

"I was glad when they said unto me, let us go unto the house of the Lord." Psalm 122.1

Each liturgy or worship service with appropriate reverence and praise in and of itself is a pleasing offering to Almighty God. Given time and space and our admiration for routine and familiarity each and every divine service we attend, whether here at our Cathedral or at some other church, provides the opportunity to offer authentic worship and be graced by God whether at Morning/Evening Prayer or at a celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

Most parishioners of the Cathedral Parish of St. John the Baptist attend one service on Sunday as do most Anglicans across Canada. Each of our five services is an integral part of a comprehensive day of thanksgiving and praise. Sunday at the Cathedral follows a faithful discipline of a somewhat traditional and rather complex understanding of worship. Time is the most valuable gift we manage as Christian stewards today. While I am not suggesting we need to offer more than one sacred hour of worship on Sunday or that finding another free hour in our busy schedules is likely, I do want to point out how and where each sacred hour of Sunday's worship fits together as a completed puzzle forms a beautiful picture.

Sunday at the Cathedral begins with a shortened version of Morning Prayer at 7:30 a.m. according to The Book of Common Prayer. The appointed lessons are those for Sunday according to the Lectionary for the Daily Offices in the Book of Common Prayer with the appropriate Collect. There are no hymns or sermon at this service.

The first celebration of Holy Eucharist at 8:00 a.m. is what some call 'Quiet Communion' as there are no sermons or hymns. This

traditional time of 'making one's communion' in the past was preceded by various versions of fasting and continues to do so by many who attend this service. The two appointed lessons for this service are found in the Eucharistic Lectionary printed in The Book of Common Prayer.

The second Celebration of Holy Eucharist at 9:15 a.m. uses our contemporary rite – The Book of Alternative Services. Although our congregation at this service is no greater than the previous one, we do have a sermon and hymns. The liturgy is sung according to our practice, some of the priests sing the Eucharistic prayer as well. We use the new hymn book, Common Praise, and the three appointed Lessons and Psalm for this service are found in the Revised Common Lectionary which is used by a number of worldwide denominations. There is a sense of unity in the Church as we use these appointed Lessons which means we are following a similar calendar with the worldwide church. Occasionally at this service and the one following we have Celebrations of Holy Baptism. Religious instruction for children, Children's Church, is offered during the sermon. At this celebration and the one following the gifts of bread and wine are presented with the collection to remind us that with our money the bread and wine are offerings from the fruits of our labour given as part of our sacrificial gift for the ministry and service of the congregation and the world.

The third Celebration of Holy Eucharist, at 11:00 a.m., using The Book of Common Prayer, is in the context of a Choral Setting with a sermon and hymns from The Book of Common Praise. The three appointed lessons are found in the Revised Common lectionary as in the previous service, omitting the Psalm. Following The Children's Talk we offer religious instruction for our Sunday School and Confirmation Class. This service is very much in the tradition of classical Anglican Choral worship using a variety of settings and motets during the Communion. There is always a consideration for the

selection of an organ postlude by the organist during which parishioners are welcome to remain seated. We are probably only one of two churches in our diocese maintaining this choral tradition. Attention is always given for the hymn-tunes, published in our Cathedral Messenger, honouring our rich and varied history recognizing the desire for congregations to sing the hymns lustily. We have various celebrations at this time including Choral Matins, Service for Young People on Mothering Sunday, Civic Services (Battle of Britain, The Commonwealth Service, Battle of the Atlantic, etc.), The Sacrament of Confirmation, Advent and Candlemas Processions, and others as opportunities present themselves.

Our final service on Sunday, Choral Evensong, follows the traditional order of service from The Book of Common Prayer with three hymns, a Choir Anthem and a sermon. Our settings might be as much as 500 years old to say nothing of our varied singing of Coverdale's version of the Psalter found in the Prayer-book. As at Morning Prayer, the appointed Lesson and Psalm are those for Sunday according to the Lectionary for the Daily Offices in the Book of Common Prayer with the appropriate Collect.

Part of the complexity of our Sunday worship is that occasionally at Choral Evensong part of the challenge for the preacher is that the second lesson follows the Sunday morning lesson from the week previous, or vice versa. Given that we use three different lectionaries on Sunday, one would expect repetition to occur from time to time. A lectionary is a series of Bible lessons for each day based upon the Church Calendar. Using three lectionaries means we also face the reality of observing at least two calendars. For example the Revised Common Lectionary recognizes February 15 as the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany while both Lectionaries in the Book of Common prayer recognizes this date as Sexagesima, approximately the 60<sup>th</sup> day before Easter. The result is that the appointed lessons at our 8:00 a.m. and

6:30 p.m. services are different offering a focus towards Lent and Easter rather than Epiphany, a challenge for any preacher.

Printing an Ordo (an outline of the particular parts of the liturgy) in The Cathedral Messenger helps everyone, including the clergy, follow the proper lessons, hymns, settings, etc.

Our Sunday worship begins and ends appropriately in services of prayer normally with three celebrations of Holy Eucharist between. Most of us will attend one service where we are familiar with the format as familiarity allows us to take ownership of that sacred hour where offer our full and reverent worship to Almighty God in each context. Attending Evening Prayer enables parishioners and clergy to have a fuller appreciation for the redeeming of time and the sacredness of the day as we hear the Psalms and anthems sung, join in singing the hymns, and hear the lessons for a particular day. For example, as much as I enjoy making my communion on Easter morning at the break of dawn, and attending the Choral Eucharist at 11:00 a. m.; the day appropriately is drawn to a close at Choral Evensong which I endeavor to attend whether I am scheduled to be present or not. Faithfulness in our discipleship as a parish family demands appropriate preparation for one whole day of worship, a unity in and of itself. As a priest in the parish we give our full attention and reverent praise in each service so that every Sunday a full and complete, albeit complex, offering of worship is given to God.

Jotie Noel, TSSF  
Dean and Rector