still now turned into remnants of the papacy, which now must be completely eradicated to be pure? Don’t even the false brothers in our own Church now press the same issues because in their view it’s so obvious that the jewel of ancient Lutheran worship cannot compete with the enthusiastic (*schwaermerisch*), Methodistic movements of the Spirit? So therefore you must see that we must be diligent and careful in our watchfulness, that – for the sake of the false spirituality and pride that now predominates and is being raised against the naivete of our fathers – we not *also* publicly and disgracefully deny our Christian freedom, if ever we give way to our opponents and our false brothers in their insistence on these things. What sort of doctrine, what take on Christian freedom, would we be bringing into the hearts of many thousands of Christians and helping to confirm in them by doing so!

It is clearly our responsibility, even right here and now, to lay down a witness – by what we practice – that a true Christian must not let people call sinful and make commands when God has not called it sinful or placed a command. And no one is permitted to say: In my circumstances, for my part, those things don’t apply to me. We reply: If you really want to be a servant of the Lutheran Church and want your congregation to be a part of the same, you must not let yourself be satisfied to do what would be right and salutary for the narrow confines of your congregation, as if you stood there all by yourself, but, as a member of the whole, you are obligated to act in conscious connection with the whole church. ...

Above all, must we not acknowledge here and now that just now it is the most sacred obligation of a faithful servant of the Lutheran Church, and of a congregation of that name, that they give evidence of it [i.e. their claim to be “Lutheran”] also through her external worship service, so [that] they are visibly distinguished from the congregations that are sectarian and also to publicly and decisively renounce them? ... If it has ever become necessary in any country that a Lutheran congregation must not want to bear her name [“Lutheran”] as a show or in jest – [by] retaining the confessional ceremonies of our church and defending herself from the acceptance of Reformed ceremonies and the like – is it not now, more now than in the confusion of Babylon, and just here in America, in this land of sects and of indifferentism? (C. F. W. Walther, “Does Old Lutheranism Lead to Rome?,” pp. 274, 276-279. Emphases added. Formatting and punctuation slightly revised.)

Even if, indeed, the Old Lutheran Church has a different doctrine in her ceremonies than the Roman Church, isn’t she showing that she is closer to the Roman Church than other Protestant denominations, since she has preserved ceremonies mitigating against God’s Word – since they are ceremonies used exclusively by papists? Thus muses the *Watchman of Zion* in Baltimore. Mr. Weyl [in the pages of that publication] asserts this. He writes: “Making the threefold cross over a baptized infant, mounting a crucifix in the Church and burning wax candles on the altar in daylight at the holy Lord’s Supper, etc., doesn’t that reek of Rome?” ...

The first rite of our church that is supposedly papistic is the rite she uses so often, called “making the sign of the cross.” Now it’s certainly true, this ceremony is seldom used nowadays, since even many of the servants of the Church are ashamed of the crucified Son of God, so now even naive, honest Christians, who only see this done when they’re around Catholics, come to think it’s a badge designating a vassal of the pope. But we ask, why could it not be an innocent ceremony, when such a lovely message is so clearly given to everyone by it? Even if it were admitted that this ceremony was not put into practice until after the papacy ascended, wouldn’t

we still have to say it's a very lovely and edifying rite to anyone who believes in the crucified Savior, who loves him and, therefore, gladly wants to remember him?

Yet whoever is even slightly familiar with the history of the Christian Church must know that this beautiful, meaningful ritual is ancient. It far predates the rise of the papacy, yes, it had even been a common practice in the age of Christianity's first love, in the age when even hundreds of thousands died as martyrs for the Crucified. Already the first doctor of the Church after the apostolic fathers, Justin Martyr, makes mention of this Christian custom in his second letter of defense in the days of the church father, Tertullian, who was born in the year 160. Making the sign of the cross was so universally practiced that he [Tertullian] could write: "Step by step, every time they came in or went out, when putting on clothing and shoes, upon waking, eating, lighting lamps, laying or sitting down, in short, in all our daily activities, we make the sign of the cross upon our forehead" (*Lib. de corona militis* c. III.). One of the things this same Tertullian writes, in giving the details of the rites used with Baptism, is this: "The flesh is signed (with the cross), by which the soul is guarded" (*De resur. Camis.* Ch. 8). From this we see that even in the time of Tertullian the sign of the cross was put into service, not only in common life, but also in the Church. And, of course, at that time it had no tie to any superstitious ideas that in the sign of the cross itself lay some magical power as it was later taught in the papacy and is still taught. To the charge that heathen of those days leveled against Christians, that they worshiped the cross, Tertullian responds: "Whoever among you thinks that we worship the cross takes refuge in the same principle we do. Wood is wood. A figure does not obliterate its distinction from what it depicts" (*Apolog.* c. 16).

So, according to that, what must you say about Lutheran preachers and writers of newspaper articles who disparage making the sign of the cross as being papistic? Aren't they themselves branding a most innocent rite, and a lovely, simple sign for the remembrance of the crucified Savior, as an abomination? Aren't they turning the Christians in the golden age of Christianity, along with many thousands of holy martyrs, into superstitious papists? Doesn't the Lutheran Church have the right, as no reasonable person can deny, to preserve innocent rites that have remained in the Church, even from the ancient, good times, even through the rule of the papacy – and how may she, then, do away with the sign of the cross, this loveliest of all symbols, that only a believer can have? Yes, says Mr. Weyl, "the time for child's play is over and the worship of God in spirit and truth is ordained for us." We respond: We truly do not begrudge this man his childish and ridiculous thoughts about responsibility and the Spirit. Yes, we much rather pity him as an unsaved man who ought to be ashamed of his own explanation of the childishness of what is simply Christian (cf. Mt. 18.3).

But perhaps another might say: Shouldn't the Lutheran Church abolish making the sign of the cross, since it is used so much by papists in service of their superstitions? We reply: Abuse must not eliminate a proper use. The true Reformation was not the elimination of all existing ceremonies, but the purification of what was good from abuses and of false accretions according to the apostolic rule: "Test everything and retain what is good!" It doesn't say to abolish, but "retain." But as to why the Lutheran Church retained just this designation, we will let the great Lutheran theologian Johann Gerhard explain. He writes thus:

The sign of the cross is made upon the forehead and the breast of the child (to be baptized). This is not done out of superstition, nor for the sake of its supposed supernatural power, but this is to bear witness that the baptized is received to grace and born again unto eternal life through the service of the crucified Christ alone. By this we are also reminded that the child is being received into the number of those who believe in the crucified Christ, that the old Adam in him must be crucified daily through Baptism, Rom. 6.6, and that he will be subject to the cross in this life. According to Genesis 48.14, the patriarch Jacob similarly formed a cross when he laid his hands upon both of his grandsons, Ephraim and Menasseh, reminding them of the cross of Christ. Here we also include that some elders did this on the foreheads of the servants of God in Ez. 9.4 and Rev. 7.3. Christ the crucified was once

foolishness to the Gentiles 1 Cor. 1.23. That is why they mocked Christians, calling them cross worshipers (*crucicolas*), as Tertullian witnesses. Christians designated themselves in that way to show that they were not ashamed of the cross of Christ, placing the same in the middle of their forehead. Cyril of Jerusalem writes (*Catech.* 13): “Do not be ashamed of his cross. If you want to dispute with unbelievers, then first make the sign of the cross with your hand... It is the sign of faith... Do not deny the Crucified, or the whole host of the witnesses of his crucifixion and his suffering will rise up against you, even the stones which are still visible, which were split at the death of Jesus.” Augustine writes (*Serm. 8 de verb. Dom.*) “The wise people of the world mock us because of the cross of Christ and say: What are you thinking, honoring a crucified God? The cross is signed upon the forehead, which is man’s disgrace, etc.” Therefore when catechumens (who had registered to be baptized) give themselves over to the crucified Christ, their forehead and breast is signed with the cross, as a sign of faith and confession of Christ. The sign of the cross comes from the baptism of catechumens, as do most other ceremonies, and is carried over to the baptism of infants. (*Loc. theol. Bapt.* § 261.)

“Can,” writes Gerhard in another passage,

forming the sign of the cross over the bread and the cup (in the holy Lord’s Supper) be disapproved? Answer: This is a free ceremony if it is used as a sign of the blessing and consecration, but it is to be ascribed absolutely no spiritual power, [yet]...by it, the remembrance of the cross of Christ is renewed – that is, the suffering of Christ on the cross, which is the fount of all blessing – just as the laying on of hands in the Absolution and [in] ecclesial ordination is used as an external sign. Even Chrysostom (*Horn. 55. in Matth.*) and Augustine (*Tract 118 in Joh.*) mention that the sign of the cross was used back then at the celebration of the holy Lord’s Supper.” (*Loc. th. S. Coena.* § 156)

Hopefully this will be sufficient to convince any objective person that nothing is less papistic than making the sign of the cross...

A second practice of the Old Lutheran Church which must lead to Rome, according to Mr. Weyl’s judgment, is “the mounting of a crucifix in the Church.” To this charge we must first remind you that, by all means, the Lutheran Church has, from the beginning, also distinguished herself from the Reformed Churches by doing this – as she has permitted images, altars, crucifixes, etc., in her houses of worship – while ever since the days of Carlstadt’s smashing statues, the Reformed Churches have, for the most part, rejected them...

...the Lutheran Church gives so little attention to images that they [i.e. Lutherans] don’t think such external things are worth disputing over; she merely asserts she has the freedom to use them, and therefore she does not disdain them when they may also serve as a God-pleasing reminder, or as an appropriate, external adornment for public worship. ... Now since, on the part of the Reformed, they often want to accuse Lutherans of sinning since they have *allowed* images, altars and crucifixes and the like in their Churches, as they charge this as being papistic, yes, idolatrous – as this, for example, is done in the Heidelberg Catechism – then using or not using these images has taken on a significance beyond what it is in and of itself. That is, since now they have made images a matter of conscience for Lutheran Christians, then between Lutherans and the Reformed it is no longer a matter involving poor, innocuous images, but rather it impacts the high article of Christian freedom, the legitimate understanding of the divine law, the proper distinction between the Old and the New Covenants, and therefore, whether a Christian ought to allow something God has not forbidden to be called sinful. ... Whoever considers this rightly will not wonder when faithful servants of the Lutheran Church still advocate their congregation’s adorning their Churches with images, with a crucifix, an altar and the like. They do this primarily so that, even in this way, God’s Word is preached and the places where the congregation of the faithful gather invite their devotion, even externally. But they also do this – and, indeed chiefly do this – so that a public witness be constantly laid down for the freedom of the Christian in all matters not forbidden by God.

So now this brings up another question: Is the use of images, crucifixes, altars, etc. really a matter that is part of Christian freedom? The Reformed deny this and with this they have always appealed to Ex. 20.4-5 where, in the midst of the enumeration of the Ten Commandments, it says: “You shall not make any image or any likeness, neither of that which is above in heaven nor that which is under the earth, nor that which is in the water under the earth.” In order to emphasize these words the Reformed have even declared that this is a separate, that is, the Second Commandment (so the Reformed number four Commandments on the first table and six Commandments on the second; they combine the Ninth and Tenth Commandments, on coveting, or lusting, into one Commandment). So the Reformed say: Isn’t it clearly forbidden here to make images? We answer: Yes! But what kind of image is forbidden is also stated in this addition: “Do not worship and serve them.” That these words must be applied to the word “make” and must limit the same, we see from the 23rd verse of this Chapter where the LORD declares: “Therefore you shall not make anything next to me, you shall not make gods of silver or gold.” These Words clearly and plainly show, first, that vs. 4 and 5 are not a separate, Second Commandment, but rather an explanation of the First Commandment; and, secondly, that God only forbids making images for worship, as images of idols, in vs. 4 and 5. This is stated so naturally and obviously that it seems inconceivable that anyone on the side of the Reformed could have raised a doubt against it.

Yet the Reformed might object: Those words: “Do not worship them, or serve them,” stand on their own. It doesn’t say “You shall not make them so that you worship them.” But even this objection dissipates into nothing when we compare this to Lev. 26.1. There the LORD says: “You shall not make any idols, nor an image, nor any pillars, nor any memorial stones in your land, which you worship. For I am the LORD, your God.” Here we have God’s own – thus an irrefutable – sure explanation of this addition to the First Commandment (Ex. 20.4,5). But his divine explanation tells us that making images and having them is only forbidden when it is done “that they be worshiped.” Now this also follows from Lev. 26.1, that erecting pillars and setting memorial stones is forbidden, from which it is clearly seen that merely making these things could not be forbidden, but rather making them to worship, for who could deny that they had been allowed to raise pillars and to set memorial stones? This is even more clearly seen in the following passage, Deut. 4.15-19. In this passage God even places next to the prohibition of making images “lifting your eyes to heaven to the sun, moon, stars and the whole host of heaven.” Now wouldn’t it be ridiculous to assert that according to that [prohibition] it is sinful to look up into the heavens and the stars? Certainly [this would be ridiculous]. Everyone sees that here [the] only looking [that] could be forbidden [is that looking] which is accompanied by a veneration of these creatures, as it also says at the conclusion of this passage: “and fall down and worship them and serve them.” But now if the only kind of idolatrous gazing into the heavens and its stars that is forbidden is idolatrous [gazing], then this also applies only to the idolatrous making of images on earth. So from this it’s clear that in the holy Ten Commandments, merely making and using images is not being forbidden. From other passages of Scripture and from the nature of this matter this is clear and self evident. ...

So is it really indisputably beyond doubt that God’s Word allows one to make, possess and use images? First we must point out that we Christians, who live in the New Covenant, are no longer bound to the civil and ceremonial laws of the Jewish people with their shadows and types (Col. 2.16-17), but rather only to their moral ethics. But this ethic is nothing other than the natural law that has been written by God in the heart, of the eternal, immutable norm of his will. Therefore we find [that] if God himself has done something or commanded it, it can’t be anything forbidden by moral ethics. But...God himself has had images made, sometimes by commanding it and sometimes by affirming them being made.

According to Ex. 25.40 God himself had made and shown Moses an image of a model of the tent of meeting. Further, according to Num. 21.8, God himself had commanded that an image of a snake be made and, according to Ex 35.30f, God filled Bezeel and Ahaliab with his spirit for

the very reason to equip them with gifts for all sorts of artfully working with gold, silver and bronze, and the like. According to Ex. 25.18 God had arranged for them to make figures of cherubim and to even place them in the Holy of Holies. Here we also include the images that were found in the temple of Solomon, of cherubim, lions, cattle, pillars, flowery adornments, pomegranates and the like in 1 Kings 6.7. Now none of this, even if it were not specifically ordered by God, is offensive to God as he bears witness. For at its dedication he wondrously filled this temple that was adorned with all sorts of images with his glory, 1 Kings 8.11. So who could now declare that it is forbidden to do what God himself has done and commanded to be done, or has affirmed? It cannot possibly be against the moral precepts buried in the heart of every human being, so obviously, without doubt, it must also be allowed for a Christian of the New Covenant. ...

So it is also only fair that our Mssrs. Reformed along with their lackies, Mr. Weyl in Baltimore and all the other non-Lutherans, calm down a bit when they hear that we Lutherans have images, crucifixes, altars, etc., not in order to offer sacrifices and the like, but rather merely as adornments and as pious reminders. (C. F. W. Walther, "Does Old Lutheranism Lead to Rome?," pp. 280-87. Translation, formatting, and punctuation slightly revised. Emphasis added.)

We have described the zeal with which the young theologians are indoctrinated in the pure old-Lutheran faith at this university [Concordia Seminary in Saint Louis]. The same situation obtains in the congregations throughout the entire church [the entire Missouri Synod]. The complete old-Lutheran ritual and altarbooks from the days of the Reformation are very faithfully followed. The lovely old Lutheran hymns, chanting from the altar, lighted candles at Holy Communion, intercessions for the sick, publishing of the banns [before a wedding], vestments – in short, their whole worship life is marked by a deep love for the fidelity to the traditions of the fathers. In this regard, their worship life has much in common with our own [in the Norwegian Synod]. (Jacob Aall Ottesen and Nils O. Brandt, "Report of Pastors Ottesen and Brandt on Their Visit to St. Louis, Missouri, Columbus, Ohio, and Buffalo, New York" [August 1857]; in Carl S. Meyer, *Pioneers Find Friends* [Decorah, Iowa: Luther College Press, 1963], p. 71)

In the spring of 1873 [Ulrik Vilhelm] Koren was engaged in preparing a new hymnal and a revised order of service for the Norwegian Synod. Walther answered his appeal for help, writing a brief letter extolling the historic musical setting for the liturgy, and sending selections from the Roman Gradual for Koren's consideration. Walther was relatively unconcerned about the threat of Rome as compared with the weaknesses of Protestantism. Above all he feared that Lutheranism itself might lose its distinctiveness, its confessional character, and its mission. Liturgically therefore he was not iconoclastic with respect to Rome, and in this respect also he reinforced the moderately high-church views of the [Norwegian] Synod pastors. (Gerhard Lee Belgum, *The Old Norwegian Synod in America* [1957], p. 372)

The teachers of the [school in the Frankenmuth] congregation were also helpful in maintaining the fine and correct liturgical character of the public services, especially Cantor Riedel, who came from Bavaria, where the churches have always been known as good liturgical churches. And [Wilhelm] Loehe (the Loehe of the earlier years) and his co-laborers, especially Friedrich Hommel, left their liturgical imprint on the Franconian colonies [in Michigan]. I think I can say without exaggeration that there are not many other churches in our Synod that could be compared with Frankenmuth in this respect. I remember that [Missouri Synod] President [Heinrich Christian] Schwan and others who, when I was pastor there, came to Frankenmuth from Saginaw on synodical Sunday, were deeply impressed by the service, especially the powerful singing of the Lutheran chorales. Everybody joined in singing, men and women, old and young, and the congregation was really a "singende Kirche." Also the finer parts of the Lutheran liturgy were used from the very beginning of the congregation. In the Communion service – and because it was a large congregation and on account of private confession and absolution on Saturday

afternoon the Lord's Supper was celebrated every Sunday – the Nunc Dimittis ending with the Gloria Patri was sung according to the old correct tune, the Sanctus was sung in the fine, stately setting of Lossius, which agrees so well with the words. ... The great Te Deum Laudamus of the Ancient Church, translated by Luther and harmonized by M. Vulpius, was regularly sung on the minor festivals of the church year, which were all observed in Frankenmuth on St. John's Day, the three St. Mary's days, and others. The first line was sung by the men, the second by the women, and everyone having an ear for music will concede that this agrees very beautifully with the peculiar tune for the two choirs. (Ludwig Ernest Fuerbringer, *80 Eventful Years* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1944], pp. 156-57)

...the congregation wished that also here for us [in Frankentrost], like in Frankenmuth, there would be a daily brief Matin and Vesper service. ... In general our public worship services and also our daily Matins and Vespers followed the liturgical method as given in the Loehe agenda. According to the constitution which Rev. Loehe sent along with us, all Sunday as well as all special festival services, on the first day thereof, holy communion shall be observed and the exclusive use of private confession shall be practised. During the six years that I was in Frankentrost it was very rare that there were no Communicants on Sunday or high festivals. (Johann Heinrich Philipp Graebner, *Die frankischen Colonien des Saginaw Thales, im Staate Michigan* [The Franconian Colonies of the Saginaw Valley, in the State of Michigan] [1890] [translated by Esther Meyer Stahlke])

...it appears to be our duty to aid in spreading a knowledge of the rich treasures of our Lutheran church among those in our country who are unacquainted with German. ... A good liturgy, the beautiful Lutheran service form part of those treasures. Church usages, except in the case when the confession of a divine truth is required, are indeed *adiaphora*. But they are nevertheless not without an importance of their own. Congregations that adopt the church usages of the sects that surround them, will be apt to conform to their doctrines also, more easily and quickly than those that retain their Lutheran ceremonies. We should in Lutheran services, also when held in the English language, as much as possible use the old Lutheran forms, though they be said to be antiquated and not suiting this country. We will mention here the words of a pious Lutheran duchess, Elisabeth Magdalena of Brunswick-Luneburg. Her court-chaplain [Hieronymus] Prunner relates as follows: "Although her ladyship well knew that the ceremonies and purposes of this chapter (at which Prunner officiated) must have the appearance and repute of popery with some people, she still remembered the instructions which that dear and venerable man, Luther, had once given to her father [Joachim II, Elector of Brandenburg] concerning such ceremonies. I remember in particular that her ladyship several times told me that she did not desire at these present times to begin discontinuing any of those church usages, since she hoped that so long as such ceremonies continued, *Calvinistic temerity would be held back from the public office of the church.*" (August L. Graebner, book review of *Church Liturgy for Evangelical Lutheran Congregations of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession*, *The St. Louis Theological Monthly*, Vol. 1, No. 4 [August 1881], pp. 77-78. Emphasis added by Graebner.)

In your letter you ask for my opinion on whether it is advisable to introduce the singing of Methodist songs in a Lutheran Sunday School. May what follows serve as a helpful reply to your questions: No, this is not advisable, rather very incorrect and pernicious.

1. Our Church is so rich in hymns that you could justifiably state that if one were to introduce Methodist hymns in a Lutheran school this would be like carrying coals to Newcastle. The singing of such hymns would make the rich Lutheran Church into a beggar that is forced to beg from a miserable sect. Thirty or forty years ago, a Lutheran preacher might well have been forgiven this. For at that time, the Lutheran Church in our country was as poor as a beggar when it comes to song books for Lutheran children. A preacher scarcely knew where he might obtain such little hymn books. Now, however, since our Church itself has everything it needs, it is unpardonable

when a preacher of our Church causes little ones to suffer the shame of eating foreign bread.

2. A preacher of our Church also has the holy duty to give souls entrusted to his care pure spiritual food, indeed, the very best that he can possibly obtain. In Methodist songs there is much that is false and contains spiritual poison for the soul. Therefore, it is soul-murder to set before children such poisonous food. If the preacher claims, that he allows only “correct” hymns to be sung, this does not excuse him. For, first of all, the true Lutheran spirit is found in none of them; second, our hymns are more powerful, more substantive, and more prosaic; third, those hymns which deal with the Holy Sacraments are completely in error; fourth, when these little sectarian hymnbooks come into the hands of our children, they openly read and sing false hymns.

3. A preacher who introduces Methodist hymns, let alone Methodist hymnals, raises the suspicion that he is no true Lutheran at heart, and that he believes one religion is as good as the other, and that he is thus a unionistic man, a mingler of religions and churches.

4. Through the introduction of Methodist hymn singing, he also makes those children entrusted to his care of unionistic sentiment, and he himself leads them to leave the Lutheran Church and join the Methodists.

5. By the purchase of Methodist hymnbooks, he subsidizes the false church and strengthens the Methodist fanatics in their horrible errors. For the Methodists will think, and quite correctly so, that if the Lutheran preachers did not regard our religion as good as, or indeed, even better than their own, they would not introduce Methodist hymnbooks in their Sunday Schools, but rather would use Lutheran hymnbooks.

6. By introducing Methodist hymn books, the entire Lutheran congregation is given great offense, and the members of the same are led to think that Methodists, the Albright people, and all such people have a better faith than we do. This may be a sufficient answer regarding this dismal matter. May God keep you in the true and genuine Lutheran faith, and help you not to be misled from the same, either to the right or to the left. (C. F. W. Walther, “Methodist Hymns in a Lutheran Sunday School” [1883], in Matthew C. Harrison, *At Home in the House of My Fathers* [Lutheran Legacy, 2010], pp. 331-32)

The songs of childhood should be essentially of the same character as the songs of maturity. The child should therefore learn the easiest and best of the songs he is to sing as a communicant member of the Christian Congregation. Old age delights in the songs learned in childhood. The religious songs learned in childhood should therefore be worthwhile. We want childlike songs, but not childish songs. The early songs should be the choicest congregation songs adaptable to his age and capacities. In the same manner as he is taught the rudiments of Christian theology through Luther’s *Smaller Catechism* and the chief Bible stories through the *Bible History*, should he also be taught the words and tunes of our most priceless church songs and chorals. It can be done just as easily as teaching him a number of equally difficult and perhaps new songs and tunes which will never be sung in his congregation. It should be done, for a child should be trained up in the way he should go (Prov. 22:6).

The songs of Lutheran children and youth should be essentially from Lutheran sources. The Lutheran Church is especially rich in songs and hymns of sound doctrine, high poetical value and fitting musical setting. They express the teachings and spirit of the Lutheran Church and help one to feel at home in this Church. Of course, there are songs of high merit and sound Biblical doctrine written by Christians in other denominations also, and some of these could and should find a place in a Lutheran song treasury. But the bulk of the songs in a Lutheran song book should be drawn from Lutheran sources. We should teach our children to remain in the Lutheran Church instead of to sing themselves into some Reformed sect. ...

Concerning choral tunes we shall therefore let F. L. Humphreys, S.T.D., Mus.D., an American authority on church music (who is not a Lutheran), say a few words. In his *Evolution of Church Music* he speaks as follows of the lighter songs which unfortunately are at present

demanded also by many Lutheran church people: “The character of piety they encourage is somewhat superficial, not to say hysterical; they are full of extravagant and often foolish statements; but it cannot be denied that they stir the hearts of the common throng. The refrains which are generally attached to them are readily caught by the ear; and that wave of emotional sympathy, easily started in large audiences, soon sweeps over the meeting, and choir and congregation are at once drawn into close accord. The musical structure of these hymns is very slight; the harmony has hardly any variety, seldom changing more than once in a bar, and they employ the march rhythms so frequently that they produce an effect of monotony. The slight structure and trivial harmony of these tunes only vitiate the public taste and strengthen the impression abroad that in America only the cheapest forms of art can flourish.”

Rev. Humphreys continues: “It is a pity that the compilers of almost all hymn books have failed to borrow as many of the German chorals as they should. These *Chorale* are so elevated, and at the same time so simple and devotional, that they are beyond question the most perfect models of hymn tunes. It is humiliating to compare our collections with those used in the German (Lutheran) Churches. In one for the use in their Sunday schools, the title page bears the inscription: ‘For our children only the best is good enough.’ If our compilers would give us a few more of these *Chorale* instead of the feeble and sensuous melodies which are too numerous in our collections, our psalmody would be greatly improved; and, more important still, the public taste would be better trained. In the Lutheran Church (of Germany) the introduction of those trifling tunes, even for Sunday school use, would not be permitted. There is a certain dignity in the German music, and, indeed, in their entire conception of the church service. Stateliness, majesty, solidity, grandeur, dignity, beauty, purity of style, fulness of harmony, fine modulation and rhythm – all these are characteristics of good music; they are essential to the formation of model tunes.”

In addition to this witness by a non-Lutheran we might say that the chorals are sung by children in all of the Lutheran lands and are not considered difficult. It is only here in America that their stately swing and reverential spirit are considered heavy and dull. ... The popular demand is for novelty. To lower the standard of Lutheran church music to suit the popular demand would be a disastrous policy.

...the best Lutheran songs are the best Christian songs in the world. As Dr. Philip Schaff, the great Presbyterian theologian, says in the Preface to his German song book of 1874: “To the Lutheran Church unquestionably belongs the first place in the history of Church song.” And as Dr. Adolph Spaeth, the great Lutheran theologian, says in his article on Hymnody in Jacobs’s *Lutheran Cyclopaedia*: “The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century is the mother of true evangelical church song. The message of God’s free grace puts a new song into the heart and mouth of the justified believer. The general priesthood of believers demanded the active participation of laymen in the service of the sanctuary, and particularly in the service of song, which Gregory the Great had assigned to the choir and the clergy. Luther gave to the Germans not only their Bible and Catechism, but also their hymn book. He called for poets and singers, able to produce hymns which might be worthy to be used in the daily service of the Church of God. It was primarily in the interest of the congregation and its service that he wanted the hymns.”

Following upon Luther, during the Sixteenth Century, a host of hymn writers arose, such as Hermann, Decius, Walther, Helmbold, Ringwaldt, Nicolai and others, whose hymns are plain and direct, fresh and vigorous, expressing the deep personal conviction and the objective testimony of the whole Congregation. They were sung by children as well as adults.

Also during the Seventeenth Century the subjective personal element blends most beautifully with the pronounced objectivity of the earlier hymnody. Among the notable hymn writers may be mentioned Gerhardt, Clausnitzer, Heerman, Held, Neander, Rinkart and Schirmer.

During the first half of the Eighteenth Century, in the interest of personal piety and sanctification, the hymns of the Pietists emphasize the personal element so strongly that many of their songs are not adapted to congregational use, not to say school use. Among the best hymn

writers of this period are Freylinghausen, Garve, Mentzer, Rambach and Zinzendorf. During the second half of this century the Rationalists played sad havoc with the hymn books of the Church. Churches became lecture rooms where longwinded treatises on morals and the utility of things were pronounced to a sleeping audience. The liturgy was shortened and otherwise mutilated. The good old church hymns were removed or changed, and commonplace rhymes praising virtue and natural religion were substituted.

During the first half of the Nineteenth Century a revival of positive Christianity swept over the Church, bringing with it a number of gifted hymn writers. "But by far the most precious result of the revival of the old faith was the renewed appreciation of the old jewels of our Lutheran hymnody, and the return to those classical hymns in their original beauty and force" (Spaeth).

A number of able critics began analyzing the hymn book chaos (for example R. Stier in his *Die Gesangbuchsnoth* ["Hymn Book Misery"], 1838). The German Church governments in 1852 appointed a commission to select 150 standard hymns, up to the middle of the Eighteenth Century, which were to form the common nucleus for the different territorial hymn books. The result of their work was published in 1854, under the title *Deutsches Evang. Kirchen-Gesangbuch, in 150 Kernliedern*. Thus the way was opened for a general return to the more conservative principles which characterize all the latest hymn books of our Lutheran Church in Germany, though in different degrees.

In our day, here in America, too, we are having a "hymn book misery" in that we are throwing overboard our choicest hymns and tunes from the past and manufacturing a multitude of more commonplace ones. We are being forced to listen to the demand from the children attending our American public schools and living in a Reformed atmosphere to provide our Lutheran books with American tunes and Reformed music. All of the English Lutheran church books, including our own *Lutheran Hymnary*, are over 50 per cent from Reformed sources. Most unwarranted and uncritical judgements against the Lutheran portion of our English Lutheran song books are freely offered not only by children, but also by parents, pastors, teachers, publishers and sellers. The situation here is really worse than it was in Germany in 1852, when a song book commission, as stated above, was appointed to compile a book of 150 standards hymns which should form the nucleus of the future German hymn books. We are happy to say that our *Lutheran Hymnary* contains nearly 250 of such precious hymns; also that the present book, *Lutheran Hymnary, Junior*, contains 114 of the choicest of the hymns to be found in Landstad's *Salmebog*, and 95 of the easiest chorals from Lindeman's *Koralbog*. The committee that has prepared *Lutheran Hymnary, Junior* has recognized the "hymn book misery" of our times and in the light of history has sought to choose songs and tunes for this book chiefly from Lutheran sources. It is their hope that the book may in some measure serve as a check against the temptations from Reformed quarters that plague our people and lead them away from their Lutheran song treasures and into Reformed tastes. (Introduction, *Lutheran Hymnary, Junior* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1916])

We must take note also of a most deplorable tendency of our times, namely, that of preferring the shallow modern "Gospel anthem" to the classical hymns of our Church. The reference is both to the text and to the tunes in use in many churches. On all sides the criticism is heard that the old Lutheran hymns are "too heavy, too doctrinal; that our age does not understand them." Strange that the Lutherans of four centuries and of countless languages could understand and appreciate them, even as late as a generation ago! Is the present generation less intelligent or merely more frivolous? (Paul E. Kretzmann, *Magazin für evangelisch-lutherische Homiletik und Pastoraltheologie*, Vol. 53, No. 6 [June 1929], pp. 216-17)

The reason why so much that is un-Lutheran in spirit and expression is sung in our churches is because there are some in our circles who no longer appreciate the beauty of the Lord as it is expressed so beautifully and so nobly in the Lutheran hymn. It is stylish to join in with the crowd and crowds like what is rather trivial. It is hard to be different and somewhat separate; unionism

is in the air and distinct Lutheranism is unpopular; this spirit is reflected in the music which some of our own circles prefer. Some of the sectarian bodies have been forced to realize that they have lost out through their shallow music; but there are people in our circles who insist on learning through their own experiences and not through the experience of others. This is certainly a foolhardy attitude, but what makes the situation all the more serious is the fact that it affects not only an individual here and there, but the Church at large. (Walter E. Buszin, "Music in the Church, School and Home" [convention essay], in *Report of the Fourteenth Annual Convention of the Norwegian Synod* [1932], p. 40)

...in almost every community there are distractions and vexations from those who claim to have a superior grade of piety. Because of the skepticism that permeates our atmosphere; because faith in Christ, in His Word, His church, and His means of grace, has been so utterly weakened, if not lost; because faith in man, in self, in one's own ability to make himself acceptable to God, has grown to such colossal proportions, therefore extremes meet and fanaticism joins hands with rationalism. Immersionists, revivalists, sanctificationists, Adventists, and healers of every hue, name, and grade, are abroad in the land. They invade the school-house, the barn, and the woods. They spread their tents on the common and on the vacant lot in village, town, and city. Each one offers a new way of salvation. All cry: "Lo, here is Christ," or, "Lo, there." They all claim that the church which teaches the old doctrines and walks in the old ways is a failure. They unsettle the minds of the uninformed and the unreflecting. They bring heartache and sorrow to the earnest pastor.

All this skepticism, uncertainty, and experimenting has unfortunately unsettled only too many pastors in the churches around us. These pastors themselves have lost faith, more or less, in the divinely ordained means of grace. They are casting about for new means and methods by which to reach and hold men. They are experimenting with all sorts of novelties and attractions. Their churches and services are becoming more and more places of entertainment. They try to outbid and outdo each other in sensations calculated to draw. And so the church, like Samson of old, is shorn of her locks, and is degraded to make sport for the Philistines of the world. No true Lutheran pastor can stoop to such prostitution of his office and of his church. But he suffers from the misdeeds of others. His people are influenced by their surroundings. Some are drawn away from him, others make trouble in his own church. And so he is caused to grieve for the hurt of Joseph, and sighs, "for the hurt of my people am I hurt" (Jer. viii. 21). (George Henry Gerberding, *The Lutheran Pastor*, Seventh Edition [Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1915], pp. 123-24)

The first care, then, of all who work in the field of English Mission, pastors and laymen alike, ought ever to be that they steadfastly adhere to the biblical doctrine in all its parts. Lutheran hymns, Lutheran liturgies, Lutheran prayers, above all Lutheran sermons ought to be heard wherever our missionary work is carried on. True Lutheranism need not fear any criticism. It has stood the test of centuries, and no modern weapon of offence will subvert it. It is an impregnable fortress. Be not afraid, then, to show its beauties to all who come to hear. They expect to be treated to something new in our churches, and they ought not to be disappointed. To follow the example set by sectarian clergymen, to sermonize on anything else rather than upon questions of doctrine, or to fill the hearers' ears with weak generalizations and pasture them on fine, poetic language alone, would be worse than folly. To make a good impression, to effect some real, living good, solid meat must be offered, which alone can satisfy the soul's desires. Emphasize doctrine, if you would accomplish your aim. Else why should we expend money and labor, only to do what others may do as well? It is not our intention to insist upon *polemical* preaching. Polemics have their season, the determination of which must be committed to the wise discretion of the preacher, who must also make quite sure that his sermons offer no just reason for being offended [attacked]. But *doctrinal* preaching is ever in season; it alone will do the work we wish to accomplish.

Having laid a good foundation, we may hope to build up congregations really Lutheran. Having sown good, living seed, we may look forward to a rich harvest. We shall reap the first-

fruits; they will ripen before our eyes. Our English congregations will give proof of spiritual life. In the great battle against worldliness we shall find them fighting shoulder to shoulder with their elder German sisters. From them, streams of living waters will flow, and their influence will be widespread. For is not this promised as a certain effect of THE WORD? (John Schaller, "Danger Ahead!", *Lutheran Witness*, Vol. 10, No. 8 [Sept. 21, 1891], p. 58. Emphases in original.)

To the Lutheran the sermon, as the preached Word, is a means of grace. Through it the Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth. It is a constant offer of pardon; a giving of life, as well as a nourishing and strengthening of life. In the Reformed churches the sermon is apt to be more hortatory and ethical. It partakes more of the sacrificial than of the sacramental character. The individuality of the preacher, the subjective choice of a text, the using of it merely for a motto, the discussion of secular subjects, the unrestrained platform style, lack of reverence, lack of dignity, and many other faults are common, and are not regarded as unbecoming the messenger of God in His temple. Where there is a properly trained Lutheran consciousness such things repel, shock, and are not tolerated. (George Henry Gerberding, *The Lutheran Pastor*, pp. 277-78)

The scope of this book [*Screen and Projector in Christian Education*] is more exactly shown by its subtitle: How to Use Motion Pictures and Projected Still Pictures in Worship, Study, and Recreation. The author rightly says: "With the addition of motion-pictures, projected still pictures, prints, photographs, models, maps, school journeys and reproduced sound, the educator has set out to stimulate a wealth of experiences to be used in the classroom to facilitate the understanding of the verbal symbols in books" (p. 14). We should like to emphasize the words "in the classroom" and add "in the church hall," because visual education has proved an invaluable aid in the work of our parish-school, Sunday-schools, young people's societies, and the various auxiliary organizations of the congregation. Every pastor who desires to have accurate information concerning the use of visual education helps will be glad to use the information contained in this book. We cannot endorse the larger part of Chapter V, on "The Use of Visual Aids in Worship," because the doctrinal and expository sermons of the Lutheran Church will rarely require, in most cases not even permit, the use of pictures. There are other dangers connected with the indiscriminate use of visual aids, especially if the emotional element is stressed. (Paul E. Kretzmann, book review of *Screen and Projector in Christian Education* by Paul H. Janes, *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. 4, No. 1 [January 1933], p. 79)

Divine worship in the Christian Church is not an *adiaphoron*. The Lord expressly commands that His Word be heard, John 8, 47. He has only severe censure for those who forsake the Christian assemblies, Hebrews 10, 25. He expressly enjoins public prayer, 1 Timothy 2, 1. 2. 8. He graciously promises His divine presence at such assemblies, Matthew 18, 20. He records with approval the public services of the early Christians, Acts 2, 42-47.

But though He has prescribed the *general* content of public worship, though He is present in the sacramental acts of divine service, declaring and appropriating to the believers the means of grace, and though He graciously receives the sacrificial acts of the assembled congregation, in confession and prayer and offerings, He has not commanded a definite form or order of divine service. It is a matter of Christian liberty whether a congregation wishes one or many prayers, one or several hymns, one or two sermons or homilies, whether the chief assembly be held in the morning or in the evening, whether the service be held on Sunday or on a ferial day.

To argue from these facts, however, that it is a matter of complete indifference as to how the form of Christian worship is constituted would be bringing liberty dangerously near to license. The Lord says: "Let all things be done decently and in order," 1 Cor. 14, 40; and again: "Let all things be done for edification," v. 26. It cannot really be a matter of indifference to a Christian congregation when the order of service used in her midst shows so much similarity to a heterodox

order as to confuse visitors. One may hardly argue that such *adiaphora* do not matter one way or the other, when it has happened that a weak brother has been offended. And a Lutheran congregation cannot justly divorce herself, not only not from the doctrinal, but also not from the historical side of its Church. It is a matter of expediency, as well as of charity and edification, that every Lutheran pastor and every Lutheran congregation have outward significant symbols of the inner union, of the one mind and the one spirit.

In addition to these facts, there is the further consideration that the outward acts of the Church, commonly known by the appellation “the liturgy,” have a very definite significance, which, in many cases, renders the acts of public service true acts of confession of faith. And the symbolism of many of the Lutheran sacred acts, if correctly performed, is such that the beauty of these treasures of our Church may be brought to the joyful attention of our congregations.

This is true especially of the morning worship in the Lutheran Church, commonly known as The Service or The Communion. For this is not, as some people have supposed, a haphazard combination or a fortuitous conglomeration of heterogeneous material, but an artistic unit with definite and logical parts, a “spirituo-psychological, well-ordered, and articulated whole,” as [Friedrich] Lochner says [*Der Hauptgottesdienst*, 41]. The order of service is a beautiful work of art, presenting a gradual climax of such wonderful dignity and impressiveness that the mere presence [of people] in such a service should result in the edification of the faithful. (Paul E. Kretzmann, *Christian Art in the Place and in the Form of Lutheran Worship* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921], pp. 395-96. Emphasis in original.)

...Lutheranism has its own perspective on the purpose and nature of Christian worship. An understanding of this perspective demonstrates why Lutheran worship looks and feels so different from worship services in other churches. At the center of Lutheran worship is a dialogue between God and man. The human creature confesses his unworthiness to enter before a holy God. Consequently, God shows his great mercy in giving forgiveness to the repentant sinner, and the believer then responds with words of thanksgiving and praise. This back-and-forth dialogue of God’s giving forgiveness and the congregation’s offering thanks continues throughout the entire service.

Most Christians are uncomfortable with the idea that people should, in any sense, go to church in order to receive something from God. This idea might seem rather selfish. Does this not make worship about us rather than God? Instead, shouldn’t we be offering all that we have to God? While this objection might sound pious, it is misguided. Between God and man, who is really in need? Does God need anything from us? Is he not sufficient in and of himself? Is there anything possibly worthwhile that we can give God which will truly benefit him? In reality, it is not God who is in need, but we are in need. We are in need of grace, mercy, and forgiveness, and these things are what God desires to give! While it is true that in the worship service, the congregation offers praise to God, at the center of worship is the grace which God gives to sinners.

In many churches, the service begins with an extensive time of worship music praising God as God. But what is one worshipping God *for*? In Scripture, the worship of God is never abstract but is in response to specific actions of deliverance. For example, God does not give the Ten Commandments to the people of Israel until he redeems them from their Egyptian captors. The obedience offered by the Jews is in response to God’s deliverance. In the same way, worship during a liturgical service is done in response to God’s previous works of deliverance. God proclaims absolution through the mouth of the pastor, and the congregation offers God praise in response. We then confess our need of God’s mercy in the *Kyrie* and respond in praise again with the *Gloria*. We receive God’s grace in Holy Communion and then again offer praise and thanksgiving in light of his gifts.

...emotion does not drive the worship of the Lutheran church. Emotion is not a bad thing; the good news of Jesus Christ is certainly something to get emotional about! The problem is not

in emotion itself, or in being moved by the love of God as expressed throughout the service; the problem is when emotion is the *driving force* of worship. One's spiritual state is not determined by emotion, and feelings should not guide the service. In a fallen world, emotions often waver, and something more steady and permanent must ground the church.

... Ethics, like emotion, is a good and important part of God's creation. The Bible does contain ethical commands, and it is the duty of the pastor to preach on them. Moral commandments are not, however, the *center* of worship. Ethics and Christian morality are always to be taught in view of the gospel, which is always the central aspect of Christian worship. Ethical living is a response to the grace that God shows sinners in Christ.

Seeker-driven worship is directly opposed to Lutheran theology and practice. The first and most obvious reason this is the case is that in a Lutheran view, there are no seekers. Man does not search for God, but God searches for man. Faith is not a product of the human will, but it is God's free gift of grace. Thus, the premise of seeker-driven worship is unbiblical. Seeker-driven churches also tend to place elements in worship for the purpose of entertainment. In the front of the church is a stage and a variety of performers, including the pastor and musicians. The congregation is then more like an audience than an actual congregation. The back-and-forth dialogue between God and man is completely absent in this view.

...Roman Catholic and Lutheran worship...share a common liturgical heritage, and a Roman Catholic Mass looks similar to a Lutheran Divine Service. However, there are some important theological differences. While Lutherans have sometimes referred to their worship service as a Mass, Lutheranism has always rejected the concept of the *sacrifice* of the Mass. Christ's work of salvation happened once for all. It does not need to be repeated, or re-presented, on the altar of the church. Moreover, the Lord's Supper is God's gift to us, not our offering to God. The Roman Church changes the proper direction of worship.

... The Reformed emphasize the glory of God in worship, whereas Lutherans focus on God's grace given in Word and Sacrament. This is not to say that Lutherans are not concerned with God's glory, or that Reformed Christians do not talk about God's grace. The emphasis of each church, however, does differ, and this fact is apparent in the manner in which worship functions. Lutherans do not hold to a strict view of how one must worship, but they allow for some variation in practice, the use of images, and other things which are not condemned in Scripture. This is not to say that Lutheran worship is simply a free-for-all, or that biblical commands regarding worship are irrelevant to the worship life of the church. Instead, Scripture itself presents a theology of worship which is best practiced in a liturgical service. (Jordan Cooper, *Liturgical Worship: A Lutheran Introduction* [Waukegan, Illinois: Just & Sinner Publishing House, 2018], pp. 18-21. Emphases in original.)

The Lutheran Church is a liturgical Church. Everywhere in her sanctuaries, even among heathen people, something in the form of a historical liturgy is to be found. Nevertheless she is in no danger of formalism, for she exercises no restraint in this respect upon pastors and congregations. For good reasons she simply chooses to be liturgical in her worship, and her people with all of their freedom universally follow the choice.

One of her reasons is that public worship must be preserved from individualism. The Church is a social organism, a divine and the only enduring social organism. The man who "goes to church" only for his personal spiritual profit has mistaken the character of a church service. His conception of worship is an entirely selfish one. He has failed to distinguish between private devotions and public worship, both of which are necessary. The Christian as he "goes to church" should as far as possible cease to be an individual, should realize himself as an integral part of a congregation, of a fellowship of men, of the communion of saints. The worship is a social function. He prays with others for the whole and for many great interests, not primarily for his individual needs. The Lord's Prayer, with its "we" and "us" and "our," is the ideal prayer for public worship. The worshiper may rightly go beyond even the one congregation and recognize himself as in

unity with all congregations of Christians. The effort to worship publicly in this manner will soon open up an increasing joy for the Christian, as he realizes the new richness of his worship. It becomes manifest however that from this point of view a well-conceived liturgy is needed, and that no passing thought of a single minister should determine how the many shall worship.

A second reason for liturgical worship grows out of the first one. The fellowship of ideal worship is greater than the whole company of Christians now upon earth. We may know ourselves as one in our praise of the Lord with the saints of all ages. There is unity with those who now worship Him in heaven. This is the powerful thought in the *Te Deum*: "Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty of Thy Glory. The glorious company of the Apostles praise Thee. The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise Thee. The noble army of Martyrs praise Thee. The holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee." It is the same thought of the united worship of heaven and earth which is found in all doxologies: "Praise Him all creatures here below; praise Him above, ye heavenly host." So also the *Preface* in the Communion Office repeats it: "Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the Company of Heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name; evermore praising Thee, and saying: "Holy, Holy, Holy, etc." It is an added joy therefore to the true worshiper if he may realize that he is using forms which the saints of the ages have employed. Such is the case with the historic Liturgy. It has not been prepared by some committee, however wise and pious. It has grown with the centuries. The piety of all times has tested it, added what was worthy, cleansed it from what was unworthy. The fragrant incense of a ceaseless devotion of multitudes to the Saviour comes to us with the Liturgy.

The Lutheran Church believes furthermore that she is justified in recommending a liturgy to its people because she has a definite faith to express. It is a distinctive faith, and is great enough to mould all of life. The places of worship are also places for the proclamation of that faith. Everything connected with the sanctuary and with the mode of worship should be shaped so as to express most clearly, most beautifully, and most effectively what the Church confesses to be the truth. It is evident therefore that greatest care is necessary so that the building and that which takes place within it shall be in harmony with the faith of the Church. (Frederick H. Knubel, Introduction to *A Manual on Worship*, Revised Edition, by Paul Zeller Strodach [Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1946], pp. ix-x)

"The liturgy, like the Bible, has a language of its own." Failure to understand the nature of liturgical language has resulted in a number of translations (or, actually, paraphrases) of ancient liturgical texts that are flawed from both a theological and literary perspective. Some liturgical language cannot escape being archaic, since the liturgy is itself rooted in God's revelation of himself within a particular history. ... The advice of Wilhelm Löhe is indeed sound:

Yet we must beware of misusing our liturgical freedom to produce new liturgies. One should rather use the old forms and learn to understand and have a feeling for them before one feels oneself competent to create something new and better. He who has not tested the old cannot create something new. It is a shame when everybody presumes to form his own opinions about hymns and the liturgy without having thoroughly looked into the matter. Let a man first learn in silence and not act as if it were a matter of course that he understands everything! Once a man has first learned from the old he can profitably use the developments of recent times (in language and methods of speech) for the benefit of the liturgy.

(John T. Pless, *The Setting of the Liturgy and the Decorum of Its Leaders, The Leaders of Worship*, in *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice*, edited by Fred L. Precht [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993], p. 232. The quotations are from Ernest Koenker, *Worship in Word and Sacrament* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959], p. 85; and from Wilhelm Löhe, *Three Books About the Church*, translated and edited by James Schaaf [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969], p. 178)

... The pastor preaches in the pulpit, prays, speaks, and serves the Lord's Supper from the altar, and performs baptisms at the font. Because of what is done from or at these liturgical centers, they also take on symbolic significance. ...

Since no one comes to the Father except through the Son (John 14:6) and since the Supper is that of the crucified and risen Christ, all would agree that it is fitting to invest Christian altar areas with clearly visible symbols of Christ. A cross or crucifix is certainly a suitable appointment for an altar. Stained-glass windows do not have to be absent from a chancel area either... A reredos, dossal, or gradine on wall altars have provided natural space for statuary, crosses, crucifixes, and paintings... Freestanding altars do not accommodate the same kinds of appointments that may be added tastefully to wall altars, but the freestanding altar and the surrounding area can be appropriately highlighted by appointments and symbols that bear testimony to the centrality of Christ in Lutheran worship. Both kinds of altars and the pulpit lend themselves well to the use of paraments, for example, which with their liturgical colors and art work seek to relate the proclamation of the Christian Gospel to the eye and so mark the regular rhythm of the church's year. Such visual communicators make a positive contribution to the message of the altar and the pulpit. Candlesticks, candelabra, and a paschal candle are dignified and symbolically meaningful for a liturgical center. ...

The practice of placing flowers on or in the altar area of Lutheran churches has been common... Cut flowers and plants in churches are symbols of God's creation... With their freshness and beauty, flowers and plants suggest the life that God gives; they create a quiet but uplifting spirit of joy and confidence. ...

To maintain the integrity of the major symbols in a church building other things should not be placed in the vicinity of altars, pulpits, and fonts that draw attention away from them or diminish their symbolic impact. Flags and banners, for example, are adornments that should be located with care because they interfere with the symbolic functions of the liturgical furnishings. National flags, denominational flags, or the Christian flag do not belong in the vicinity of altar, pulpit, and font. The latter, as one writer has put it, "all point to Christ." National flags, on the other hand, "speak not of Christ, but of the nation." "The Christian loves his country, not only for its bounty, but also for the freedom it has given him to worship God." But to place a national flag "with the means of grace, Word, and Sacraments, is to invite confusion." ...the flag does symbolize something quite different from what liturgical furnishings symbolize. The flag, by its very nature, intends to draw attention to itself. If it is placed in the vicinity of the liturgical furnishings, it is bound to diminish the theological impact which they are intended to make.

...since the Christian flag is of rather recent origin, it lacks catholicity and is more of a rallying symbol than a communicator of what God has done for us in Christ. The main liturgical furnishings with their longstanding and well-ingrained universal traditions point more directly to the divinely ordained means of grace, are more powerful symbols than the Christian flag, and should thus not have attention diverted away from themselves.

Much of what has been said about national flags and the Christian flag applies to denominational flags as well. Denominational awareness is not unimportant, and worshipers deserve to know what kind of church they have entered. That information is best communicated outside the church building. When, however, it is communicated inside, this should not be done in the vicinity of the chancel, for if there is one place where the church should emphasize that there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:5 RSV), it is there where the liturgical symbols direct our attention to Christ, his Word, and his sacraments. ... Altar, font, pulpit, and lectern, if it is used, should be the focal point of a worship center. ... Fellowship halls, classrooms, or entrances that have been designed to include space for effective display are better places for flags. ...

Banners...serve a variety of purposes. Some...highlight local events. Others bear a biblical message appropriate for a particular time of year or for worship generally. Some rather quietly mark the rhythmic changes of the liturgical calendar and complement the message of the liturgical

paraments. In any case, however, banners are not to be the focal center in Christian worship. This means that they are to be placed out of the vicinity of the altar, lectern, pulpit, or font. (Wayne E. Schmidt, *The Setting of the Liturgy and the Decorum of Its Leaders, The Place of Worship*, in *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice*, pp. 211-15. The quotations are from Donald J. Bruggink and Carl H. Droppers, *Christ and Architecture* [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1965], pp. 450, 452)

There are probably two extremes in Lutheranism regarding the Divine Service, both of which are based on a false understanding of liturgics and our Lutheran heritage. There is the spirit that says one must follow only the words printed on page 15 or 41 (or whatever page begins the liturgy) and not waver a jot or tittle. In actuality there is no one who can do this, because no one follows the text and order exactly as printed, and even if they tried, rubrics at so many turns call for the use of one of several choices (even if it is the choice, speak or chant). Thus the liturgy becomes once again almost a Roman canon, ruled by jurists schooled in their own opinions. At the other end of the spectrum one might find those who wish to throw out the Lutheran liturgy altogether as being too archaic and not speaking to today's people. Such people would start with the premise and guiding principle that, since all this liturgical stuff is adiaphora, therefore it is unimportant or not necessary to keep at all. Their services quickly become like those of the Protestants and Pentecostals: shapeless, anthropocentric and self-flattering for their authors. I suppose Luther might have made the same claim about liturgy being "unimportant" and might have discontinued the use of the Mass for his Renaissance Saxons. But he saw that the basic text of the Mass is timeless and Scriptural, and so his reforms were informed and conservative, excising only the canon because it was false. If we were to study the liturgy and hymns of our church, we too would discover their timelessness and Scriptural source and content, and we would not want to venture off into inflexibility or uninformed informality. Though liturgy and church ceremonies fall into the category of adiaphora, that does not mean they are unimportant or that we can and should throw them away whenever we feel like it. The traditional liturgy and ceremonies of the Lutheran church are Christocentric. Most attempts to devise "new" liturgies week after week have tremendous difficulty keeping that Christocentric character. Hermann Sasse urges us to study and learn the liturgy:

Why do we not explain the liturgy to our congregations, especially to the youth? That naturally presumes that we know the teaching of our church regarding the divine service, that we ourselves study the old church orders with their liturgical treasures, that we understand the Lutheran way of combining loyalty to the old liturgical heritage with the great Gospel freedom of which Article 10 of the Formula of Concord speaks. We do not mean liturgical arbitrariness but authentic Gospel freedom. We have to face the fact that a heritage that has been lost over 250 years cannot be restored quickly. We must have several forms of the divine service, just as the Roman Church has and practices in the preservation of unfamiliar rites. We need small circles and congregations in which the old liturgical heritage is preserved along with confession – *confessio* always means confession of the faith, confession of sins, and praise of God all in one – as is done in such an exemplary way, a way that puts us all to shame, in the "Brethren" congregations of Braunschweig. Moreover, in the large congregations we need extensive instruction in the liturgy. We need preaching services and special services of Holy Communion. We particularly need the divine service in the sense of the Lutheran Mass with both preaching and the celebration of the Sacrament. The sermon will then need to be short, but above all it must be authentic proclamation of the Gospel. There can be no renewal of the Lord's Supper without renewed preaching, preaching that is not just the pious talk of a man but disciplined exposition of Holy Scripture that strikes the heart. Such preaching grows out of serious study of Scripture, plumbing the

depths of the divine Word. It should not be that the hearer of the text will always know exactly what is coming next because he has already heard it a hundred times.

Part of knowing and learning the liturgy is knowing and learning new hymns or relearning “old” hymns. Even old hymns can be used in fresh ways. How many pastors spend as much time picking hymns as they do preparing their sermon? No, that probably isn’t the right way to put that. But consider that the congregation often spends more time singing hymns on a Sunday morning than listening to the sermon. We would never use the criterion “This is what they want to hear” when preparing a sermon; there’s something Paul said about tickling itching ears (2Ti 4:3). And yet how often don’t we hear that regarding choosing which hymns to sing in church: “Oh, but people like to sing that one!” What then becomes of our concern for the distinction between law and gospel, since often those hymns are devoid of such clear distinction or attain to teach neither? If we had only such generic hymns from which to choose, their use might be more easily tolerated, but with the vast wealth of Lutheran hymns and other good hymnody, how can we defend the too-frequent use of weak hymns? Not every hymn has to be *Salvation unto us is come*, but an old Lutheran hymnbook gives us pause to consider when [it] included the phrase: “For our children only the best is good enough.” ... The old dictum *lex orandi lex credendi* (the law of praying is the law of believing) is two-pronged. It works both ways: we believe what we pray, and we pray what we believe. Our doctrine establishes our practice; it determines what things are appropriate or not in the services of the church. At the same time, what we do in the service is what people learn to love and to believe. “We should teach our children to remain in the Lutheran Church instead of to sing themselves into some Reformed sect.”

What we hold before the people of God on Sunday morning is eternally important. “Favorite” hymns and “praise music” will not do. What suffices for the people of God is the pure Gospel of forgiveness through the blood of Christ, delivered to them in the means of grace. In other words, the hymnody and preaching of the Lutheran church [present] not a warm and fuzzy Jesus who is buddy and friend, but Jesus, the Son of God, who shed His blood on the cross and gives us in His Sacraments and Word the salvation He won on Golgotha once for all. In this way we come as prodigals back to the Father’s welcoming arms; and in the embrace of our heavenly Father we come to long for the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit that brings forth fruits of faith in our lives. (Mark DeGarmeaux, “Sacramental Worship, Sacramental Preaching: Treasures of our Lutheran Church” [1998]. The Sasse quotation is from *We Confess: The Sacraments* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1985]. The other quotations are from the Introduction to *Lutheran Hymnary, Junior*.)

...it is established doctrine for many that the traditional Lutheran liturgy is a piece of sixteenth-century German culture, and needs to be pensioned off in favor of some modern American version. Pastor Andrew Pfeiffer...calls this idea a “myth” and explains: “The outline of the Service with Holy Communion...has its roots in the early church. This liturgy is almost all Scripture. Its development can be traced from the early church to the present time. This is why it is recognizable also in other mainline churches such as the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Orthodox...”

The liturgy is already transcultural. It has been prayed by many nations over many centuries, and its incense is mingled with the fragrances of the places and times it has blest, and which can no longer be clearly distinguished. Each new Christian people or country has its own gifts to offer in Jerusalem (Isaiah 60). When a missionary plants a church in a culture in which there has not been a church before, he also brings the liturgy, above all the Service of Word and Sacrament. ... The church is not planted until there is a regular assembly round the Word and Sacrament of Christ, and that requires the liturgy. Since the liturgy is the confession of the church in the form of worship, it will require the same care as catechesis. The missionary will therefore normally implant in the new church, at least in embryo, the liturgy of the church which sent him.

This, of course, is easier said than done. The linguistic part of the work will naturally go

hand in hand with the task of translating the Holy Scriptures. Even more difficult will be the music. Ideally this will be a suitable adaptation of Gregorian chant or plainsong if the model liturgy is Western, or of one of the Eastern modes, such as the Slavonic, should that be the appropriate pattern. (The confessionally solid Evangelical Lutheran Synod, in its mission work in the Ukraine, employs a Byzantine Lutheran liturgy). One thing such music must stoutly avoid is any affinity with the ways of local pagan cults. Thus the church in antiquity deliberately rejected the music of the Graeco-Roman state religion. That did not in the least impede her missionary progress – quite the contrary.

... The congregational singing of hymns has from time immemorial been recognized as a realm of greater spontaneity and flexibility than that of the fixed Service. The governing principle must be that expressed in the title of...Richard Resch's splendid essay, "Hymnody as Teacher of the Faith." Since hymns shape our minds and souls, it is important that they contain the church's faith, and not falsehood or drivel... The two greatest hymn-writing ages were no doubt the centuries of the Christological battles in antiquity and the time of the Reformation. This is not a coincidence, for hymns are confessions of faith, as in New Testament prototypes like Phil 2:6-11 and 1 Tm 3:16. Congregations need to make the effort to learn really good hymns, and to sing them regularly. (Kurt E. Marquart, "'Church Growth' as Mission Paradigm: A Confessional Lutheran Assessment," in *Church and Ministry Today*, edited by John A. Maxfield [Saint Louis: The Luther Academy, 2001], pp. 141-42, 144. The quotations are from Andrew K. Pfeiffer, "Facing Up to Myths about Worship," *The Lutheran* [Australia], Vol. 6 [September 1993], p. 282; and from Richard Resch, "Hymnody as Teacher of the Faith," *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, Vol. 57 [July 1993], p. 161.) [Regarding] what C. S. Lewis called the "Liturgical Fidget." I can do no better than to quote Lewis directly:

Novelty, simply as such, can have only an entertainment value. And they don't go to church to be entertained. They go to *use* the service, or, if you prefer, to *enact* it. Every service is a structure of acts and words through which we receive a sacrament, or repent, or supplicate, or adore. And it enables us to do these things best – if you like, it "works" best – when, through long familiarity, we don't have to think about it. As long as you notice, and have to count, the steps, you are not yet dancing, but only learning to dance. A good shoe is a shoe you don't notice. Good reading becomes possible when you need not consciously think about eyes, or light, or print, or spelling. The perfect church service would be one we were almost unaware of; our attention would have been on God. But every novelty prevents this. It fixes our attention on the service itself; and thinking about worship is a different thing from worshipping. ... There is really some excuse for the man who said, "I wish they'd remember that the charge to Peter was, Feed my sheep, not, try experiments on my rats, or even teach my performing dogs new tricks." Thus my whole liturgiological position really boils down to an entreaty for permanence and uniformity. I can make do with almost any kind of service whatever if only it will stay put. But if each form is snatched away just when I am beginning to feel at home in it, then I can never make any progress in the art of worship. You give me no chance to acquire the trained habit – *habito dell'arte*.

What then shall we make of the idea that "the youth" get bored with sameness and therefore require constant innovations to keep them interested? The sentiment is well-meaning enough but is essentially misguided. It is true that initially some silly youngsters (by no means all) may enjoy having the service turned into a variety show, especially one that is flattering to the inane Youth Cult images promoted by the media for profit. In the long term, however, such an approach is bound to produce conscious or subconscious contempt for the church. Who, after all, could respect an institution which is, after two thousand years' experience, so confused about its functions as to say, in effect: "Dear children, help us! We are no longer sure about what we ought to be doing. Perhaps you might have some good ideas?" Who could possibly take seriously the play-worship prefixed with that horrid word, "experimental"?

The fact is that no healthy, viable society lets its children arbitrate its values. It is for the

elders of the tribe to guard its cultural heritage and to transmit it solemnly to the younger generation – never *vice versa*. Also in our society the problem is not with the youth but with their elders. If youth are confused about values, it is mainly because their parents are. If the liturgy is boring to children it is usually because the parents do not find it very interesting either. If children saw adults treating the Sunday Service as the most important activity of their lives, they would respect it too, and would never dream of treating it as a pop-event, to be tinkered with by every Tom, Dick, and Harry. A church which has won the conscientious loyalty of parents – particularly fathers (Eph. 3:15; 6:4)! – will have the devotion of their children too. But a church which abjectly capitulates to the whims and tastes of adolescents will have, and deserve, neither.

Finally, there is a variety-principle built into the liturgy, and that is the rhythm of the church-year. The basic units of this gentle, natural rhythm are the week and the year. This cycle is virtually broken by forcing onto it the alien drum-beat of “monthly emphases” based on the activist, organizational imperatives of the financial year. It is also broken by the false off-on or even off-off-off-on *staccato* of “Communion Sundays” and “non-Communion Sundays.” The proper change from Sunday to Sunday should be in the specific meaning and application of the Sacrament, not in having or not having it. The Eucharist is the whole Gospel in action. This one Gospel, like a precious diamond, has many facets or aspects, of which one or two are especially highlighted in each Sunday’s or festival’s Gospel pericope. And through whatever concrete facet the full Gospel is celebrated on a given day, that is the specific meaning, or the mode of application of the Sacrament on that day. The Sacrament is always the full Gospel-gift, of course. But on Christmas Day we receive it under the aspect of the Lord’s Nativity, on Epiphany in celebration of His Baptism, on Laetare Sunday as the Divine Bread of Life revealed in the miraculous feeding of the multitude, and so on. In other words, the Sacrament, like the Gospel itself, must never be seen as some one narrow aspect or some unvarying ‘standard ration’ in the feast that is Christianity. It is rather the whole reality, under many wonderful aspects, each especially observed and celebrated at various times. Each time it is as new and fresh as are the daily mercies of God. We have here the Kaleidoscope of God, which, at each weekly or seasonal tilt, exhibits the same divine generosity in ever new and exciting configurations. (Kurt E. Marquart, “Liturgical Commonplaces,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 4 [October 1978], pp. 342-44. The Lewis quotation is from *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer* [New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1964], pp. 4-5. Emphases in original.)

Notice what happens when a church aims itself, through its music or worship style, at one particular generation or sub-group. The others, in this generational and cultural crazy-quilt that is the typical American congregation, will be alienated. ... When churches go to a “contemporary service,” older parishioners of the World War II generation object. How could they be expected not to? Those who have devoted their lives to the church for decades feel, as one told me, that “they have taken away my church.” It is unfair to categorize such objections, as is often done, as being overly tradition-bound or as some unwillingness to evangelize. They are responding both to the feeling of being unwanted in their own church and to the fact that they can hardly worship in such an alien language. The answer, however, is not to give them a Big Band service. Nor to give Generation X a punk or hip-hop or death metal service. The answer is in the genius of the hymnbook.

When we are singing hymns in church, we are not following the preferred “style” of anyone in the congregation. This is church music, wholly different, whatever its origins, from the currently preferred musical taste of any of the generations assembled to worship. No one is offended; no one is excluded; everyone is lifted out of a particular time, generation or in-group, into the extraordinary experience of worship. ...pop music of every kind is excluded, since fashions, by their very nature, come and go. Furthermore, church music is to have a very different use than the music put out by the entertainment industry, namely, to be sung corporately (most pop music

works at best only as a solo performance) under the Word and in the presence of God. Music with origins in the folk culture (the old hymns specifically passed down from generation to generation) or the high culture (compositions old or new of artistic greatness) has the capacity to be universal, transcending time and place as Christ's church is supposed to do.

The Christian church, St. Paul tells us, "consists of many diverse members who come together in the unity of the Body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12: 12-27). "There should be no division in the body" (12:25), we are warned, so that generational differences, like those of "ethnicity, race, gender or social class" (Gal. 3:28), must not be allowed to get in the way of the unity we have in Jesus Christ. This unity extends through time, "throughout all generations," including those generations of the past. In a typical church service, the hymns that are sung literally do span the generations. A typical worship service thus exemplifies the commerce of ages that is intrinsic to the communion of saints.

A new baby represents a new generation, but the baby is baptized into the one Body of Christ. In church, the old and young, rich and poor, parents and children, Boomers and X-ers, kneel together in prayer, hear the Gospel each of them desperately needs and join together in the unfathomable spiritual intimacy with Christ and with each other, that is Holy Communion. There are different generations, but they are all equally in need of Christ. The Church is the place where generational differences are to be transcended, not reinforced. Where ephemeral fashions and cultural distinctions are subsumed into an eternal perspective, into a kingdom which "endures from generation to generation" (Daniel 4:34). Only a church which resists being merely of one generation can be relevant to them all. (Gene Edward Veith, "Through All Generations," *For the Life of the World*, Vol. 2, No. 1 [March 1998], p. 9)

In the independent Lutheran Church of the Trinity in Berlin, Pastor Gottfried Martens baptises ten or more former Muslims on most Sundays. Six hundred converts from Iran and Afghanistan make up two-thirds of this thriving parish in a city ranking among the most secular in Europe. Martens's Sunday services often last more than two hours, as it takes a long time for this large number of ex-Muslims to kneel down at the altar rail and receive the sacrament and blessing while the rest of the congregation of dark-skinned worshippers lustily chant sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Lutheran hymns they have learned in Berlin. "Former Muslims are particularly attracted to these hymns and our high liturgy," explained Pastor Martens, "because they establish an intimacy with God they had not known in their previous faith." (Uwe Siemon-Netto, "Where Muslim Dreams May Lead," *Quadrant Magazine*, January-February 2016, pp. 39-40)

Chant is the musical speech of the Church in worship. Sometimes it consists of dialogue between pastor and people. At other times it takes the form of a monologue as, for example, when the pastor chants the collect or prayer of the day, or the proper preface of the eucharistic liturgy or, on festive occasions, the Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel readings for that day.

Why do we chant in the Lutheran Church? Because it is one of the characteristic fundamentals of our worship as it was established by our founder, Dr. Martin Luther. In the *Formula Missae* of 1523, he declares that he never intended to change the worship of the established church, but merely to purge it of the idolatrous parts which were contrary to the Holy Scriptures. This permitted the whole body of music from the past to be preserved including the chant.

Following this concept, in the German Mass (*Deutsche Messe*) of 1526 Luther not only gave instruction regarding the chanting of the Collect, but also devised formulae for the chanting of the Epistle and Gospel... It would be most profitable for pastors and others who are concerned with worship to read these two documents. ...this tradition still has validity since it lifts our worship above ordinary conversation and the speech of everyday life and makes of it a special offering of worship to our God.

Keeping this in mind, there should be participation of both pastor and people in the chant, and *not* a fifty percent process in which the *pastor speaks* his part and the *people chant* their

responses. Were we to use this fifty percent process in everyday life we would be considered strange. It is therefore hard to understand why some think it logical and appropriate in the church. ...

This type of musical speech can be traced back to Old Testament times. It was the function of the Levites to use different “tropes,” as they were called, for the cantillation of the Pentateuch, the Prophets and the Hagiographa, and still others for the chanting of the Psalter (*Sefer Tehilim*).

The early church quite naturally took over some of the synagogal institutions, especially that of the *hazzanim* (synagogue cantors) and some of the Christian cantors who had been trained in that synagogue tradition. ... Other liturgical assistants in the post-apostolic church came from the ranks of the well educated laity and served as lectors. In about 250 A.D. they were elevated to the status of minor clerics (*ordo minoris*). A bit later there came into being the *schola lectorum* directed by lector and cantor for the purpose of training boys for the liturgical office. The Council of Carthage at the end of the fourth century required the formation of a *schola cantorum*, but it was not until the time of Gregory the Great (c. 540–604) that the most famous one was established in Rome. From the Roman model similar institutions were then also established at St. Gall, Metz and Aachen. These also wielded tremendous influence. These were the sources for the great body of chant which Luther learned and loved. He urged the church to retain those chants that could stand under the scrutiny of the Holy Scriptures.

In the early years of this [twentieth] century we see a gradual disintegration of the pastoral chant. The causes for this are numerous and perhaps somewhat complex. The transition from German to English during the closing decades of the nineteenth century and the beginning of our own [twentieth century] certainly contributed since some pastors had difficulty adjusting to bilingual chanting. The parsimony of publishers of official hymnals did not help the situation either by printing only the congregation’s music and printing just the pastor’s text, no music. From this many somewhat naturally concluded: “The pastor speaks, but the congregation chants!” (M. Alfred Bichsel, *Manual on the Pastor’s Chant* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989], pp. 3-5. Emphases in original.)

Chanting is good reading done on notes. It should be carried out lightly and fluently at the same speed and with the same rhythm as is done in good reading. Unlike barred music, chanting has its own rhythm and mode of expression. ...

The basic idea of chanting is stated in the following rubric in *The Lutheran Liturgy* (p. 419): “Liturgical chant, more so than any other type of church music, is not a musical interpretation of the text: it is only the bearer of the text and hence should be sung in a simple, straightforward manner. To a lesser extent, the same thing is true of Hymn tunes. This is in keeping with the spirit of the objective character of liturgical worship, which disdains sentimentalization and tawdriness, musical and otherwise.”

Another rubric in *The Lutheran Liturgy* (p. 419), which many officiants either ignore or do not seem to know, prescribes: “The Officiant shall chant those portions of the Service to which the Choir or the Congregation responds with chanting.” This means, for example, that if the congregation chants the response: “And with thy spirit,” the officiant is to chant the salutation: “The Lord be with you.” The rubric is a “shall” rubric and refers to all those parts of the service in which there is a dialog between the officiant and the congregation or in which a portion of a part is done by the officiant and another portion by the congregation or choir. It means that all such parts are either spoken or chanted by both the officiant and the congregation and not, as one so often finds, that the officiant speaks his portion and the congregation chants the other portion; for example, the officiant reads the Collect, but the congregation chants the Amen. (Paul H. D. Lang, *Ceremony and Celebration: An Evangelical Guide for Christian Practice in Corporate Worship* [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965], pp. 84-85. The quotations are from *The Lutheran Liturgy*, Authorized by the Synods Constituting the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941].)

Communication is not limited to language. We express ourselves to others and we receive impressions from others and from God through signs and symbols. These communications by signs and symbols are often more effective than those of language. While this is true in ordinary life, it is particularly true in the church's worship. The things communicated there have to do with the mysteries of our holy faith. These deep mysteries cannot, of course, be communicated so as to be understood fully or else they would no longer be mysteries. But signs and symbols often communicate the realities of the mysteries better than language.

Therefore, the devaluation of signs and symbols in the Protestant churches and also, at least since the day of Rationalism, in the Lutheran church, and the almost exclusive reliance on words as the means of communication seems to be a mistake. While we need to rely on language as the most important means of communication, we should perhaps reconsider our attitude toward the use of signs and symbols. Christ Himself gave us signs and symbols, i.e., material signs and symbolical actions, in the holy sacraments. These sacraments are, together with the words of the Holy Scriptures, the means of grace and the Gospel. But the Gospel is conveyed in various forms and manners of communication. In his *Christian Dogmatics*, Dr. Pieper says, "Such a means of grace is the Gospel in all forms of expression (communication), whether it be preached, written, or read, or spoken, or expressed in the form of absolution, or by means of signs, or pondered in the heart; for example, through a crucifix or another kind of picture, John 3:14-15." We ought to underline the words, "the Gospel in all forms of expression." In the opinion of this writer, Protestants and Lutherans have minimized the use of bodily and non-verbal signs and symbols in their worship services at the expense of achieving most effectively the edifying of the body of Christ.

The positions and actions of the body in worship are included in liturgical signs and symbols. The number of such bodily actions is very great and the nature is diverse. Some are accompanied by words and verbal formulae and others are not. Some are gestures and actions of reverence, some of prayer, some of penitence, and others are sacramental. ...many convey more than one meaning when used under different circumstances. (Paul H. D. Lang, *Ceremony and Celebration: An Evangelical Guide for Christian Practice in Corporate Worship*, pp. 64-65. The quotation is from Franz Pieper, *Christliche Dogmatik*, Vol. III [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1920], p. 124.)

Clergymen should be dignified, natural, and reverent in all their actions when serving in the chancel. They should not be stiff, ceremonious, and affected. ... They should not shout the service or drawl, mumble, mumble, or monotone their words. They should avoid walking falteringly or at any gait that might be disturbing. They should not stand at an indecisive angle. ... If a mistake is made, they should not make a fuss about it during the service. (Paul H. D. Lang, *Ceremony and Celebration: An Evangelical Guide for Christian Practice in Corporate Worship*, p. 76)

...Matthias Flacius Illyricus of Magdeburg...rejected the liturgical compromises of the [Leipzig] Interim that the victorious Catholics had sought to impose on the evangelicals after the Schmalkald War, noting:

All ceremonies and ecclesiastical usages are free in themselves, as ever. But when they are imposed through coercion, or through the erroneous impression that they are required for worship, or through deceit, scandal, or public pressure from the godless, and when they do not benefit God's church in some way, but disrupt it and mock God, then they are no longer adiaphora.

Flacius's 'general rule regarding ceremonies' was seconded by other Gnesio-Lutherans, notably Nikolaus Gallus, also from Magdeburg, and Joachim Westphal of Hamburg. It was also endorsed by the Formula of Concord (1577) and frequently reiterated as churches were jousting for people's confessional allegiance. 'To distinguish ourselves from Anabaptists, Sacramentarians, Papists, Interimists, Adiaphorists, and others with novel and strange teachings...we are taking the right middle road by neither rejecting nor endorsing all ceremonies', explained Gallus. Lutherans,

observed Tilemann Hesshusen in 1585, were involved in a two-front war with ‘Jesuits and Calvinists’ in which ritual and ceremonial count. Hesshusen cautioned people to beware of ‘the wolf’s howling of the Adiaphorists, who insist that our confession is not reflected in surplices or external garb and ceremonies’. ‘Ceremonies...serve to promote our true and pure teaching of the Holy Gospel’, observed the Rostock superintendent Simon Pauli. They enable us ‘to distinguish true from false doctrine...and reveal our sectarian adversaries – Papists, Calvinists, and their ilk’. Much the same, Balthasar Meisner, professor at Wittenberg, reminded his listeners that false prophets expose themselves not only by their erroneous teachings but also by their ceremonies: ‘For heretics are in the habit of always using unique and strange church rites under the pretext...of Christian liberty. Liturgy and ritual thus had become much more than merely an indifferent matter for Lutherans in the late Reformation; they clearly were regarded as marks of confessional identity.

Concurrently there had occurred another subtle but important shift in the way Lutherans were treating church usages, notably in regions where they were vying with Calvinists for people’s confessional loyalty. Some of the very same liturgical practices which earlier critics of the Interim had condemned as ‘Catholicising’, many followers of the Augsburg Confession were now defending as a useful prophylactic against Reformed and other sacramentarian perversions. Old rituals are ‘like a good disciplinarian in that they provide helpful instruction on how to keep the true faith’, thought Achatius, member of the Brandenburg consistory. He even published a lengthy compendium of excerpts from the writings of notable Lutherans to demonstrate that doctrinal orthodoxy and ceremonial traditionalism went hand in hand. ‘As long as the old ceremonies are kept in the Mark of Brandenburg, Calvinists also will be kept at bay’, observed Elisabeth Magdalene, sister of the archconservative elector Johann Georg (ruled 1571-98). In a book which he dedicated to the duchess, Zacharias Rivander of Saxony, where another [Calvinist] reformation had just been aborted, listed the marks whereby a ‘simple layman’ could easily spot a Calvinist minister. ‘If he distributes Holy Communion without reverence...[and] runs to the altar like a hog to its trough...he surely is a secret sacramentarian.’ Similarly, Theodosius Fabricius of Göttingen, in a history of the current communion disputes which appeared in 1593, compared in separate columns the teachings and practices of Germany’s three major denominations. His goal, the author explained, ‘is not to contrast Protestants and Papists, but to compare the teachings of Lutherans with Zwinglians or Calvinists’. Thus, for the year 1563 Fabricius’s chronicle recorded: ‘Heidelberg becomes Reformed and Luther’s catechism is eliminated. ... Calvinists remove pictures from churches, abolish auricular confession, delete exorcism [from baptism] and numerous festivals, and discard altars and baptismal fonts’. Johann Olearius of Halle, who witnessed the introduction of Calvinism in neighbouring Anhalt in the early 1590s, thought that the new [Calvinist] reformers were purposefully eliminating ‘the public ceremonies of the mass that we [Lutherans] have kept to instruct people: ...florid descant, church organs, altars, wax candles, mass vestments, golden vessels, communion hosts, genuflecting as one approaches the Lord’s Table, and similar practices’.

Olearius’s assessment was accurate, for the Reformed, like the Lutherans, had come to view church rites and usages from a mostly confessional perspective. Unlike the Lutherans, however, they had a much stricter notion of just what ceremonies were permitted. ‘Those matters about which we have no commandment of God are in our liberty’, John Calvin had observed; but he added, ‘how much more true then, that which leads to stumbling, and serves as an instrument of idolatry and gives rise to misleading opinions, ought in no way be allowed’. Carlos [M. N.] Eire has argued that, for the Genevan, ‘the Reformation...was not so much one of doctrine, but one of piety, which involved profound social and cultural changes. To be properly “Reformed”, a community would not only have to change its theology, but also its outward expression of faith.’ The results of this war against idolatry became most evident in late Reformation Germany. ‘Because ceremonies indicate the confession one has either embraced or rejected, it is...most crucial that one shun and avoid all suspicious ones’, insisted Anhalt’s new [Calvinist] reformers. ‘Exorcism [in baptism]..., altars, crucifixes, pictures, chasubles, mass vestments, capes, candles, etc., do [not]

belong among Christian ceremonies' and therefore must go, observed [Calvinist] Duke Johann Georg of Anhalt. 'For the sake of the people the current emendation was necessary so that doctrine and ceremony alike will reflect the truth, and the many remaining superstitious rituals...will not mislead people any longer', declared [Calvinist] Christoph Pezel of Bremen. (Bodo Nischan, "Ritual and Protestant Identity in Late Reformation Germany," in *Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe*, Volume 2: The Later Reformation [edited by Bruce Gordon] [Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 1996], pp. 144-48. The Eire quotation is from *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* [New York, 1986], p. 233.)

Polycarp Leyser, court preacher in Dresden from 1594 to 1610, asserted that it was better to be 'papist than Calvinist'. Calvinists were, Leyser wrote to Elector Christian II in 1602, 'enemies of all ceremonies and good order, and real trouble makers'. Leyser's little address to the Elector was printed eighteen years later in 1620... ..Leyser's sentiments also found resonance outside Saxony. An eighteenth-century description [by D. H. Herings] of the origins of the Reformed confession in Brandenburg and Prussia lamented that, thanks to the dissemination of such writings and to inflammatory [Lutheran] preaching, the Calvinists were hated more than the papists and Turks: 'lieber päbstisch, als calvinisch' had, the author asserted, become a common proverb. (Bridget Heal, "'Better Papist than Calvinist': Art and Identity in Later Lutheran Germany," *German History*, Vol. 29, No. 4, pp. 591-92. The Herings quotation is from *Historische Nachricht von dem ersten Anfang der evangelisch=reformierten Kirche in Brandenburg und Preußen...* [Halle: Johann Jacob Curt, 1778], p. 96.)

The Lutheran Church is a liturgical church, but its various branches are not obligated to adhere to the rubrics of any one particular rite. The sixteenth-century liturgical orders of the various branches of the Church generally did follow the basic outline of the western catholic Mass, but they often differed from each other in many details. The Lutheran Church acknowledges that God's Word has not bound Christian worshipers to any specific liturgy or ceremonies, and that all Christian churches therefore are, in principle, free to modify or change their liturgical practices. However, the Confessions of the Lutheran Church are also very clear in their teaching that such modifications or changes are to be made only when there are good reasons for them, and only in ways that are fully in keeping with the Church's Biblical standards of liturgical solemnity and doctrinal purity. Lutheran congregations are not required to be "high church" or "low church," but they *are* required to be *churchly*. (David Jay Webber, "Why Is the Lutheran Church a Liturgical Church?," *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 2 [June 1992], pp. 14-15. Emphases in original.)

We can appreciate the systematic presentation of the Formula of Concord in particular regarding the matter of *adiaphora*, as a guide for our own consideration of these matters. An *adiaphoron* is, in principle, acceptable and desirable for use among God's people when it is beneficial for "good order, Christian discipline, evangelical decorum, and the building up of the church." But before we go any further in applying these criteria to the ceremonial and liturgical issues of our day, we need to make sure that we accurately grasp how the Formula actually intends its use of the term "adiaphora" to be understood. The Concordists themselves do not apply the concept of "adiaphora" as broadly as we often do. Martin Chemnitz provides us with the larger sixteenth-century lexical context for the Formula's use of this specific term, in his *Examination of the Council of Trent*:

The ceremonies of the Mass are not all of one kind. For some have a divine command and examples of Scripture that they should be done at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, being as it were essential, e.g., to take bread and the cup in the public assembly, to bless, distribute, eat, drink, proclaim the death of the Lord. Some indeed do not have an express command of God, that they must of necessity be done thus in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, nevertheless they are in their nature good and godly if they are used

rightly for edification, such as psalms, readings from Scripture, godly prayers and giving of thanks, confession of the Creed, etc. Some are *per se* superstitious and ungodly, for instance the sacrifice of the Mass for the living and the dead, invocation of the saints, satisfaction for the souls in purgatory, the private Mass, consecration of salt, blessing of water, etc. Some ceremonies indeed are *adiaphora*, such as vestments, vessels, ornaments, words, rites, and things which are not against the Word of God. Things which are of the first kind must of necessity be observed, for they belong to the substance of the Lord's Supper. Of the things that belong to the second and fourth kind, many which make for the edification of people are observed in our churches without infringing on Christian liberty. The third kind, however, being superstitious and godless, has deservedly, rightly, and of necessity been abrogated and done away with.

Chemnitz divides the various kinds of religious "ceremonies" into four distinct categories. His first category pertains to those ceremonies that are commanded by God, and that therefore cannot be dispensed with. Christian worship is not a matter of Quaker-like mysticism. Jesus has told us physically to *do* certain things in the administration of the means of grace, and this sacramental *doing* is a matter of sacred *ceremony* – that is, outward actions that accompany the spoken Word, according to the Lord's institution and command. Chemnitz's third category pertains to those ceremonies that are inherently wrong, and that therefore must not be used. Such ceremonies enact, or invariably testify to, things that God's Word forbids. But there are also *two remaining categories*, and not just one.

Chemnitz's second category pertains to certain historic usages that admittedly are not, in themselves, commanded by God. But these usages are so well established in the church, and are so widely recognized as serving inherently good and godly purposes in worship, that there would be hardly any conceivable reason why a faithful pastor would want to do away with them – at least if his goal and desire would be to have a worship service that edifies his congregation with the unchanging gospel of Jesus Christ. Ceremonies of this category invariably testify to the truth of God's Word, and always serve the purposes of a proper liturgical theology as based on that Word. Hence the inevitable impression that would be left among informed observers by the removal of such ceremonies, is that those who are removing them are thereby rejecting the truth and the proper theology that everyone understands them to represent. And so, even though the Bible does not explicitly command the use of an order of service that employs "psalms, readings from Scripture, godly prayers and giving of thanks, [and] confession of the Creed," this kind of liturgical format has become, for all practical purposes, virtually "untouchable" in an orthodox church.

In Chemnitz's *Examination*, the concept of *adiaphora* does not come into view until his fourth category. This category pertains to the kind of ceremonies that can with little fanfare be adjusted or revised, diminished or increased, according to the needs and circumstances of the church. Ceremonial changes of this nature, if they are implemented in an orderly and pastorally-responsible way and with the right motives, will not be a cause of scandal or offense, or give a testimony of heterodoxy to those who witness such changes.

According to this category of genuine *adiaphora*, a pastor can either chant or speak his parts of the service. As he conducts the service, he can wear a white alb, a black talar, or a colored chasuble. He can administer the Lord's Supper with vessels of silver or gold, of glass or porcelain. Communicants can kneel or stand. They can make the sign of the cross and bow when they are dismissed and depart, or not. The service can be comprised of plainsong canticles, or of metered hymns, or of a combination of both.

However, Chemnitz would not have considered it to be a proper application of the principle of *adiaphora* to revamp totally the whole concept and framework of Christian worship. He would not have considered it to be a proper example of evangelical freedom to get rid of an historically-based order of service that accentuates and underscores the means of grace; and to replace it with a format that arises from, and reflects, the entertainment and variety-show culture,

the restaurant and coffee-shop culture, the talk-show and psycho-therapy culture, or the big-business and corporate culture. One of the important points that is made by the Formula is that “useless and foolish spectacles” are not to be counted among the *adiaphora*. They are inherently contrary to the requirement for “evangelical decorum” that applies to any Lutheran worship service. Frivolous gimmicks that are introduced into the worship services of a church, for the deliberate purpose of creating a casual and unserious atmosphere, are beyond the pale of what is acceptable. They offend the pious, and disrupt the larger unity of the church.

It is often thought that such things should be done by a church that is interested in outreach, so that any unbelievers who might be present, and who might be “put off” by too much reverence, would not be made to feel uncomfortable in worship. But unbelievers *should* actually feel a little uncomfortable in a gathering that honors the First Commandment, and that is comprised of worshipers who humbly recognize the holiness of the God whom they are therein enjoined to *fear, love, and trust* above all things. Pastors and worship leaders who intentionally try to craft a service that does not reflect and promote the fear of God, love for God, and trust in God above all things – whatever their motive may be – are thereby sinning against the First Table of the law.

The Epistle to the Hebrews gives us this instruction: “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe” (Hebrews 12:28, NIV). In the New Testament era, God does not prescribe for his people a detailed ritual – such as he did for the nation of Israel in the Old Testament. But even in the New Testament era, there still is such a thing as “acceptable” worship. And this means that there is *also* such a thing as *unacceptable* worship. Worship that is irreverent is unacceptable. Worship that is not permeated by sound Biblical doctrine, and that does not convey sound Biblical doctrine in its songs and texts to those who are present, is also unacceptable.

Christians do not gather chiefly for the purpose of telling God what they think or how they feel, but for the purpose of listening in faith to what God has to tell them, and for the purpose of learning from God how to respond to his Word – in prayers of petition, praise, and thanksgiving that have been molded and shaped by that Word. As St. Paul writes: “Let *the word of Christ* dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God” (Colossians 3:16, NIV). ...

None of this should be taken to mean that there is one and only one order of service that every Lutheran church or church body must follow. There is more than one way to worship God acceptably with reverence and awe. The Confessors of our church knew this, not only as a matter of Scriptural doctrine, but also by their own experience. Luther and Melancthon – who authored several of our Confessional documents – were, of course, members of the church in Wittenberg, in Electoral Saxony. In its public worship, the church of Wittenberg employed an order of service that was based on the ancient and medieval Latin Mass. ... Jacob Andreae, a coauthor of the Formula of Concord, was from Tübingen, in the Duchy of Württemberg. The church of Württemberg did not use an order of service that was based on the Latin Mass. But it also did not use a “made-up” service that was invented from scratch by the Reformers of that region, without historical roots. Rather, the Württembergers used an order of service that was based on the medieval Preaching Service. ...

These two orders of service were certainly different from each other. In the sixteenth century and later, most Lutherans followed an order of service similar to that of Wittenberg. The “Common Service,” familiar in American Lutheran history, is an heir of this “majority” tradition. But some Lutherans in the sixteenth century and later followed an order of service similar to that of Württemberg. Wittenberg used a fuller and more elaborate ritual, with a richer ceremonial. Württemberg used a more streamlined and simplified ritual, with a minimized ceremonial. But, what these orders of service had *in common* was that they were both rooted in the earlier tradition of the church’s worship, and therefore testified to Lutheranism’s continuity with the church of all ages; they both focused the attention of the worshipers on the means of grace, and faithfully

conveyed the means of grace to the people; and they were both serious and dignified in spirit, without any frivolous or irreverent elements. ...

(Since 1933, world Lutheranism has been able to claim for itself yet another type of historic liturgical service. The Ukrainian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession, which then existed in the Galicia region of Poland (now Ukraine), published in that year an order of the Divine Liturgy that was based on the historic Byzantine Rite of Eastern Christendom. This rite is used now in the Ukrainian Lutheran Church, which preserves the legacy of the former Ukrainian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession.)

Among the articles of faith that are to be taught in and through the liturgy and its ceremonies, is the essential point of Lutheran ecclesiology that “one holy church will remain forever” – to quote...from the Augsburg Confession. This is why the Reformers are so adamant in demonstrating and defending their unity with the church of the apostles and ancient Fathers, and their adherence to the evangelical teachings of the apostles and the Fathers.

Some Lutherans, in their anti-Roman polemics, actually end up sounding like Mormons in their seeming willingness to agree with the Romanist accusation that the Lutheran Reformers established a “new” church that was not in continuity with the church of pre-Reformation times. But this is heresy! We should absolutely refuse to be tarred by this. In our desire to preserve and confess the doctrinal unity on this point that God wants us to have, we will do what we can – in the testimony that we give with our lips, and in the testimony that we give *with our ceremonies* – to refute this accusation, and to show forth in word and deed that it is not true.

If there would be a weighing and an evaluating of *old* ceremonies, and of potential *new* ceremonies, Lutherans would be expected to embrace a “preferential option” for the *old* ceremonies. An old ceremony and a new ceremony may each be able, with equal effectiveness, to teach and reenforce a certain Scriptural truth. But the old ceremony, by its very *oldness*, is also able to teach and reenforce the fact that this Scriptural truth is what faithful Christians of all times have believed. The *newness* of a new ceremony severely diminishes the ability of such a new ceremony to impress upon people a sense of the *oldness* of the doctrine that it is devised to symbolize.

There is indeed a catholic and historic spirit in true Lutheranism that is lacking in Calvinism, and in the various Protestant sects within Christendom that Calvinism has spawned over the centuries. [Hermann] Sasse reminds us that

Lutheran theology differs from Reformed theology in that it lays great emphasis on the fact that the evangelical church is none other than the medieval Catholic Church purged of certain heresies and abuses. The Lutheran theologian acknowledges that he belongs to the same visible church to which Thomas Aquinas and Bernard of Clairvaux, Augustine and Tertullian, Athanasius and Ireneaus once belonged. The orthodox *evangelical* church is the legitimate continuation of the medieval Catholic Church, *not* the church of the Council of Trent..., which renounced evangelical truth when it rejected the Reformation. For the orthodox evangelical church is really identical with the orthodox catholic church of all times. And just as the very nature of the Reformed Church emphasizes its strong opposition to the medieval church, so the very nature of the Lutheran Church requires it to go to the farthest possible limit in its insistence on its solidarity and identity with the Catholic Church. It was no mere ecclesiastico-political diplomacy which dictated the emphatic assertion in the Augsburg Confession that the teachings of the Evangelicals were identical with those of the orthodox catholic church of all ages, and no more was it romanticism or false conservatism which made our church anxious to retain as much of the old canonical law as possible, and to cling tenaciously to the old forms of worship.

It does not surprise us, then, that there is a noticeable convergence between some of the outward forms of the Lutheran Church, and some of the outward forms of the Catholic Church – and indeed of any other church (Anglican or Orthodox) that, like ours, deliberately cultivates an identity of “connectedness” to the historic church of past centuries.

We do have an obligation to confess the pure and whole truth, and thereby to cultivate our unity with other Lutherans who with us confess this truth. And this means that in our ceremonial usages, we will not employ customs and practices that testify to, and teach, the *distinctive errors* of “the papist religion.” Neither will we employ customs and practices that testify to, and teach, the distinctive errors of Protestant sectarianism, and that would make people feel in our worship services as if they were in a typical Baptist or Evangelical church and not in a Lutheran church.

But returning to the matter at hand, not everything that is *in Rome is of Rome*. We need not refrain from ceremonially accentuating those articles of faith that we actually do to some degree still share with Rome. In fact, since the Protestant Evangelical movement poses much more of a threat to our existence in America than does the church of Rome at this time in history, we should probably accentuate even more than in the past those sacramental and incarnational distinctives of our confession that set us apart from the enthusiasm and rationalism of American Evangelicalism. At the very least, we certainly would not deliberately try to make ourselves look and sound like the Evangelicals, by adopting the distinctive usages and ceremonies of the Evangelicals. Such a way of proceeding would directly threaten the unity in doctrine that God wants the orthodox to maintain among themselves, and together to show forth to the world. (David Jay Webber, “‘Walking Together’ in Faith and Worship: Exploring the Relationship between Doctrinal Unity and Liturgical Unity in the Lutheran Church,” *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, Vol. 52, Nos. 2-3 [June-September 2012], pp. 215-26. Emphases in original. The quotation from Chemnitz’s *Examination* is from Part II, pp. 524-25. The Sasse quotation is from *Here We Stand* [New York: Harper and Brothers, 1938], pp. 102-03. Emphases in the Sasse quotation added by Webber.)

Lutheran pastors who look with envying eyes upon the large numbers in attendance at the heterodox churches of our land, and who think that their own attendance will increase if they imitate the worship practices of those churches, need to realize that such churches *worship* the way they do because they *believe* the way they do. The theology of Arminian churches in particular requires them to devise techniques of persuading and enticing people to make a “decision” to turn their hearts toward God, and to follow Christ. The praise songs that one finds in such churches, which “market” God as one who is available and able to satisfy the felt needs of religious seekers, fit exactly with the false doctrine of such churches.

Even when such songs do not explicitly teach this false doctrine, one should notice that in the majority of cases they do not teach very much sound doctrine either. Most of the time, the words of praise songs are not really being used to teach much of anything. With mantra-like repetitions of innocuous phrases from the Bible, wed to a musical style that appeals directly to the physiological pulsations of the human body, the words of such songs are being used instead to manipulate the will and the emotions of those who sing them. How can Lutherans imitate any of that, and still remain Lutheran? The Revivalists and Pentecostals who invented the genre of the praise song knew exactly what they were doing, governed as they were by their sincerely-held but erroneous doctrines of original sin and free will, conversion and faith. As we put the best construction on the actions of Lutherans who introduce such songs into their churches, we would have to say that they naively do not know what they are doing.

What goes on in the popular Evangelical megachurches of our day is not theologically neutral. Heterodox people go to heterodox churches because they like the heterodoxy that they find there. They like churches where the focus of attention is on them: on entertaining them, and on satisfying their needs as they define those needs. We should be saddened by their embracing of such heterodoxy, and we should wish and pray that they would be turned away from this wrong thinking. But if such heterodox Christians visit an orthodox Lutheran service, and decide that they do not like it, the fundamental problem is not in the orthodox service. The fundamental problem is in the heterodox visitors. Indeed, the orthodox evangelical doctrine that is embedded in a Lutheran service is actually their only hope, if they would only believe it instead of the fluff that

they currently believe. It should not be discarded for their sake. It should instead be preserved and accentuated for their sake – and for the sake of the Lutherans who come regularly to their own church, to be renewed regularly in their orthodox evangelical faith by this orthodox evangelical doctrine.

It is the considered opinion of the present essayist that a full-bodied liturgical service, which preserves the intended flow and rhythm of the liturgy, and which is accompanied by purposeful ceremonial ornamentation, actually recommends itself to the church as a better instrument for congregational worship, *and for outreach*, than a more “low-church” option. We do have to admit that in some corners of conservative Lutheranism in America, a way of conducting the service has developed that can fairly be called “boring.” Ministers plod through the texts of the printed order with little sense of the grandeur and pageantry of the liturgy, or of the organic and logical flow of the successive parts of the service. The flow of the service is also broken up by the frequent insertion of wordy rubrical announcements about what is coming next, what page things are on, and so forth.

Many today have proposed that this “boring” way of conducting the service be replaced by an “entertaining” way of conducting it – either by substituting for the church’s liturgy a locally-produced flashy concoction each week; or by seeking to “enliven” the service, and make it more “meaningful,” through a stronger intrusion of the pastor’s personality into the conducting of the service. In contrast, we would propose that this “boring” way of conducting the service be replaced instead by an *intriguing* way of conducting it – that is, by a way of leading the Lord’s people in the worship of almighty God that testifies to the fact that something special and other-worldly is there taking place.

Any unchurched guests who may be present for such a sacred gathering would not be expected to be able to grasp everything that is going on. A desire to change the liturgy so as to make it immediately understandable in all respects to first-time visitors is a misguided desire. As Christians over time mature in their faith, the liturgy should be something that they *grow into*, and not something that they quickly *grow out of*. But first-time visitors, even if they are unbelievers, can still be *intrigued* by a *well-done* liturgy that they do not immediately understand in all particulars. They can tell that something special and other-worldly is indeed taking place – something unlike anything else they have ever experienced – and this can draw them back again, to learn more.

On the basis of the natural knowledge of God, even an unbeliever would sense that if there is a God to be worshiped, those who do worship him will be serious about it. To the extent that a public worship service can serve an evangelistic purpose, then, the best way for it to do so, is for that service to exude an attitude of joyful yet sublime reverence, and deep respect for all that is holy. An unregenerated person, in his spiritual darkness, does not yet know where to find God. But he does at least know that if God can be found anywhere, it will likely not be in a setting or atmosphere of frivolity and silliness. (David Jay Webber, “‘Walking Together’ in Faith and Worship: Exploring the Relationship between Doctrinal Unity and Liturgical Unity in the Lutheran Church,” pp. 233-36. Emphases in original.)

One public Mass should be celebrated on the Lord’s Day for communicants, in the customary vestments, at a covered altar, with the customary vessels and lights. (Danish Church Order, 1537, in *Reformation Worship: Liturgies from the Past for the Present*, edited by Jonathan Gibson and Mark Earngey [Greensboro, North Carolina: New Growth Press, 2018], p. 259)

In order to preserve unity in liturgical forms and ceremonies, the synod recommends to its congregations that they use the Order of Worship based on the Danish-Norwegian liturgy of 1685 and agenda of 1688, or the Common Order of Worship [the Common Service], as each congregation may decide. (Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter I)



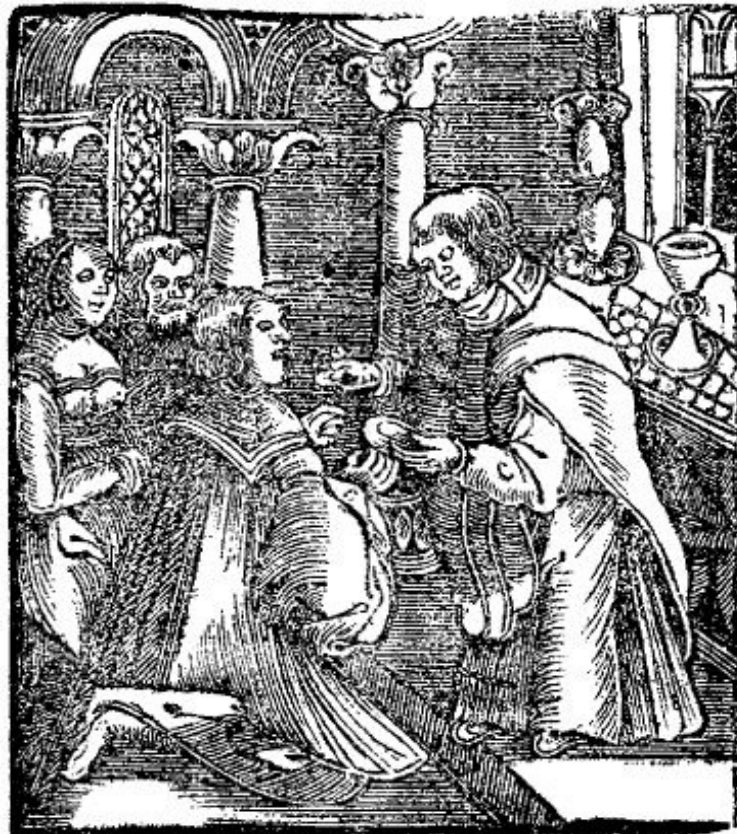
Portrayal of Martin Luther, vested in a surplice, preaching



Portrayal of Martin Luther, vested in a surplice, administering the Lord's Supper



Lutheran Divine Service in Wittenberg, Germany, 1523, portraying Martin Luther, vested in a chasuble, as the celebrant



Lutheran Divine Service in Wittenberg, Germany, 1530



Lutheran Divine Service, *Gebetbuch* illustration, 1535



Lutheran Divine Service in Wittenberg, Germany, 1523,
Portraying Martin Luther as a communicant



Lutheran Divine Service as it would have been conducted in Berlin, Germany, in 1539



Lutheran Divine Service as it would have been conducted in Berlin, Germany, in 1539



Lutheran Divine Service as it would have been conducted in Berlin, Germany, in 1539



Lutheran Divine Service as it would have been conducted in Berlin, Germany, in 1539



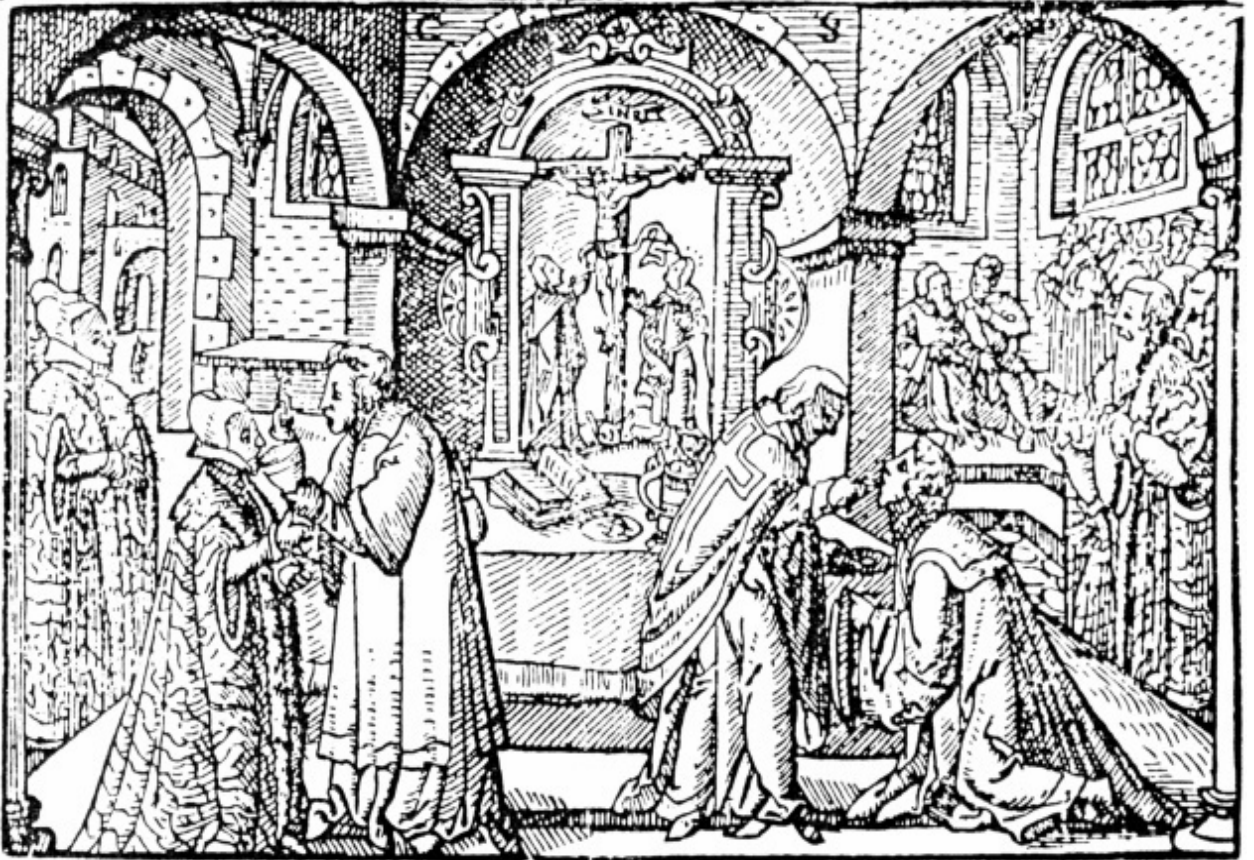
Lutheran Divine Service, illustration from a 1760 edition of the Small Catechism



Lutheran Divine Service in Wittenberg, Germany, 1558



Lutheran Divine Service in Langenbernsdorf bei Zwickau, Germany, 1590



Lutheran Divine Service in Nürnberg, Germany, 1577



Lutheran Divine Service in Repperndorf bei Kitzingen, Germany, 1608



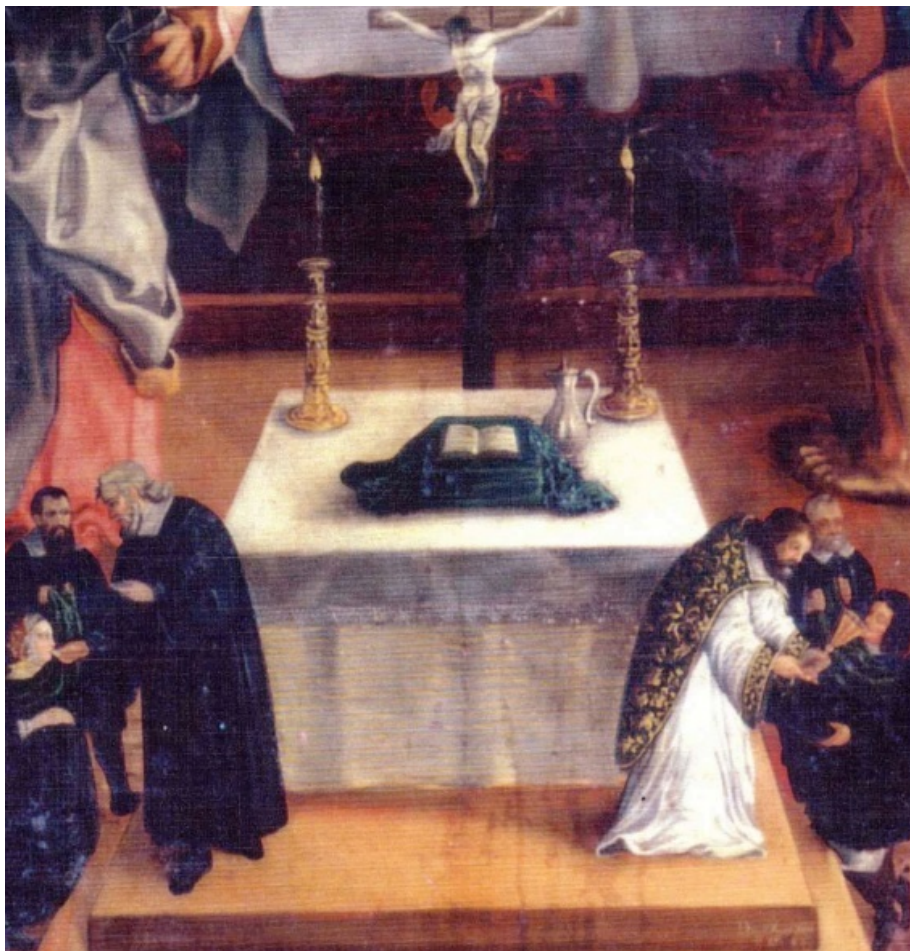
Lutheran Divine Service in Hamburg, Germany, circa 1650



Lutheran Divine Service in Rengersdorf am Queis, Silesia, 1572



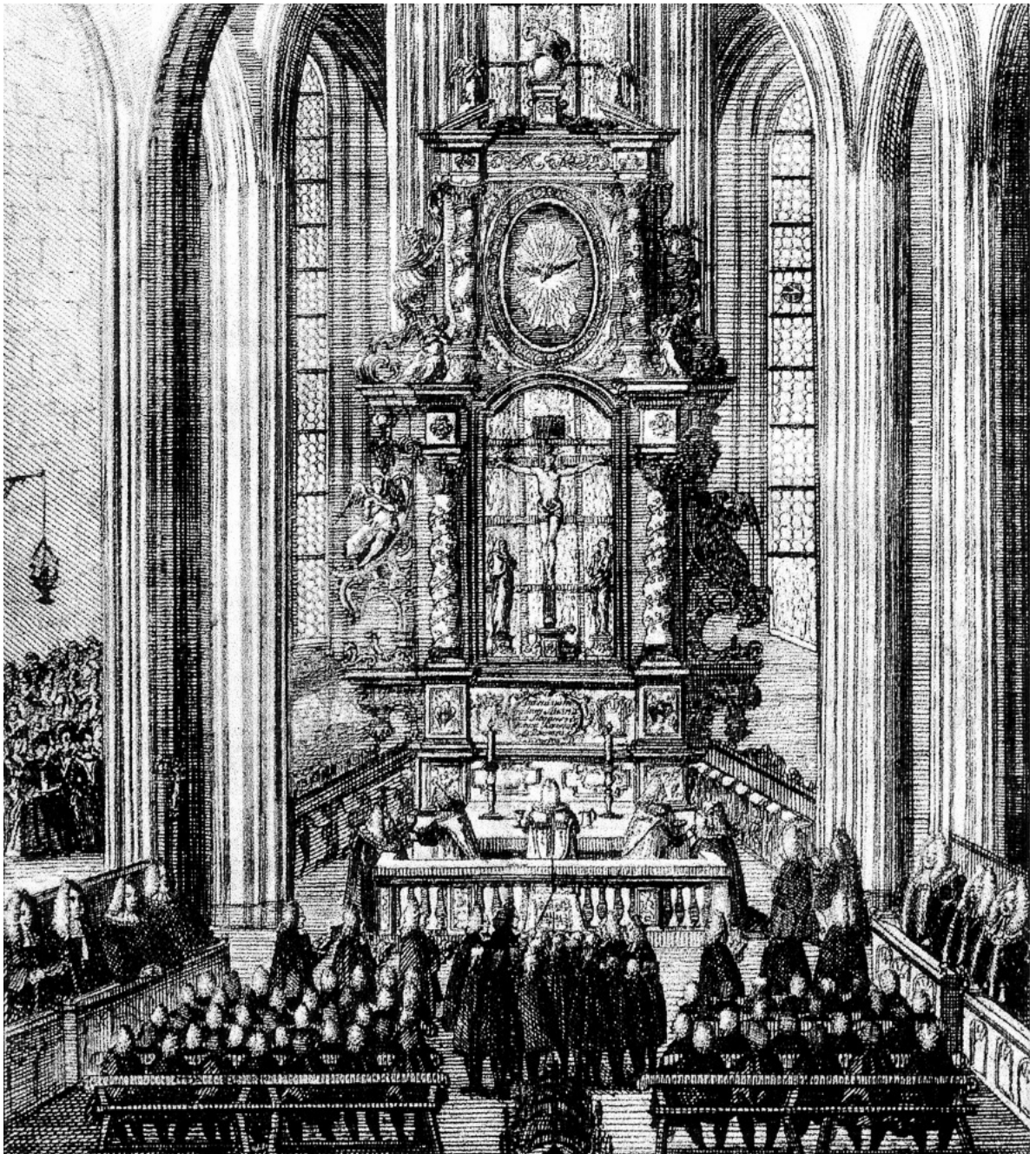
Lutheran Divine Service in Salzhemmendorf, Germany, 1620



Lutheran Divine Service in Olbernhau, Germany, 1648



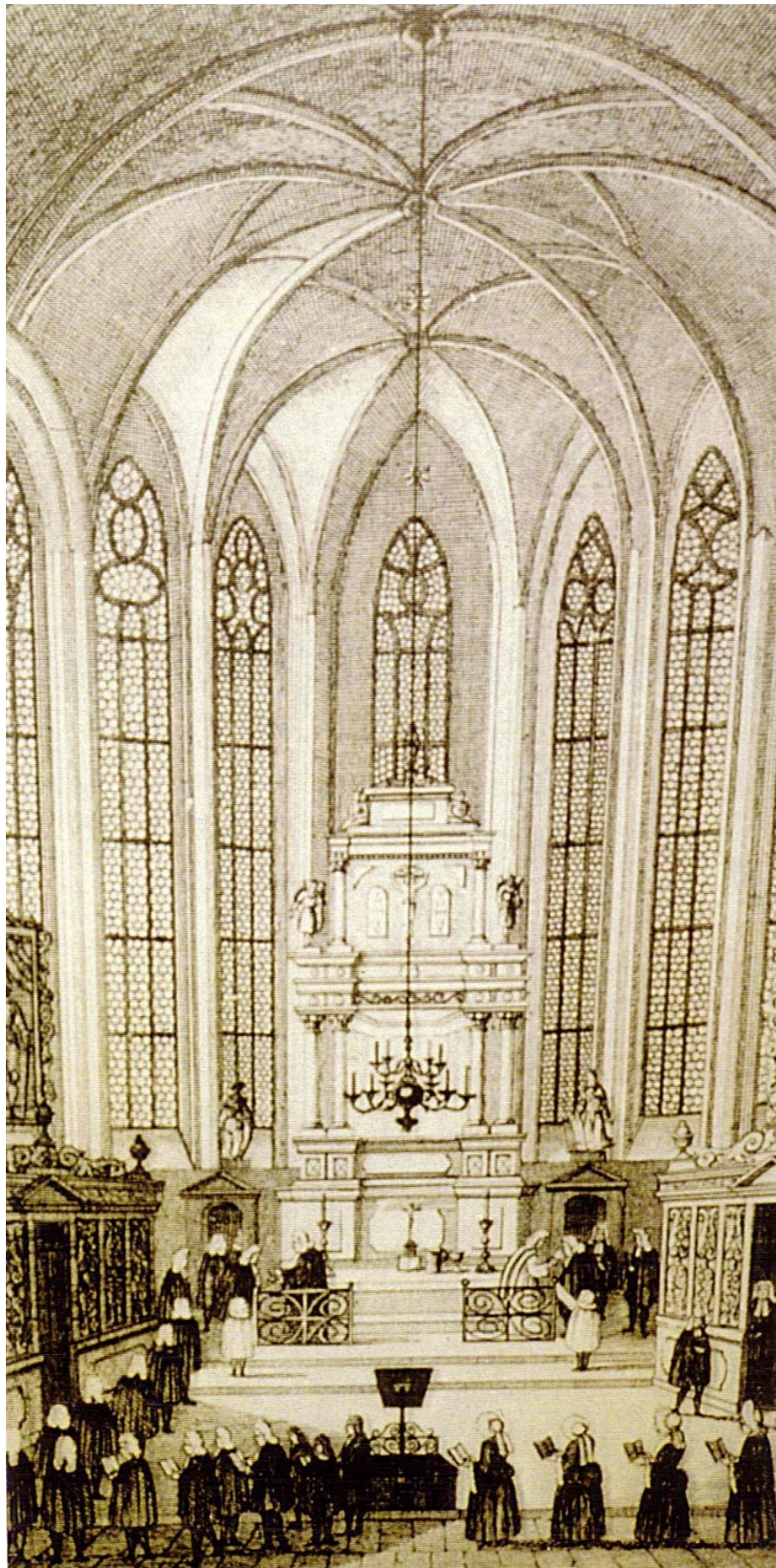
Lutheran Divine Service in Nürnberg, Germany, 1798



Lutheran Divine Service in Nürnberg, Germany, 1718



Lutheran Divine Service in Schleswig-Holstein, 1590



Lutheran Divine Service in Dresden, Germany, 1760



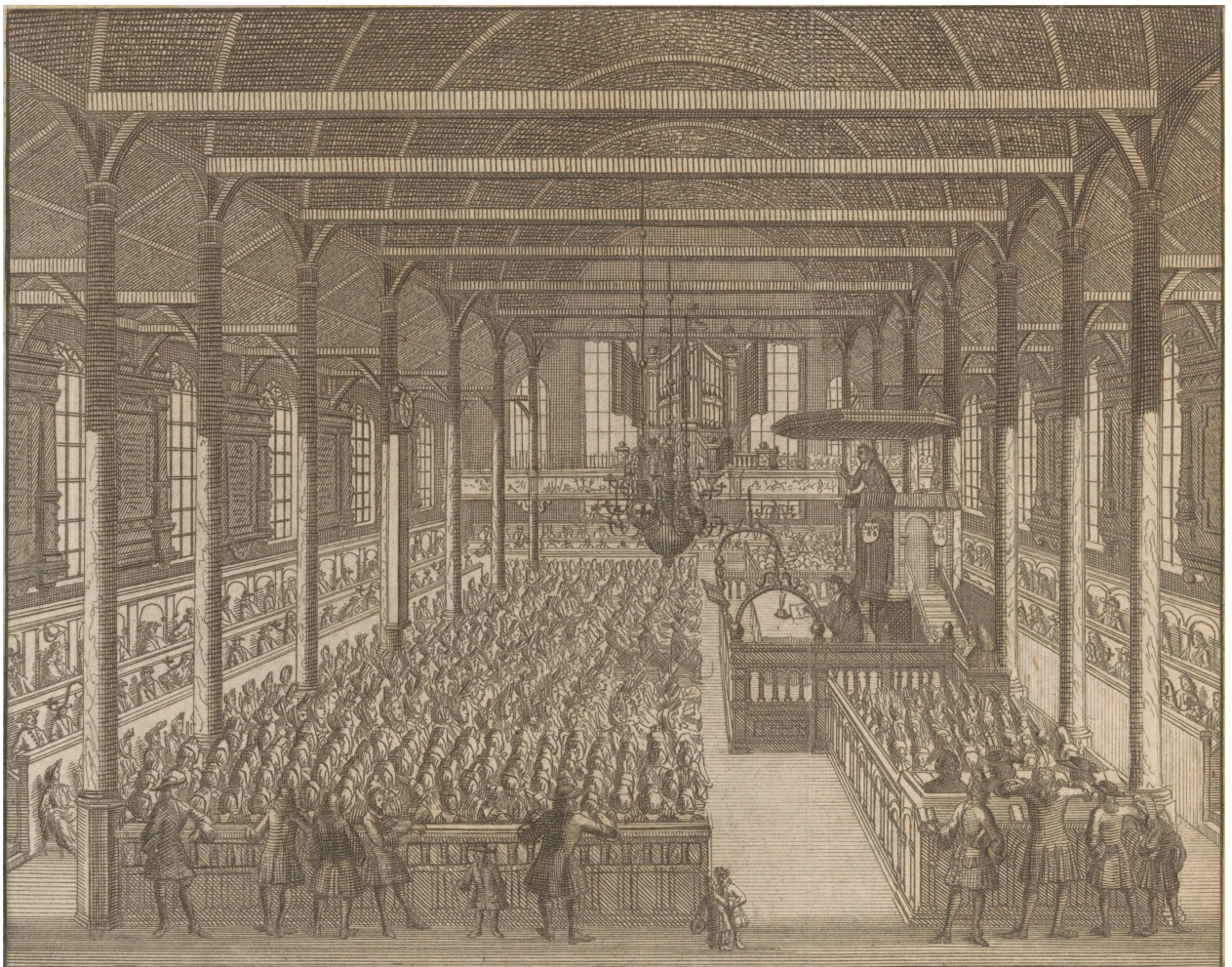
Lutheran Divine Service in Worms, Germany, 1524



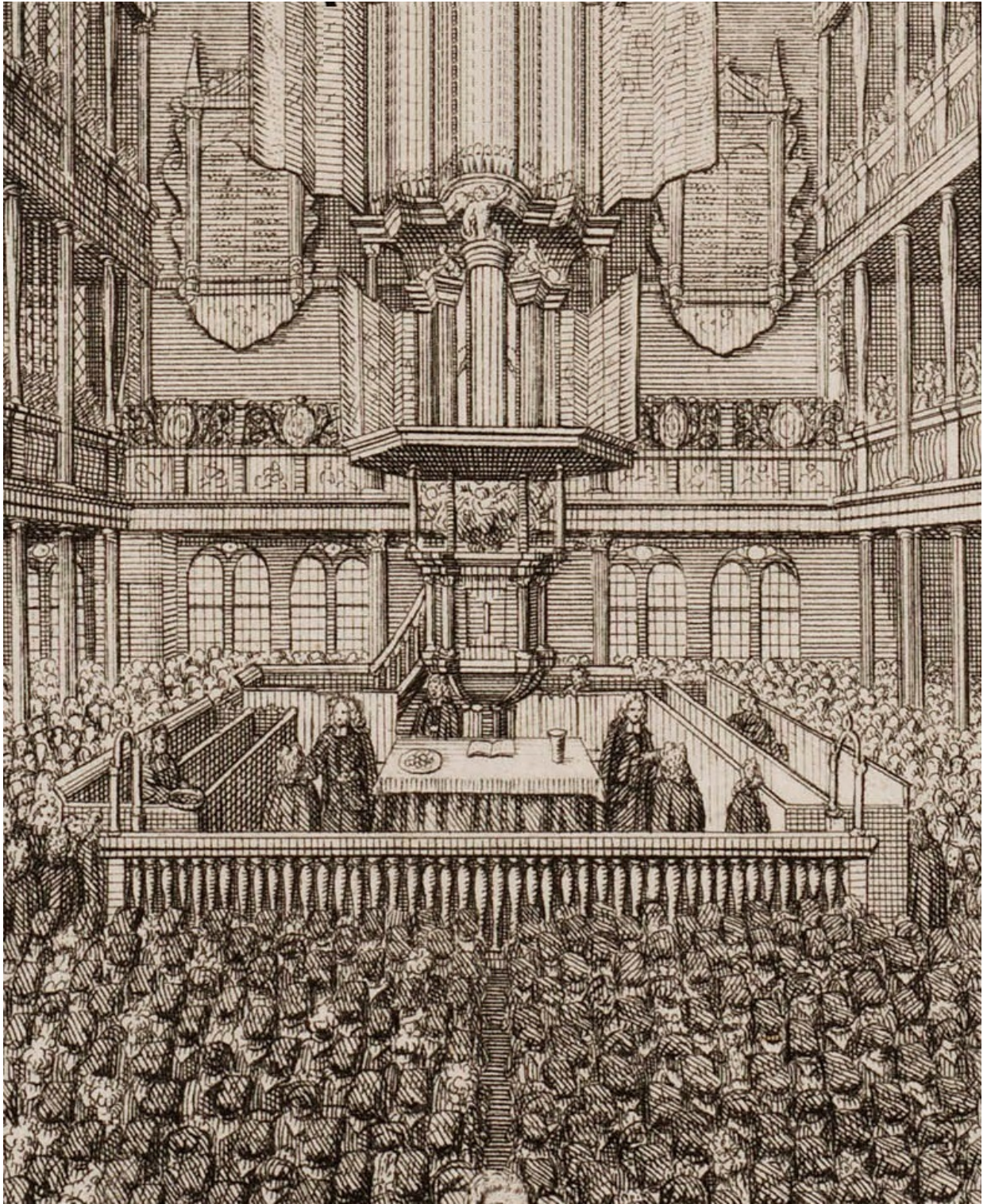
Distribution of the blood of Christ in Hetzdorf (Uckermark), Germany, 1620



Lutheran worship service in London, England, 1709



Lutheran worship service in Leiden, in the Netherlands, 1712



Lutheran Divine Service in Amsterdam, in the Netherlands, eighteenth century



Lutheran Divine Service in Mühlberg an der Elbe, Germany, 1569



Lutheran Divine Service in Denmark, nineteenth century



Lutheran Divine Service in Sauland, Norway, 1846



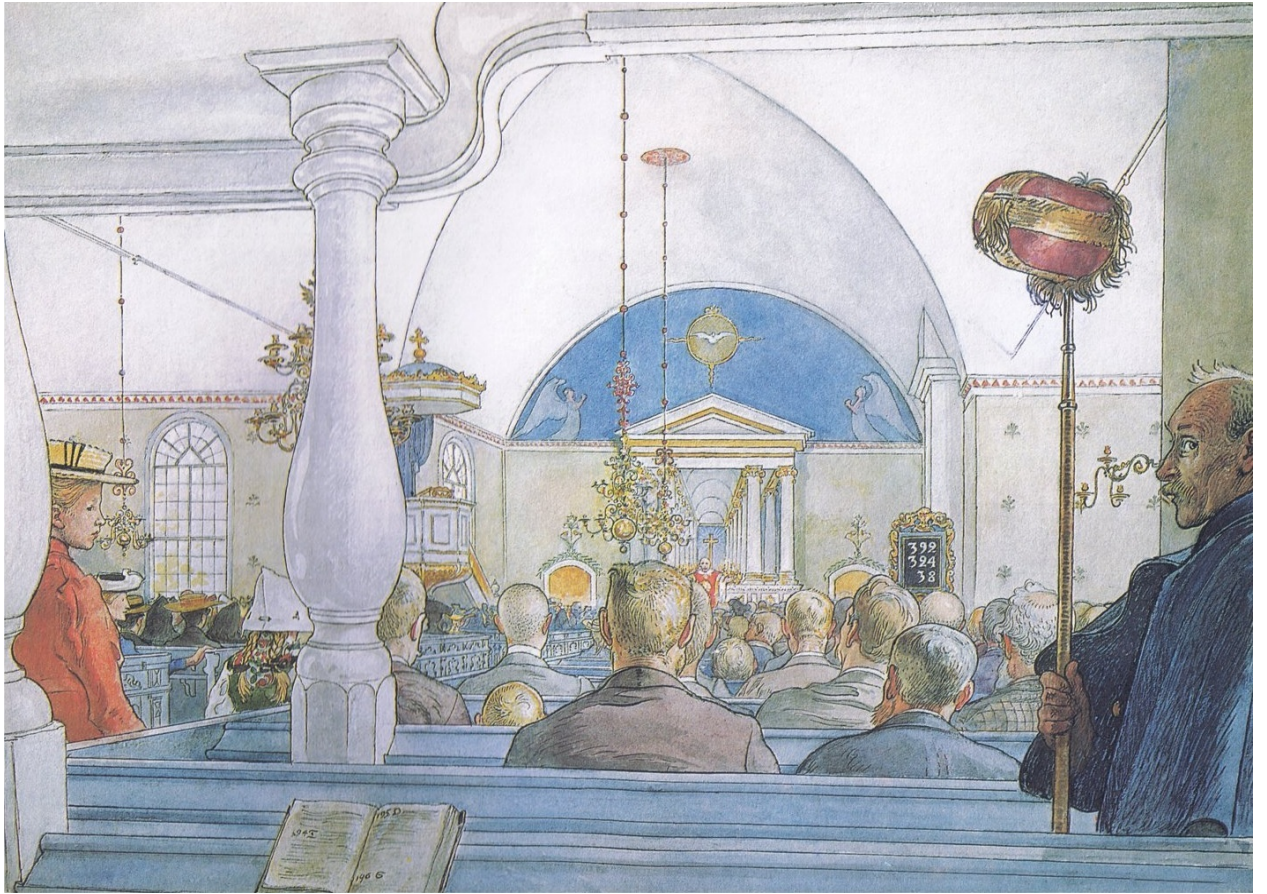
Lutheran Divine Service (with Confirmation and First Communion) in Sweden, 1881



Lutheran Divine Service in Sweden, 1856



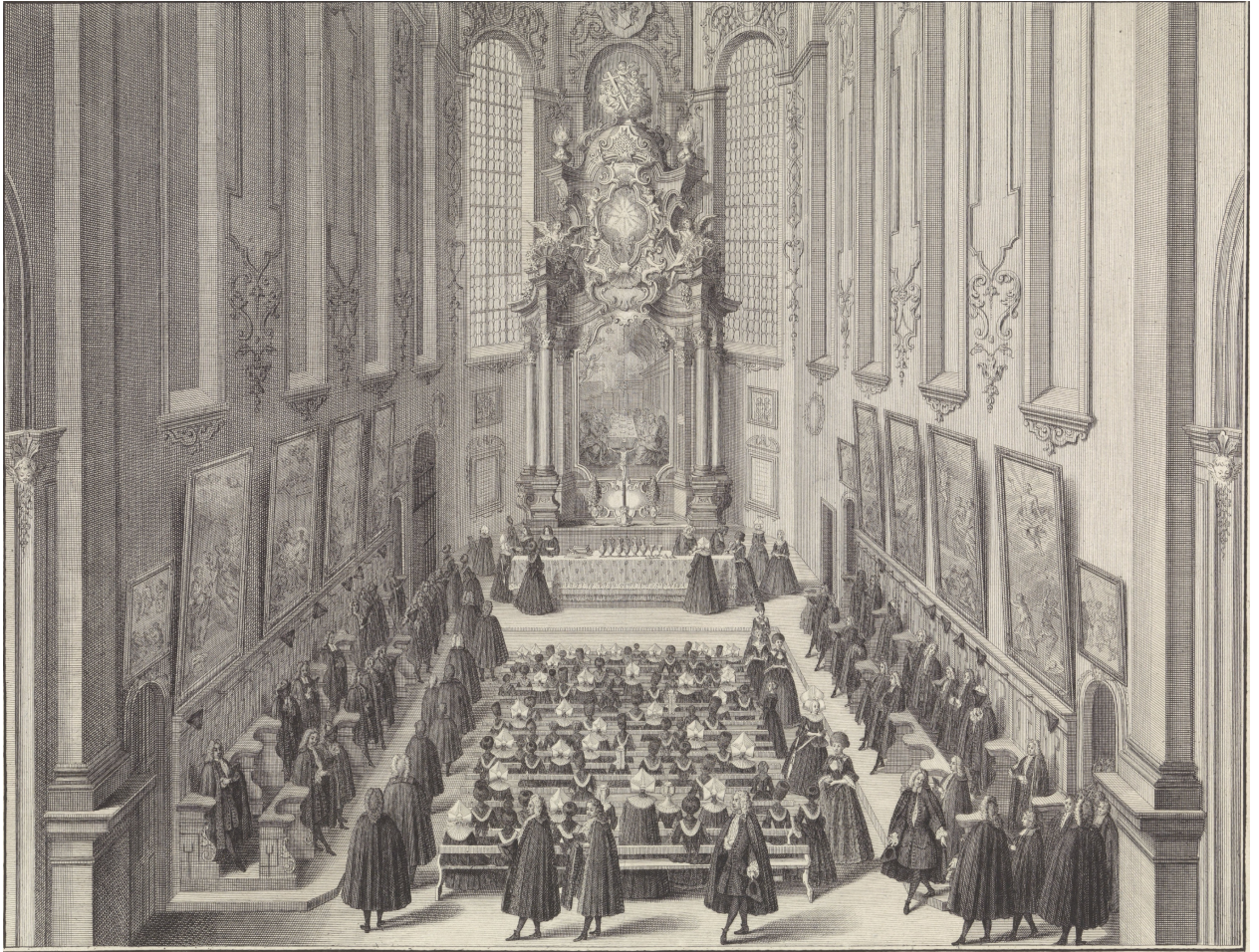
Lutheran Divine Service in Skåne County, Sweden, nineteenth century



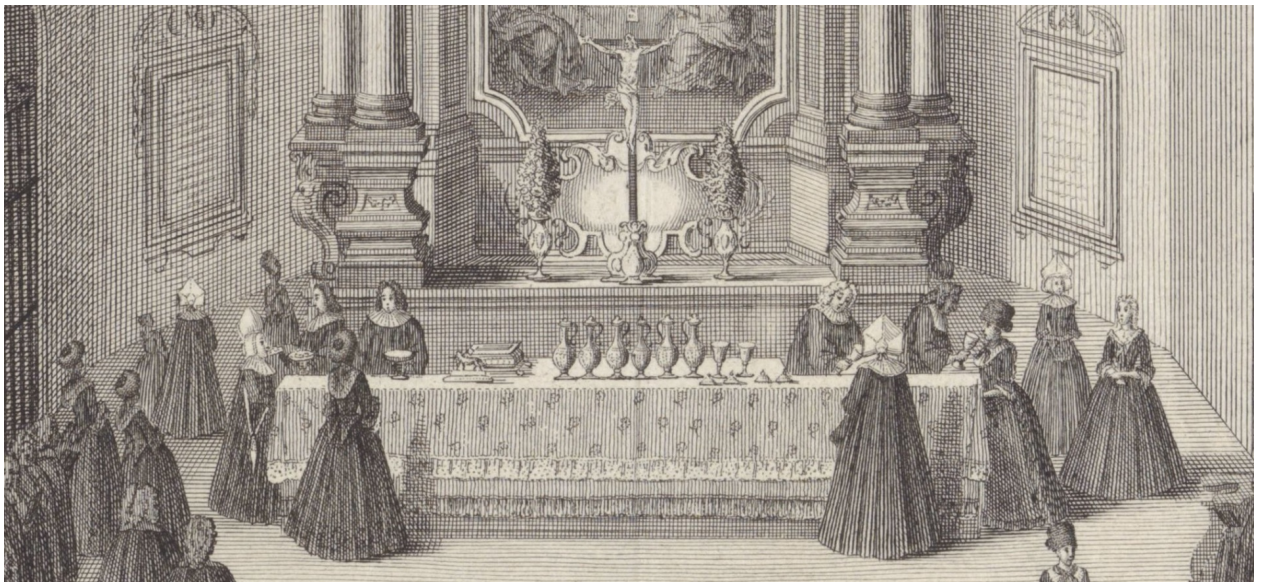
Lutheran Divine Service in Sundborn, Sweden, 1905



Lutheran Divine Service in Sundborn, Sweden, 1905 (magnification)



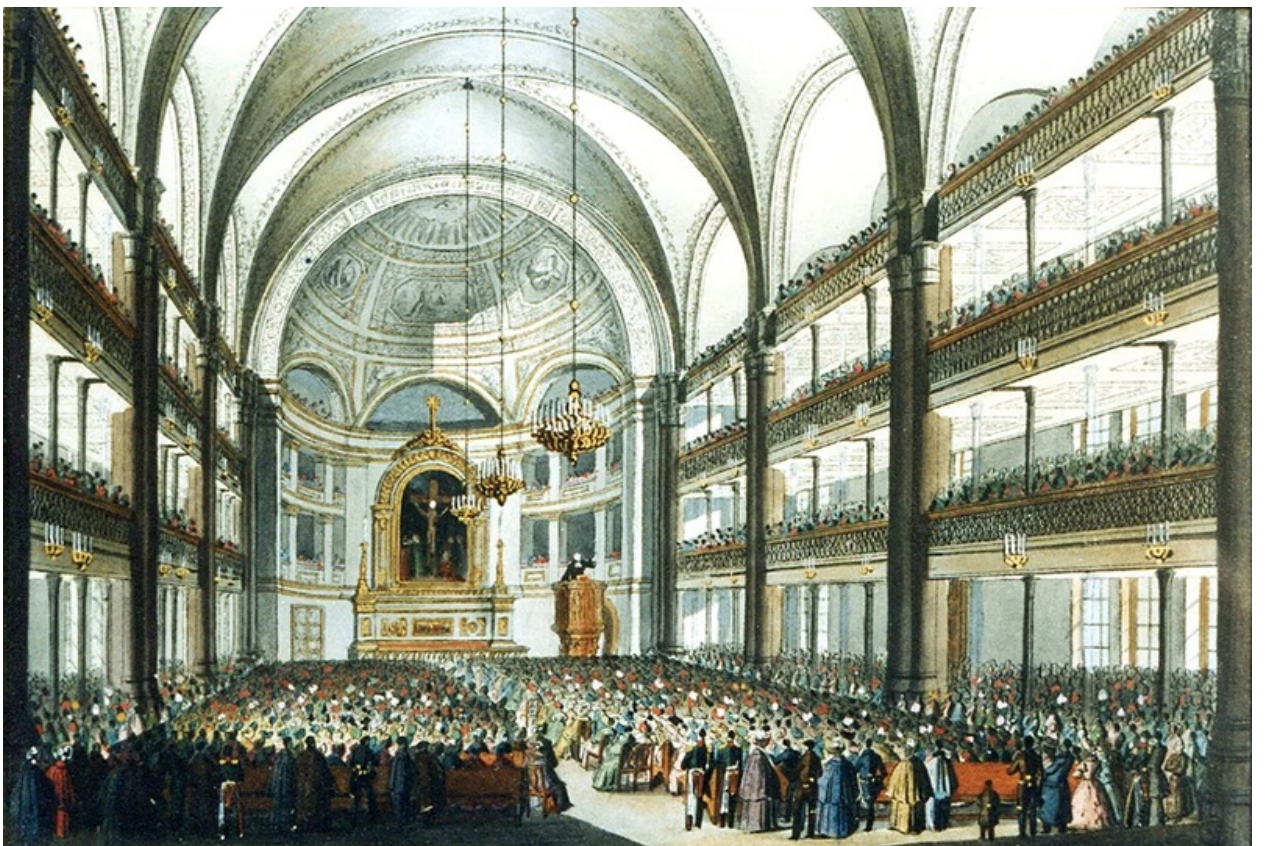
Lutheran Divine Service in Augsburg, Germany, 1732



Lutheran Divine Service in Augsburg, Germany, 1732 (magnification)



Lutheran worship service in Saint Petersburg, Russia, 1840s



Lutheran worship service in Saint Petersburg, Russia, mid nineteenth century



Distribution of the body of Christ in Zwickau, Germany, 1661



Distribution of the blood of Christ in Zwickau, Germany, 1661



Lutheran church life: The preaching of the Gospel, the distribution of the Lord's Supper, and the administration of Baptism (to a convert from Judaism), *Bedebug* illustration, 1531



Lutheran church life: Altarpiece in Torslunde, Denmark, 1561



Lutheran church life in Opcno, Czechia, 1575



Lutheran worship service in Batavia, Dutch East Indies (Jakarta, Indonesia), 1785



Lutheran Divine Service, illustration from an early edition of Luther's Small Catechism

The Singing Choir, ¹Ludwig Miller, ²John Barnitz, ³George Snyder,
⁴Christopher Stoehr, ⁵Daniel Lauman, ⁶Levis Shive, ⁷William Fornschild,
⁸George Barnitz, ⁹Steffe Horn, ¹⁰George Miller, ¹¹Michael Eurich,
¹²mis. Herman, ¹³mis. Laub, ¹⁴mis. Stoehr, ¹⁵mis. Cramer, ¹⁶mis. Hay,
 Pastor, Rev. Jacob Goering.

The Organist
 John Morris.
 Charles Fisker.



In Side of the old Lutheran Church in 1800. York, Pa.
 1. the Sexton, Henry Bannix, and his wife; the fire maker, old Brener; 2.
 3. John Hay Jr. president, 4. Jacob Barnitz, Sr. sexton, 5. Jacob Hay, 6. Melos D'hl, 6.
 7. George Striobig, 8. philipe Kisinger, 9. col. G. Adams, 10. Michael Smys, 11. martin Lbertin.
 12. Christian Samman, 13. John Creb, 14. Jacob Cramer, 15. philipe Sr, 16. the are-tan, Mar

Lutheran worship service in York, Pennsylvania, 1800



Memorial Service for George Washington at Zion
Lutheran Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1799

*In every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and bless you.
(Exodus 20:24, ESV)*



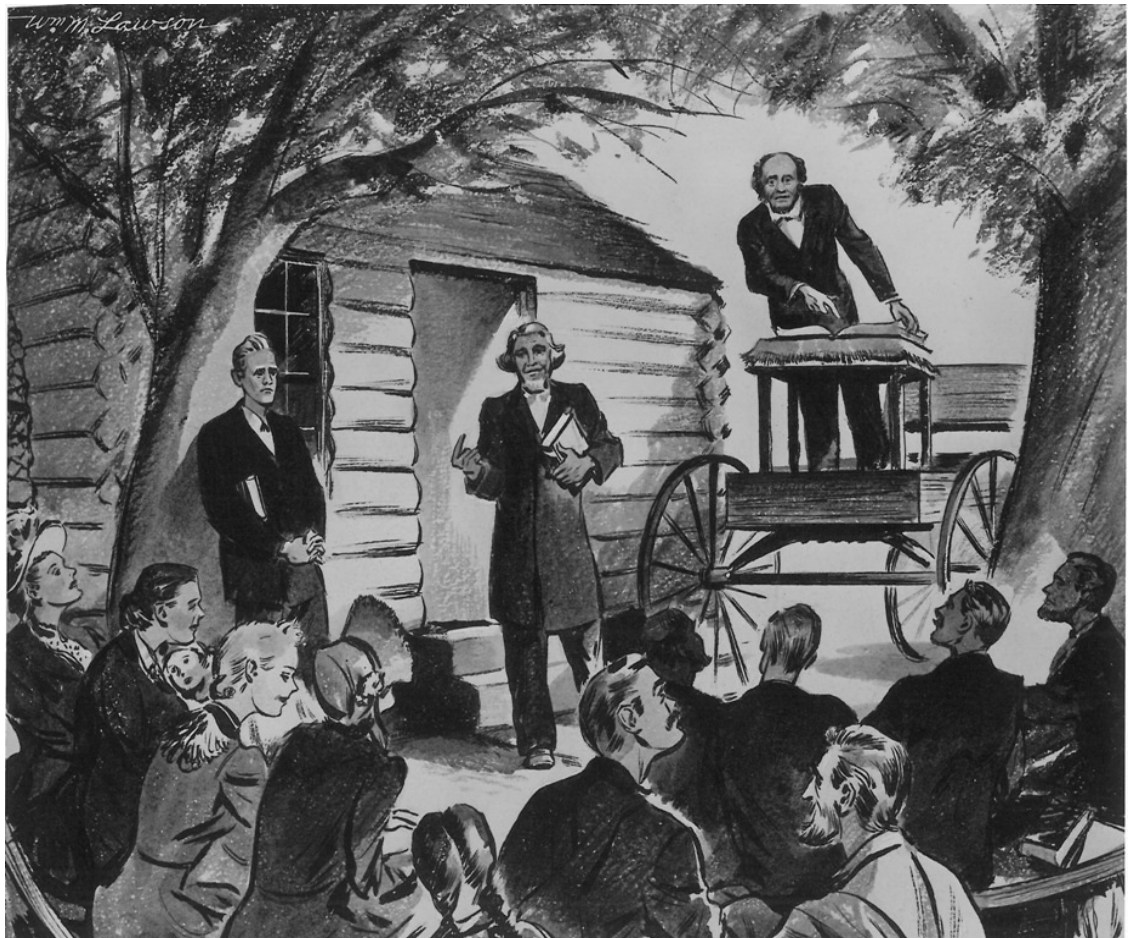
Missionary Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg preaching a farewell sermon in Tranquebar, India, 1714



Pastor Henry Melchior Muhlenburg preaching in a barn in Trappe, Pennsylvania, 1742



Pastor J. W. C. Dietrichson preaching under the oak trees in Koshkonong, Wisconsin, 1844



Pastor / Professor C. F. W. Walther preaching in German from the back of a wagon, with Pastor Jonathan Moser translating into English, in Gravelton, Missouri, 1872

Recommended Lutheran Liturgical Reconstruction Recordings:

