

Handouts for Holy Communion Class at Christ Episcopal Church

This document includes the six handouts for the Holy Communion Class taught by The Rev. Dave Johnson at Christ Episcopal Church in Charlottesville, Virginia during Epiphany 2009.

Class 1: Holy Communion in Scripture

Introduction

The classic Protestant Reformation definition of the Church is a congregation of people saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8-9) "in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance" (Article XIX of the Thirty-Nine Articles, BCP 871). Sacraments are "outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure and certain means by which we receive that grace" (BCP 857). The ultimate expression of God's grace is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:10, etc.). The sacraments are one of the means God uses to communicate his grace (his unearned, undeserved, one-way love) to us.

In the Protestant tradition the two sacraments are Holy Baptism and Holy Communion (Holy Eucharist), because in Scripture we find that Jesus Christ instituted both of these sacraments. He instituted Holy Baptism at the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) and Holy Communion at the Last Supper (Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25). Typically Christians experience Holy Baptism once and receive Holy Communion many times.

Today we will examine Holy Communion in Scripture with particular attention to Jesus' institution of Holy Communion as found in 1 Corinthians 11:23-25; Matthew 26:26-29;

Mark 14:22-25; and Luke 22:17-20. Scholars maintain that Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians was written sometime in the mid-50's A.D. while Paul was in Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:8), which predates the writing of the synoptic accounts of the gospel (Matthew = between 70 and 80 A.D.; Mark = between 65 and 70 A.D.; and Luke = around 70 A.D.) and means the account of Jesus' institution of the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 is the earliest account we have. Therefore, there is more attention given to this account. The unique emphases of the accounts in Matthew, Mark, and Luke are then addressed.

1 Corinthians 11:23-25

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The verbs "received" and "handed on" here are technical terms for receiving and handing on traditions, so that many scholars think Paul's account of Jesus' institution of Holy Communion was tradition passed on to him from the apostles (perhaps Peter—Gal. 1:18). However, it may also refer to a direct revelation to Paul from the Lord (Gal. 1:12).

Jesus instituted the sacrament of Holy Communion "on the night when he was betrayed." Just hours before his passion and death Jesus instituted Holy Communion so we could experience again and again "remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion" (BCP 335); in other words, so we could experience again and again the grace of God.

As head of the table in standard Jewish custom Jesus gave thanks to God and then "took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it." Since the Last Supper was the Passover meal, during which the Jews commemorated Israel's exodus from Egypt, the

bread was unleavened according to God's command (Exod. 12:15). In the same way the Jews remembered God's deliverance of Israel from bondage in Egypt when eating the unleavened bread at Passover, Christians can remember God's deliverance from sin and death by God through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. The Greek word translated here, "when he had given thanks" is *eucharistesas*, from which we derive the term "Eucharist" for Holy Communion (1979 BCP).

He then said, "This is my body that is for you." This is often used to defend the doctrine of transubstantiation, that the substance of the bread at Holy Communion is changed into the actual body of Christ. However, the New Testament is clear that corporally Jesus ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father (Acts 1:9-11 and 5:31; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 12:2, etc.). In addition, Jesus often spoke metaphorically about himself (see the "I am" sayings in John 6:35; 8:12; 10:7 and 11; 14:6; and 15:1). Moreover, in Article XXVIII of the Thirty-nine Articles we find the historical Protestant Anglican view of transubstantiation:

Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions (BCP 873).

When Jesus said, "This is my body that is for you," his emphasis was not on the bread being changed in substance to his body, but rather that the broken bread signified his body which he would give for the sins of the world in his impending death on the cross. What happened to Jesus' body in his passion and death was "for" us, so when we receive the bread at Holy Communion we remember that Jesus died on the cross "for" us. In dying "for" us Jesus died in our place and took our sins upon himself (Isa. 53:4-6; Rom. 5:6-8; and 2 Cor. 5:21, etc.). At Holy Communion Christ is not present corporally in the bread, but rather present

spiritually by faith, as we see in Article XVIII, “The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is Faith” (BCP 873).

When Jesus gave the disciples the bread he specifically commanded them, “Do this in remembrance of me.” The verb “do” here is in the present continuous tense, meaning “keep on doing this.” The Greek word for “remembrance” here is *anamnesis*, meaning to remember intentionally (the opposite of amnesia). As Christians we can participate in Holy Communion not just once, but many times because Jesus commanded it. Remembering what Jesus did for us in the past gives us comfort for the present and future. Moreover, Jesus reiterated his emphasis on remembrance when he gave the disciples the cup of wine, “Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” When we participate in Holy Communion we are not doing anything for God, but rather remembering intentionally what God has done for us in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

“After supper,” the Passover supper Jesus shared with his disciples, Jesus gave the cup of wine to the disciples and said, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood.” In many places in Scripture God established covenants with his people: for example, Noah in Genesis 9:1-17 and Abraham in Genesis 15. After delivering Israel from four centuries of bondage to the Egyptians, God established the covenant of the law with Moses and all Israel (Exod. 24:1-8), a covenant which required the shedding of blood. When Jesus shed his blood on the cross, he established the new covenant of grace. This was in fulfillment of these words God spoke centuries earlier to the prophet Jeremiah:

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land

of Egypt—a covenant that they broke... I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people... I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more (Jer. 31:31-34).

This concept of Jesus fulfilling this prophecy from Jeremiah and establishing his new covenant of grace is addressed thoroughly in Hebrews 8. As with the bread that Jesus gave, when Jesus told his disciples, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood,” he was not saying that the substance of the wine had been transformed into his blood, but that the cup of wine symbolized the blood he would shed on the cross to establish the new covenant of grace. On the cross Jesus Christ demonstrated that he is “the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” (John 1:29), or as Paul put it earlier in 1 Corinthians: “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us” (5:7, KJV). Moreover, Jesus’ intention that Holy Communion be done periodically by Christians, not just once, is reiterated with his words, “Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

Matthew 26:26-29

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

Matthew emphasizes four things in his account that Paul does not. First, Matthew describes Jesus as saying a blessing before breaking the bread and giving it to the disciples, and also giving thanks when taking the cup instead of the bread. The blessing Jesus used may have been the following traditional Jewish blessing: “Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.” Similarly, the words of thanks Jesus used

with the cup may have been: “Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.”

Second, unlike the other three accounts, in Matthew’s account Jesus specifically commands the disciples to “eat” the bread; and “drink from it (the cup), all of you.” This is the main reason we drink from a common cup at Holy Communion. When we partake of Holy Communion we receive and internalize in a tangible way the grace of God given us in Jesus Christ.

Third, when giving the cup to the disciples Jesus describes his “blood of the covenant” as being “poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” In the Old Testament sacrificial system blood was poured out of sacrificial animals so that the sins of Israel would be forgiven (Lev. 1-7 and 16), for “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins” (Heb. 9:22). Jesus blood was poured out on the cross once for all for the forgiveness of the sins of the whole world (Isa. 53:12; John 1:29; 1 Pet. 3:18; Heb. 10:0; 1 John 2:1-2, etc.).

Fourth, when giving the disciples the cup of wine Jesus adds, “I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” Jesus here comforts the disciples, promising them that in the future when his kingdom is established once and for all there will be a great heavenly banquet (Rev. 19:6-9) “in my Father’s kingdom.” (We also see in Matthew’s account of the gospel that Jesus taught his disciples to pray, “Our Father, who art in heaven...”—6:9-13). In the meantime we are to participate in Holy Communion on a regular basis and in so doing “proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor. 11:26).

Mark 14:22-25

While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

Unlike Paul and Matthew, Mark emphasizes here that when the disciples received the cup of wine from Jesus, “all of them drank from it.” This may have included Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus, and certainly included the other disciples, who all fled when he was arrested. Also, at the end of Jesus’ words of institution, while Matthew refers to “my Father’s kingdom” Mark refers to as “the kingdom of God.” It is one and the same because Jesus is the Son of God (Mark 1:1, etc.).

Luke 22:17-20

Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”

Unlike Paul, Matthew, and Mark, Luke mentions Jesus taking a cup of wine before and after breaking and distributing the bread. At a typical Passover meal there were four cups of wine that were shared. Unlike Matthew, Luke places Jesus’ words, “I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes,” after the first cup mentioned, rather than the last cup. It is possible that Jesus may have reiterated these words as he gave the last cup and that Luke did not record that to avoid redundancy. Like Paul, but unlike Matthew and Mark, Luke refers to Jesus’ emphasis on his body being given “for you,”

and also Jesus' command, "Do this in remembrance of me." Both Paul and Luke's accounts place heavy emphasis the bread representing Jesus' body broken "for" us, and that when we partake of Holy Communion we do so "in remembrance" of Jesus, both who is, the Son of God, and what he did, die on the cross to atone for the sins of the world.

Conclusion

When taken together, these four New Testament accounts give us a full and beautiful picture of the Last Supper. Although these accounts vary slightly in emphasis, the intent is the same. Each account communicates clearly that Jesus Christ instituted the sacrament of Holy Communion so that we could experience repeatedly his grace, his unearned, undeserved, one-way love for us. The bread represents his body, which he gave for us. The wine represents his blood, which was poured out for us. Because of Jesus' death on the cross we have the forgiveness of sins and can live daily under God's covenant of grace, the "new covenant" established by Jesus' blood. When we celebrate Holy Communion, we receive his grace afresh, remember who he is and what he did on the cross for us, and "proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor. 11:26). Moreover, we anticipate the future heavenly banquet when we will join Jesus and all the saints at the table in the kingdom of our Heavenly Father.

Class 2: Holy Communion in the Early Church

The sacrament of Holy Communion has been a vital aspect of worship since the birth of the Christian Church. Following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13) the Apostle Peter preached the gospel, focusing on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ ("this man [Jesus of Nazareth], handed over to you according to the definite plan and

foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed... But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible to be held in its power” (Acts 2:23-24). Those who heard Peter’s sermon were convicted by the Holy Spirit (“they were cut to the heart”—2:37), and they asked, “What should we do?” (2:38). Peter responded, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (2:38). Three thousand repented, and were baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit. They formed the nucleus of the Early Church:

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved (Acts 2:42-47).

Members of the Early Church “devoted themselves to... the breaking of bread,” or in other words, Holy Communion. In addition Luke also records in the above passage that, “they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts.” This may also refer to Holy Communion, particularly as the culmination of a large meal, sometimes referred to as an agape feast. It is just such a feast that the Apostle Paul describes in his First Letter to the Corinthians (11:17-34), and within which, as we saw last week, we find the earliest account of Jesus’ institution of Holy Communion (11:23-25).

Weekly gatherings of the Early Church were held on Sundays. During Paul’s third missionary journey he and his companions shared Holy Communion with the Christians in Troas “on the first day of the week” (Acts 20:7). In addition, Paul instructed the Corinthians to take up regular collections “on the first day of every week” (1 Cor. 16:2). In his *First Apology*

Justin Martyr (100-165) demonstrates that these elements of weekly Christian worship continued into the second century:

And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succors the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead.

In time liturgies for Holy Communion were developed in the Early Church. Three sources of these liturgies are the Didache, the First Apology of Justin Martyr, and the Apostolic Tradition.

Didache

Although the exact date and authors of the Didache (from the Greek meaning, “teaching” and short for “The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles”) are unknown, many scholars assert that it was written in the latter part of the first century. It contains sixteen brief chapters on the Christian faith, and in the ninth and tenth chapters we get a glimpse of what occurred in the Early Church at Holy Communion:

Now concerning the Eucharist, give thanks this way. First, concerning the cup: We thank thee, our Father, for the holy vine of David Thy servant, which You madest known to us through Jesus Thy Servant; to Thee be the glory forever. And

concerning the broken bread: We thank Thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which You madest known to us through Jesus Thy Servant; to Thee be the glory forever. Even as this broken bread was scattered over the hills, and was gathered together and became one, so let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom; for Thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever. But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist, unless they have been baptized into the name of the Lord; for concerning this also the Lord has said, "Give not that which is holy to the dogs." But after you are filled, give thanks this way: We thank Thee, holy Father, for Thy holy name which You didst cause to tabernacle in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality, which You modest known to us through Jesus Thy Servant; to Thee be the glory forever. Thou, Master almighty, didst create all things for Thy name's sake; You gavest food and drink to men for enjoyment, that they might give thanks to Thee; but to us You didst freely give spiritual food and drink and life eternal through Thy Servant. Before all things we thank Thee that You are mighty; to Thee be the glory forever. Remember, Lord, Thy Church, to deliver it from all evil and to make it perfect in Thy love, and gather it from the four winds, sanctified for Thy kingdom which Thou have prepared for it; for Thine is the power and the glory forever. Let grace come, and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the God (Son) of David! If anyone is holy, let him come; if anyone is not so, let him repent. Maranatha. Amen
(<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/didache-roberts.html>)

In this liturgy of Holy Communion, referred to as “the grace of spiritual food and drink,” there are six references to giving thanks and six references to ascribing glory to God. There is also an admonishment against those who have not yet been baptized receiving Holy Communion. There is also an emphasis on God bringing together the Christians scattered around the world. The Christian Church in the Roman Empire was enduring persecution when the Didache was written, as is reflected in the petition, “Let grace come, and let this world pass away.” It is a powerful glimpse of Holy Communion liturgy in the Early Church.

First Apology of Justin Martyr

Justin Martyr (110-165) converted from pagan philosophy to Christianity, established a Christian school in Rome, and wrote several defenses, or “apologies,” for the Christian faith. Along with many other Christians, Justin suffered persecution at the hand of the Romans and in 165 was scourged and beheaded for refusing to sacrifice to Roman pagan gods. In his First Apology, completed around 155, we see elements of how Holy Communion was administered

in the Early Church. In this excerpt from chapter 65 of the First Apology, “Administration of the Sacraments,” Justin describes what happened after the newly baptized were welcomed into the church:

Having ended the prayers, we salute one another with a kiss. There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying Amen... And when the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion.

The celebrant or “president” is not given a standard Eucharistic prayer to read, but rather, simply “offers thanks at considerable length.” The congregation plays a vital role in the liturgy as they are called to “express their assent” twice. In chapter 66, “Of the Eucharist,” there is an emphasis on hearkening back to Jesus’ institution of Holy Communion and his death on the cross “for our salvation:”

And this food is called among us Eukaristia [the Eucharist], of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, “This do ye in remembrance of Me, this is My body;” and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, “This is My blood;” and gave it to them alone. (<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/justinmartyr-firstapology.html>).

The bread and wine here are referred to as Jesus' "flesh and blood." In John 6, following the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus metaphorically refers to eating his flesh and drinking his blood:

I am the bread of life... I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh... Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them' (John 6:48; 51; and 53-56).

In the Gospel According to John there are other "I am" sayings of Jesus that coincide with specific miracles. For example, Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" (8:12) and then healed a blind man (9:1-12); and Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life" (11:25) and then raised Lazarus from the dead (11:38-44). Moreover, Jesus also metaphorically referred to himself as "the gate for the sheep" (10:7), "the good shepherd" (10:11 and 14), "the way, the truth, and the life" (14:6), and "the vine" (15:1 and 4). So in John 6 when Jesus refers to eating his flesh and drinking his blood, he is speaking metaphorically as he often does in the Gospel According to John. He is also pointing to his death on the cross, when he gave his flesh "for the life of the world." Jesus' teaching here may certainly be foreshadowing Holy Communion, but he did not say these things specifically at the Last Supper. In fact, John records Jesus' washing the disciples' feet at the Last Supper (13:1-12), rather than his instituting Holy Communion.

The Apostolic Tradition

Written around 215, The Apostolic Tradition, formerly known as the "Egyptian Church Order," is attributed to be the work of Hippolytus (170-236), a leader in the Early Church in Rome. It contains the earliest known liturgy of Holy Communion. Chapter 4 of The

Apostolic Tradition contains many similarities to the Holy Eucharist liturgies we use in The Book of Common Prayer of 1979:

When he has been made bishop, let everyone offer him the kiss of peace, saluting him, for he has been made worthy of this. To him then let the deacons bring the oblation, and he with all the presbyters laying his hand on the oblation shall say giving thanks:

The Lord be with you.

And the people shall say: And with thy spirit.

And the bishop shall say: Lift up your hearts.

And the people shall say: We have them with the Lord.

And the bishop shall say: Let us give thanks unto the Lord.

And the people shall say: It is meet and right.

And forthwith he shall continue thus: We render thanks unto thee, O God, through Thy Beloved Child Jesus Christ, Whom in the last times Thou didst send to us to be a Savior and Redeemer and the Angel of Thy counsel; Who is Thy Word inseparable from Thee, through Whom Thou madest all things and in Whom Thou wast well-pleased; Whom Thou didst send from heaven into the Virgin's womb and Who conceived within her was made flesh and demonstrated to be Thy Son being born of Holy Spirit and a Virgin; Who fulfilling Thy will and preparing for Thee a holy people stretched forth His hands for suffering that He might release from sufferings them who have believed in Thee; Who when He was betrayed to voluntary suffering that He might abolish death and rend the bonds of the devil and tread down hell and enlighten the righteous and establish the limit and demonstrate the resurrection: Taking bread and giving thanks to Thee said: Take eat: this is My Body which is broken for you for the remission of sins. Likewise also the cup, saying: This is My Blood which is shed for you. When ye do this ye do My anamnesis. Doing therefore the anamnesis of His death and resurrection we offer to Thee the bread and the cup making eucharist to Thee because Thou hast made us worthy to stand before Thee and minister as priests to Thee. And we pray Thee that thou wouldest send Thy Holy Spirit upon the oblation of Thy holy Church (and) Thou wouldest grant to all Thy Saints who partake to be united to Thee that they may be fulfilled with the Holy Spirit for the confirmation of their faith in truth, that we may praise and glorify Thee through Thy Beloved Child Jesus Christ through Whom glory and honor be unto Thee with the Holy Spirit in Thy holy Church now and forever and world without end. Amen (Dix, Apostolic Tradition 6-9).

There is powerful imagery here of the death of Jesus, who “stretched forth His hands for suffering that He might release from sufferings them who have believed in Thee.” This prayer also contains the first evidence of epiclesis: “And we pray Thee that thou wouldest send Thy Holy Spirit upon the oblation of Thy holy Church.”

Later, in chapter 23, Hippolytus states that the bread and wine are not substantially changed into the body and blood of Christ at Holy Communion, but rather represent them: “He (the bishop) shall eucharistize the bread into the representation of the Flesh of Christ; and the cup mixed with wine for the antitype of the Blood which was shed for all who have believed in Him.” This does not mean the bread and wine used at Holy Communion were treated flippantly, as he stresses in chapters 32:

And let all take care that no unbaptized person taste of the eucharist nor a mouse or other animal, and that none of it at all fall and be lost. For it is the Body of Christ to be eaten by them that believe and not to be thought lightly of... For having blessed the cup in the Name of God thou didst receive it as the antitype of the Blood of Christ. Wherefore spill not from it, that no alien spirit lick it up, because thou didst despise it, and become guilty of the Blood of Christ as one who despises the price with which he has been bought (Dix, Apostolic Tradition 59).

So we see that from the beginning of the Early Church, the sacrament of Holy Communion was a vital aspect of Christian worship (Acts 2:42-47). Moreover, in the Didache, the First Apology of Justin Martyr, and The Apostolic Tradition we see get a glimpse of Holy Communion liturgies that were developed in the Early Church.

Class 3: Holy Communion in the 1549 and 1552 English Prayer Books

The most influential figure of the English Reformation was Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556), Archbishop of Canterbury. He was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury on March 30, 1533 and spearheaded many reforms in the Church of England. Cranmer did not embrace Protestantism simply to contradict the Roman Catholic Church; rather, he did so because he desired to see the Church of England return to scripture and the early church in theology and worship. Cranmer forged the truths of Protestant theology—particularly justification through faith—into liturgy for worship. This involved having the liturgy in English rather than Latin,

allowing the laity to receive both the bread and wine at Holy Communion, emphasizing a sacramental and spiritual presence of Christ at Holy Communion, as opposed to transubstantiation, and remembering the sufficiency of Christ's once and for all death on the cross, as opposed to the Mass being a propitiatory sacrifice. Cranmer served under King Henry VIII and his successor, King Edward VI.

In 1548 Cranmer produced The Order for Holy Communion, which was partially in Latin and partially in English. Then in 1549 he published the first English Prayer Book, entitled The Booke of the Common Prayer and Administracion of the Sacramentes, and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Churche after the Use of the Churche of England. Within this 1549 Prayer Book is the service for Holy Communion, entitled "The Supper of the Lorde and the Holy Communion, Commonly Called the Masse." Reading through this service is helpful in gaining a grasp of Cranmer's Protestant theology regarding Holy Communion and seeing his influence on the Holy Communion liturgies we use in The Book of Common Prayer. (In the sections cited below from the 1549 and 1552 services of Holy Communion the original spelling is retained).

The 1549 service begins with the Lord's Prayer and then the following collect for purity:

ALMIGHTIE God, unto whom all hartes bee open, and all desyres knowen, and from whom no secretes are hid: clense the thoughtes of our hartes, by the inspiracion of thy holy spirite: that we may perfectly love thee, and worthely magnifie thy holy name: through Christ our Lorde. Amen.

This is followed by a psalm, the *Kyrie* (Lord, have mercy upon us...), the *Gloria* (Glory be to God on high...), the collect for the day, a collect for the king, an epistle reading, a gospel

reading, the Nicene Creed, and the sermon. Then, based on 1 Corinthians 11:27-30, there are exhortations about self-examination prior to receiving communion:

DERELY beloved in the Lorde, ye that mynde to come to the holy Communion of the bodye and bloude of our savior Christe, must considre what S. Paule writeth to the Corinthians, how he exhorteth all persones diligently to trie and examine themselves, before they presume to eate of that breade, and drinke of that cup: for as the benefite is great, if with a truly penitent heart, and lively faith, we receive that holy Sacrament; (for then we spiritually eate the fleshe of Christ, and drinke his bloude, then we dwell in Christ and Christ in us, wee bee made one with Christ, and Christ with us;) so is the daunger great, yf wee receyve the same unworthely; for then wee become gyltie of the body and bloud of Christ our savior, we eate and drinke our owne damnacion, not considering the Lordes bodye... Wherefore our duetie is, to come to these holy misteries, with moste heartie thanks to bee geven to almightie GOD, for his infinite mercie and benefites geven and bestowed upon us his unworthy servauntes, for whom he hath not onely geven his body to death, and shed his bloude, but also doothe vouchesave in a Sacrament and Mistery, to geve us his sayed bodye and bloud to feede upon spiritually....

These exhortations were followed by an offertory sentence, the collection and then the *sursum corda*, which hearkens back to what we saw last week from The Apostolic Tradition:

Priest. The Lorde be with you.
Aunswere. And with thy spirite.
Priest. Lift up your heartes.
Aunswere. We lift them up unto the Lorde.
Priest. Let us geve thanks to our Lorde God.
Aunswere. It is mete and right so to do.
The Priest. It is very mete, righte, and our bounden dutie, that wee shoulde at all tymes, and in all places, geve thanks to thee, O Lorde holy father, almightie everlastyng God.

This was followed by the preface (a seasonal sentence of praise) and the *Sanctus*:

Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the holy companie of heaven, we laude and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praisyng thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lorde God of Hostes: heaven and earth are full of thy glory: Osanna, in the highest. Blessed is he that commeth in the name of the Lorde: Glory to thee, O lorde in the highest.

The prayers of the people (very similar to BCP 328-330)—begin “ALMIGHTIE and everlivyng GOD, whiche by thy holy Apostle haste taught us to make prayers and supplicacions, and to

geve thanks for al menne..." and concludes, "Graunt this, O father, for Jesus Christes sake, our onely mediatur and advocate." There is no "Amen;" instead the priest continues with the following Eucharistic prayer:

O God, heavenly father, which of thy tender mercie diddest geve thine only sonne Jesu Christ to suffre death upon the crosse for our redempcion, who made there (by his one oblacion once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblacion, and satisfaccyon, for the sinnes of the whole worlde, and did institute, and in his holy Gospell commaund us, to celebrate a perpetuall memory of that his precious death, untill his comming again: Heare us (O merciful father) we besech thee; and with thy holy spirite and worde, vouchsafe to blesse and sanctifie these thy gyftes, and creatures of bread and wyne, that they maie be unto us the bodye and bloude of thy moste derely beloved sonne Jesus Christe. Who in the same nyght that he was betrayed: tooke breade, and when he had blessed, and geven thanks: he brake it, and gave it to his disciples, sayng: Take, eate, this is my bodye which is geven for you, do this in remembraunce of me. Likewise after supper he toke the cuppe, and when he had geven thanks, he gave it to them, sayng: drynk ye all of this, for this is my bloude of the newe Testament, whyche is shed for you and for many, for remission of synnes: do this as oft as you shall drinke it, in remembraunce of me.

The following rubric, which reveals some Protestant theology in this liturgy, is inserted: "These wordes before rehersed are to be saied, turning still to the Altar, without any elevacion, or shewing the Sacrament to the people." The priest then concludes the Eucharistic prayer:

WHEREFORE, O Lorde and heavenly father, accordyng to the Instytucion of thy derely beloved sonne, our saviour Jesu Christ, we thy humble servauntes do celebrate, and make here before thy divine Majestie, with these thy holy giftes, the memoryall whyche thy sonne hath wylled us to make, havng in remembraunce his blessed passion, mightie resurreccyon, and gloryous ascencion, renderyng unto thee most hartie thanks, for the innumerable benefites procured unto us by the same, entierely desiryng thy fatherly goodnes, mercifully to accepte this our Sacrifice of praise and thankesgeving: most humbly besechng thee to graunt, that by the merites and death of thy sonne Jesu Christ, and through faith in his bloud, we and al thy whole church, may obteigne remission of our sinnes, and all other benefites of hys passyon. And here wee offre and present unto thee (O Lorde) oure selfe, oure soules, and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee: humbly besechng thee, that whosoever shalbee partakers of thys holy Communion, maye worthely receive the most precious body and bloude of thy sonne Jesu Christe: and bee fulfilled with thy grace and heavenly benediccion, and made one bodye with thy sonne Jesu Christe, that he maye dwell in them, and they in hym. And although we be unworthy (through our manyfolde synnes) to offre unto thee any Sacryfice: Yet

we beseeche thee to accepte thys our bounden duetie and service, and commaunde these our prayers and supplicacions, by the Ministry of thy holy Angels, to be brought up into thy holy Tabernacle before the syght of thy dyvine majestie; not waiyng our merites, but pardonyng our offences, through Christe our Lorde, by whome, and with whome, in the unities of the holy Ghost: all honour and glory, be unto thee, O father almightie, world without ende. Amen.

This is followed by the passing of the peace, the *pascha nostrum* (Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us), the Lord's Prayer, the confession, absolution, comfortable words, and the following prayer of humble access:

WE do not presume to come to this thy table (o mercifull lord) trusting in our owne righteousnes, but in thy manifold and great mercies: we be not woorthie so much as to gather up the cromes under thy table: but thou art the same lorde whose propertie is alwayes to have mercie: Graunt us therefore (gracious lorde) so to eate the fleshe of thy dere sonne Jesus Christ, and to drynke his bloud in these holy Misteries, that we may continually dwell in hym, and he in us, that our synfull bodyes may bee made cleane by his body, and our soules washed through hys most precious bloud. Amen.

The bread was administered to each person with these words: "The body of our Lorde Jesus Christe whiche was geven for thee, preserve thy bodye and soule unto everlasting lyfe." The wine was also administered to each person (communion of both kinds is a Protestant feature of Holy Communion) with these words: "The bloud of our Lorde Jesus Christe which was shed for thee, preserve thy bodye and soule unto everlastyng lyfe."

Then various scriptures are read, followed by this post communion prayer:

ALMIGHTYE and everlyvyng GOD, we moste hartely thanke thee, for that thou hast vouchsafed to feede us in these holy Misteries, with the spirituall foode of the moste precious body and bloud of thy sonne, our saviour Jesus Christ, and haste assured us (duely receiving the same) of thy favour and goodnes toward us, and that we be very membres incorporate in thy Misticall bodye, whiche is the blessed companie of all faythfull people, and heyres through hope of thy everlasting kingdome, by the merites of the most precious death and passion, of thy deare sonne. We therefore most humbly beseeche thee, O heavenly father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy felowship, and doe all suche good woorkes, as thou hast prepared for us to walke in: through Jesus Christe our Lorde, to whome with thee and the holy gost, bee all honour and glory, world without ende.

The priest concluded the service with the following blessing:

The peace of GOD (which passeth all understanding) kepe your hartes and mindes in the knowledge and love of GOD, and of his sonne Jesus Christ our Lorde: And the blessing of God almightie, the father, the sonne, and the holy gost, be emonges you and remayne with you alway.

The 1549 English Prayer Book had a mixed reception. Some thought it was too Protestant; others that it was not Protestant enough. Cranmer himself was in the latter group, and in 1550 he published his classic theological treatise on Holy Communion, Defense of the True and Catholic Doctrine of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. Throughout this book he appeals repeatedly to scripture and the church fathers in defending a Protestant approach to Holy Communion. Then in 1552 he published a second English Prayer Book that fully reflected his Protestant sacramental theology, The Booke of the Common Prayer and Administracion of the Sacramentes, and Other Rites and Ceremonies in the Church of England. The 1552 service of Holy Communion is entitled, “The Order for the Administracion of the Lorde’s Supper, or Holye Communion.” (Notice there is no mention of the word, “Mass”). We will highlight some of the features that reveal Cranmer’s Protestant sacramental theology.

There are some similarities between this service and the 1549 service, but there are even more differences. The 1552 service begins with the Lord’s Prayer and continues with the collect for purity, the Decalogue (Ten Commandments), the collect of the day, a collect for the king, an epistle reading, a Gospel reading, the Nicene Creed, the sermon, the offertory sentence and offering, the prayers of the people, exhortations regarding self-examination prior to receiving communion, the confession, absolution, and comfortable words. (Notice the addition of the Decalogue and the omission of the psalm, Kyrie, and Gloria, which is said near the end

of the service. Also, notice that the prayers of the people have been separated from the actual Eucharistic prayers, and the confession, absolution, comfortable words are now *prior to* the Eucharistic prayer). Immediately after the comfortable words the service continues with the *sursum corda*, the preface, and the *Sanctus*. This is followed by the prayer of humble access, which has been moved from its previous position between the comfortable words and administration of the bread and wine. At this point in the service the priest says the prayer of humble access while “keeling down at Goddes borde” (unlike the rubrics of the 1549 service, there is no reference to an “Altar” in the 1552 service; rather reference is made to “Goddes borde” or “the Lordes table”—again, emphasizing that Christ is not sacrificed anew at Holy Communion). Then the priest prays the following Eucharistic prayer:

ALMIGHTY God oure heavenly father, whiche of thy tender mercye dyddest geve thine onely sonne Jesus Christ, to suffre death upon the crosse for our redempcion, who made there (by hys one oblacion of hymselfe once offered) a full, perfecte and sufficiente sacrifice, oblacion, and satisfaccion, for the synnes of the whole worlde, and dyd institute, and in hys holye Gospell commaund us to continue, a perpetuall memorye of that his precious death, untill hys comynge agayne: Heare us O mercyefull father wee beeseche thee; and graunt that wee, receyving these thy creatures of bread and wyne, accordinge to thy sonne our Savioure Jesus Christ's holy institucion, in remembrance of his death and passion, maye be partakers of his most blessed body and bloud: who, in the same night that he was betrayed, tooke bread, and when he had geven thanks, he brake it, and gave it to his Disciples, sayinge: Take, eate, this is my bodye which is geven for you. Doe this in remembrance of me. Lykewyse after supper he tooke the cup, and when he had geven thankes, he gave it to them, sayinge: Drink ye all of this, for this is my bloud of the new Testament, whiche is shed for you and for many, for remission of synnes: do this as oft as ye shal drinke it in remembrance of me.

Notice the absence in this prayer of the epiclesis along with the accompanying rubric to make the sign of the cross. (Also, there is no *Agnus Dei*, *pascha nostrum*, or passing of the peace in the 1552 service). In addition, notice the emphasis on remembering Christ's once and for all sacrificial death on the cross. This emphasis is reinforced with changes in the words of

administration. As the bread was given the following words of administration were used: “Take and eate this, in remembraunce that Christ dyed for thee, and feede on him in thy hearte by faythe, with thankesgeving” (Instead of the 1549 “The body of our Lorde Jesus Christe whiche was geven for thee, preserve thy bodye and soule unto everlasting lyfe”). As the wine was given the following words of administration were used: “Drinke this in remembraunce that Christ's bloude was shed for thee, and be thankfull” (Instead of the 1549 “The bloud of our Lorde Jesus Christe which was shed for thee, preserve thy bodye and soule unto everlastyng lyfe”). The absence of the epiclesis and the immediate administration of the bread and wine following the words of institution demonstrate that the climax of the service of Holy Communion was no longer the epiclesis, but rather the spiritual reception of Christ by faith. This was followed by the Lord’s Prayer, and one of two post-communion prayers, the first of which is:

O LORDE and heavenly father, we thy humble servaunts entierly desire thy fatherly goodnes, mercifully to accept this our Sacrifice of prayse and thanksgeving: most humbly beseching thee to graunt, that by the merites and death of thy sonne Jesus Christe, and through fayth in his bloud, we and al thy whole church may obtayne remission of oure synnes, and all other benefytes of his Passion. And here we offre and presente unto thee, O lord, our selves, our soules, and bodies, to be a reasonable holy, and lively Sacrifice unto thee: humbly beseching thee that al we which be partakers of this holy Communion, maye bee fulfilled with thy grace and heavenly benediccion. And although we bee unworthy throughe oure manifolde sinnes to offre unto thee any Sacrifice: yet we beseche thee to accept this our bounden duetie and service, not weighing our merites, but pardoning our offences, through Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom and with whom, in the unitie of the holy ghost, all honour and glory bee unto thee, O father almightie, world without ende. Amen.

Notice that in the 1549 service this was part of the Eucharistic prayer, not a post-communion prayer. Again, we see Cranmer’s insistence that the only sacrifice that takes place at Holy Communion is one of praise and thanksgiving, and the only offering that takes place is ourselves in grateful response for Christ’s once and for all sacrifice of himself on the cross for

the sins of the world. The post-communion prayer was followed by the *Gloria*, a helpful means to give God a sacrifice of thanksgiving. The service then concluded with a blessing. Finally, at the end of the service in the 1552 prayer book there is a famous item that became known as the “Black Rubric” (although technically it is not a rubric because it has directions for the congregation, not the clergy), which reinforces Cranmer’s views against transubstantiation:

... Whereas it is ordeyned in the booke of common prayer, in the administracion of the Lord's Supper, that the Communicants knelyng shoulde receyve the holye Communion. whiche thyng be yng well mente, for a sygnificacion of the humble and gratefull acknowledgyng of the benefites of Chryst, geven unto the woorthye receyver, and to avoyde the prophanacion and dysordre, which about the holy Communion myght els ensue: Leste yet the same kneelyng myght be thought or taken otherwyse, we dooe declare that it is not ment thereby, that any adoracion is doone, or oughte to bee doone, eyther unto the Sacramentall bread or wyne there bodily receyved, or unto anye reall and essencial presence there beeyng of Christ's naturall fleshe and bloude. For as concernynge the Sacramentall bread and wyne, they remayne styll in theyr verye naturall substaunces, and therefore may not be adored, for that were Idolatrye to be abhorred of all faythfull christians. And as concernynge the naturall body and blood of our saviour Christ, they are in heaven and not here. For it is agaynst the trueth of Christes true natural bodye, to be in moe places then in one, at one tyme.

The 1552 service of Holy Communion clearly demonstrates Cranmer’s increasingly Protestant sacramental theology. In 1553 he summarized this theology in Articles XXVIII (“Of the Lord’s Supper”), XXX (“Of Both Kinds”), and XXXI (“Of the One Oblation of Christ Finished upon the Cross”) of The Forty-two Articles, which became the basis of the Articles of Religion (Thirty-Nine Articles, BCP 867ff). Cranmer completed the Order for Holy Communion (1548), the 1549 Prayer Book, the Defense (1550), the 1552 Prayer Book, and The Forty-two Articles (1553) during the reign of Edward VI, son of Henry VIII and Jane Seymour. Edward VI died on July 6, 1553 and was succeeded for nine days by Lady Jane Grey, who in turn was succeeded by Queen Mary, a Roman Catholic. Cranmer was then arrested and tried as a heretic.

In September 1555, while in prison awaiting his fate, Cranmer wrote a letter to Queen Mary in which he defended his Protestant stance on Holy Communion. The next month he witnessed two of his friends and fellow English Bishops and Reformers, Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley as they were burned at the stake on October 16, 1555. (Latimer is famous for his final words to Ridley, “Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle by God’s grace in England as shall never be put out”). Cranmer watched his friends suffer from the tower in which he was imprisoned. He threw down his hat, fell to his knees and wept as they died. The authorities hoped this would frighten Cranmer into recanting his Protestant beliefs. Initially this was the case, but he later recanted his recantations, knowing what it would cost him.

His final sermon on the morning of Saturday, March 21, 1556 at St. Mary’s Church, Oxford, included his final recantation: “And as for the sacrament, I believe as I have taught... that it shall stand at the last day before the judgment of God, where the papistical doctrine, contrary thereto, shall be ashamed to show her face.” Cranmer was then pulled from the pulpit and taken to the same spot where Latimer and Ridley had been martyred five months earlier. He then knelt in prayer, removed his shirt, and was secured to a stake with an iron chain. Even though he had recanted his recantations, he was ashamed of his initial recantations and had vowed, “forasmuch as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, therefore my hand shall first be punished; for if I may come to the fire, it shall first be burned.” John Foxe in the classic, Foxe’s Book of Martyrs, movingly describes the final moments of Cranmer’s life:

His body did abide the burning with such steadfastness, that he seemed to move no more than the stake to which he was bound; his eyes were lifted up into heaven, and he repeated, ‘his unworthy right hand,’ so long as his voice would suffer him; and using often the words of Stephen, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,’ in the greatness of the flame, he gave up the ghost.

Cranmer, at the cost of his life, clung to his Protestant sacramental theology of Holy Communion, a theology beautifully expressed in the services of Holy Communion, particularly in the 1552 English Prayer Book. As we will see next week, his influence is evident in the services of The Book of Common Prayer of 1979.

Class 4: Holy Eucharist, Rite One

At the 7:45, 11:00, and 5:00 services at Christ Church we most often follow “The Holy Eucharist, Rite One” service from The Book of Common Prayer of 1979 (323ff). This liturgy draws significantly from Jesus’ institution of Holy Communion in Scripture (addressed in week one), the liturgy for Holy Communion from The Apostolic Tradition from about 215 AD (addressed in week two), and the services for Holy Communion from the English Prayer Books of 1549 and 1552 (addressed in week three). It is also much like the Holy Communion liturgy in the 1928 American Prayer Book.

The service of “The Holy Eucharist: Rite One” contains two main sections: “The Word of God” (BCP 323ff) and “The Holy Communion” (BCP 333ff). This reflects the classic Protestant definition of the visible church as being “a congregation... in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ’s ordinance” (Article XIX, BCP 871). The liturgy for “The Word of God” section of the service helps the grace of God to connect with our lives. First, it reminds us of our need for God’s grace with the opening acclamation, collect for purity, Decalogue (or summary of the law), the *Kyrie* (or *Trisagion* or *Gloria*), and the collect of the day. Second, it provides an opportunity for us to hear of God’s grace through scripture readings, the gospel reading and the sermon. Third, it

gives us ways to respond to God's grace through the Nicene Creed, the Prayers of the People, and the confession. Fourth, it gives us the opportunity to receive God's grace in the absolution and comfortable words. Fifth, it encourages us to share God's grace with others through the passing of the Peace. Some of these items are sung, and there are additional hymns as well. All this is just the first half of the service.

In the second half of this service, "The Holy Communion," we have the opportunity to receive God's grace in the sacrament of Holy Communion. The sacrament of Holy Communion was instituted by Jesus Christ himself at the Last Supper and "is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather it is a Sacrament of our Redemption by Christ's death" (Article XXVIII, BCP 873). Holy Communion is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, a "certain sure" witness and "effectual" sign "of grace and God's good will toward us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our Faith in him" (Article XXV, BCP 872). The liturgy of "The Holy Communion" is steeped in Scripture.

"The Holy Communion" section of the service is in turn divided into two main sections: "The Great Thanksgiving" and "The Breaking of the Bread." At Christ Church we most often use Eucharistic Prayer I (BCP 333ff), because it follows most closely the Eucharistic prayers of the 1549 English Prayer Book and 1928 American Prayer Book, and because of its humble tone and theological emphasis on the once for all sacrifice of Christ on the cross for the sins of the world. What follows is the liturgy (in italics) of "The Holy Communion" part of the service from "The Holy Eucharist: Rite One" (Eucharistic Prayer I, BCP 333ff) with observations and references to Scripture.

Following the Offertory, during which the bread and wine for Holy Communion and the collection is brought forward, the celebrant continues with “The Great Thanksgiving,” which begins:

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People And with thy spirit.
Celebrant Lift up your hearts.
People We lift them up unto the Lord.
Celebrant Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.
People It is meet and right so to do.

This comes directly from the 1549 Prayer Book and in turn from The Apostolic Tradition of 215. The initial “The Lord be with you” is also found in the Old Testament book, Ruth: “Just then Boaz came from Bethlehem. He said to the reapers, ‘The LORD be with you.’ They answered, ‘The LORD bless you’” (2:4). The exchange between the celebrant and people demonstrates immediately that everyone at the service of Holy Communion has the opportunity to participate in the liturgy. It is a joint liturgy of the congregation, not a performance by the celebrant.

The liturgy continues with the celebrant leading an expression of thanksgiving: “Then, facing the Holy Table (notice reference to a table, not altar), the Celebrant proceeds: It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God.” Scripture has many references to giving thanks to God, including: “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thess. 5:18). It is also clear in Scripture that God is holy (Lev. 11:44; Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8, etc.), God is our Father (Matt. 6:9; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 4:6, etc.), God is almighty (Gen. 17:1; Ps. 91:1; Ezek. 1:24, etc.), and God is everlasting (Isa. 9:6 and 40:28, etc.).

This is followed by a preface (BCP 344ff), which vary according to the season of the church year or occasion of the service. This is followed by the *Sanctus*:

Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name; evermore praising thee, and saying (Celebrant and people), Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts: Heaven and earth are full of thy Glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord Most High.

Elements of the *Sanctus* are found in the prophet Isaiah's vision of heaven, where the angels sing, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. 6:3).

Similarly in John's vision of heaven there is unceasing singing of "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come" and of "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created" (Rev. 4:8 and 11). Then the following may be added: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest." At Jesus' triumphal entry, which we commemorate each year on Palm Sunday, Jesus was greeted with shouts of praise, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest" (Matt. 21:9, KJV; see also Mark 11:9-10; Luke 19:38; and John 12:13).

"The people kneel or stand"—In the Early Church standing was the common posture for prayer, and since then kneeling has become a common posture for prayer as well. We stand or kneel at this point because the Eucharistic prayer is about to begin. Notice that the entire prayer is first person plural, not singular. While the celebrant prays the Eucharistic prayer vocally, the congregation prays along silently:

All glory be to thee, Almighty God, our heavenly Father, for that thou, of thy tender mercy, didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption; who made there, by his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world; and did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death and sacrifice, until his coming again.

Just as we do in the *Sanctus*, we give glory to God at the beginning of the Eucharistic prayer, first and foremost because of his mercy given us in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross “for our redemption.” It is only through Jesus’ death on the cross that we have been redeemed: “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph. 1:7); “He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:13-14).

At Holy Communion we do not sacrifice Jesus again, but remember the sacrifice Jesus already made, “his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.” When it comes to paying the price for our sins, there is nothing we can do to supplement or complete what Jesus has already done for us. His death was enough. There are many New Testament Scriptures that emphasize this, among which are: Romans 3:23-25a—“Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith;” Hebrews 10:10—“And it is by God’s will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all;” 1 Peter 3:18a—“For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God;” 1 John 2:1b-2—“If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world;” and 1 John 4:10—“In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.” When Jesus instituted Holy Communion at the

Last Supper, he did so in order that we would perpetually remember “his precious death and sacrifice, until his coming again” (see 1 Cor. 11:26).

These following words of institution weave in the various elements that we see in the four New Testament accounts of Jesus’ institution of Holy Communion: Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20; and 1 Corinthians 11:23-25, which we covered in week one.

At the following words concerning the bread, the Celebrant is to hold it, or lay a hand upon it; and at the words concerning the cup, to hold or place a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing wine to be consecrated: For in the night in which he was betrayed, he took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take, eat, this is my Body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” Likewise, after supper, he took the cup; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink ye all of this; for this is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins. Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me.”

This Eucharistic prayer continues:

Wherefore, O Lord and heavenly Father, according to the institution of thy dearly beloved Son our Savior Jesus Christ, we, thy humble servants, do celebrate and make here before thy divine Majesty, with these thy holy gifts, which we now offer unto thee, the memorial thy Son hath commanded us to make; having in remembrance his blessed passion and precious death, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; rendering unto thee most hearty thanks for the innumerable benefits procured unto us by the same.

We are not offering Christ again as we celebrate Holy Communion, but obeying Jesus’ command to remember the sacrificial death he already died on the cross, “his blessed passion and precious death.” We also recall that death is not the end of the story as we also remember “his mighty resurrection and glorious resurrection.” Our response is to give God “most hearty thanks.”

This is followed by the following part of the prayer known as the epiclesis, the calling down of the Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine:

And we most humbly beseech thee, O merciful Father, to hear us; and, of thy almighty goodness, vouchsafe to bless and sanctify, with thy Word and Holy Spirit, these thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine; that we, receiving them according to thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood.

The epiclesis was included in the 1549 Prayer Book (though not the 1552 Prayer Book) and the 1928 American Prayer Book. Notice the appeal to all three Persons of the Trinity. At Holy Communion we are “partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood” “after an heavenly and spiritual manner” and “the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is Faith” (Article XXVIII, BCP 873). The prayer continues with thanksgiving:

And we earnestly desire thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; most humbly beseeching thee to grant that, by the merits and death of thy Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood, we, and all thy whole Church, may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion.

Again, we do not offer Christ afresh at Holy Communion, but rather we offer a “sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving” in response to the sacrifice Jesus made for us. This is straight from Psalm 116:17a (“I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving” (KJV) and Hebrews 13:15a (“Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God”). The foremost benefit of Jesus’ passion is the forgiveness of our sins: “The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost” (1 Tim. 1:15). When Jesus raised the paralytic, before giving him the ability to walk, he forgave his sins (Mark 2:1-12). We receive the benefit of the forgiveness of our sins through faith in Jesus and the blood he shed for us: “by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). In addition to offering God a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, we also offer God ourselves:

And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, our selves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto thee; humbly beseeching thee that we,

and all others who shall be partakers of this Holy Communion, may worthily receive the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son Jesus Christ, be filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction, and made one body with him, that he may dwell in us, and we in him.

This is exactly what we see in the Letter of Paul to the Romans: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Rom. 12:1). Moreover, when we receive Holy Communion, we receive the grace and blessing of God afresh. We are also reminded of God’s abiding presence with us, as Jesus taught, “Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them” (John 6:56). This portion of the Eucharistic prayer concludes with acknowledgement of our unworthiness, an appeal to the mercy of God, and a Trinitarian doxology.

And although we are unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer unto thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech thee to accept this our bounden duty and service, not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offences, through Jesus Christ our Lord; By whom, and with whom, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory be unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. AMEN.

We continue praying by praying the Lord’s Prayer (“And now, as our Savior Christ hath taught us, we are bold to say”), which is why the celebrant says, “we are bold to say” instead of “we are bold to pray.” There is no better way to conclude a Eucharistic prayer than with praying the prayer Jesus taught us.

The second section of “The Holy Communion” section of the Holy Eucharist service is “The Breaking of the Bread,” which begins: “The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept. Then may be sung or said, [Alleluia.] Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; Therefore let us keep the feast. [Alleluia.]” This emphasis on the breaking of the bread with a period of silence is not in the 1549, 1552, or 1662 English Prayer Books. Neither is it in

the 1928 American Prayer Book. In fact, there are no rubrics in the 1549 and 1552 English Prayer Books regarding the celebrant breaking the bread, and the rubrics in the service in the 1662 English Prayer Book and the 1928 American Prayer Book instruct the celebrant to break the bread during the words of institution. At Christ Church the clergy do not elevate or venerate the bread and wine, because it is not part of our Protestant Anglican heritage: “The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was not by Christ’s ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped” (Article XXVIII, BCP 873). The phrase, “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us” is taken directly from the King James Version of 1 Corinthians 5:7. Other English translations use “has been sacrificed” (NIV, NRSV) or “was sacrificed” (NKJV). When we celebrate Holy Communion we remember that Jesus indeed was sacrificed for us as the Passover lamb for the sins of the world, and that because of the blood of Jesus shed on the cross, the wrath of God passed over us as the angel of the Lord passed over the houses of Israel whose doors were marked with the blood of the lamb (Exod.12). The paschal theme continues with the following optional anthem: “O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace.” This anthem echoes the words of John the Baptist as Jesus came to be baptized by him in the Jordan River: “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). In the 1549 English Prayer Book a shorter version of this anthem was sung as people received Holy Communion: “O lambe of god, that takeste away the sinnes of the worlde: have mercy upon us. O lambe of god, that takeste away the sinnes of the worlde: graunt us thy peace.” It is not found in the Holy Communion service of the 1552 or 1662 English Prayer Books, or in the 1928 American Prayer Book.

The service then continues with the prayer of humble access:

We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

In Luke 18:9-14 Jesus tells the powerful parable of the Pharisee and tax collector who go to the temple to pray. The Pharisee trusts in his own righteousness and the tax collector appeals to the mercy of God. Jesus states that the tax collector, not the Pharisee went home justified.

Similarly, when we come to receive Holy Communion, we do so trusting in God's mercy, demonstrated in Jesus' death on the cross for our sins, not our own righteousness. The reference to gathering "crumbs under thy table" may refer back to Jesus' encounter with a Gentile woman (Matt. 15:21-28 and Mark 7:24-30) or Lazarus, who longed to gather the crumbs from his master's table (Luke 16:21). It is a reference to our being utterly unworthy to receive Holy Communion except through the mercy of God, "whose property is always to have mercy" and whose "mercies never come to an end" (Lam. 3:22). As with the Eucharistic Prayer, reference is made to John 6:56.

These following words of invitation emphasize that God is the giver and we are the recipients: "The Gifts of God for the People of God, and may add, Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving." When we receive Holy Communion we do so in remembrance of Christ's death for us. We feed on him "after an heavenly and spiritual manner" (Article XXVIII, BCP 873) by faith, thankful for what God has done for us. After the clergy receive the bread and wine, the congregation does so:

The Bread and the Cup are given to the communicants with these words: The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto

everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith, with thanksgiving. The Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's Blood was shed for thee, and be thankful. (or with these words) The Body (Blood) of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life. [Amen.] (or with these words) The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven. [Amen.] The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation. [Amen.]

The longer forms of the words of administration echo those of the 1549 Prayer Book and the 1928 American Prayer Book and emphasize remembrance and thanksgiving. The shorter forms are unique to The Book of Common Prayer of 1979. There is reference in Scripture to the “bread of heaven” in Psalm 105:40 (KJV) and to “the cup of salvation” in Psalm 116:13 (KJV).

After the bread and wine have been administered, the following post communion prayer is prayed:

Almighty and everliving God, we most heartily thank thee for that thou dost feed us, in these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and dost assure us thereby of thy favor and goodness towards us; and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, the blessed company of all faithful people; and are also heirs, through hope, of thy everlasting kingdom. And we humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

We thank God for spiritually feeding us “in these holy mysteries” (we do not, indeed we cannot, understand everything God does for us at Holy Communion) and for giving us his grace afresh in Holy Communion. We are also reminded that as part of the church we are part of something that is much bigger than us and that lasts forever. We ask for more grace to continue in the church and to “do all such good works” that God has prepared for us (a direct reference to Eph. 2:10). We conclude with a Trinitarian doxology.

The service of Holy Eucharist: Rite One concludes with the blessing:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you, and remain with you always. Amen (or) The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. Amen.

These blessings are influenced by Philippians 4:7 (“the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”) and 2 Corinthians 13:13 (“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you”). Usually, a hymn follows and then the congregation is dismissed: “Let us go forth in the name of Christ (or “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord” or “Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit” or “Let us bless the Lord) People: Thanks be to God.” We conclude “The Holy Eucharist, Rite One” service, during which we can experience the grace of God in both “The Word of God” and “The Holy Communion,” with corporate thanks to God.

Class 5: Holy Eucharist, Rite Two

At the 9:00 Sunday morning service at Christ Church we most often follow “The Holy Eucharist: Rite Two” service from The Book of Common Prayer of 1979 (355ff). As with “The Holy Eucharist, Rite One,” which we addressed last week, the liturgy for “Holy Eucharist, Rite Two” is also significantly influenced by Jesus’ institution of Holy Communion in Scripture (addressed in week one), the liturgy for Holy Communion from the Apostolic Tradition from about 215 AD (addressed in week two), and the services for Holy Communion from the English Prayer Books of 1549 and 1552 (addressed in week three).

There are many similarities between the Rite One and Rite Two liturgies, but there are some key differences as well. As with Rite One, there are two main sections of Rite Two:

“The Word of God” and “The Holy Communion.” “The Word of God” of Rite Two is structurally very similar to Rite One, except with more contemporary English. There are also some key differences: the Rite Two has no Decalogue, or summary of the law, unless “A Penitential Order, Rite Two” (BCP 351-353) with the Decalogue (BCP 350) is added. In addition, Rite Two has different forms of the prayers of the people and the confession and absolution. Also, there are no comfortable words following the absolution in the Rite Two service.

There are four different Eucharistic prayers in The Book of Common Prayer that can be used in the Rite Two service: A, B, C, and D. We use Eucharistic Prayer A (BCP 361ff) most often at Christ Church, because, though shorter, it most closely follows Eucharistic Prayer I of the Rite One service, which we most often use at the 7:45 and 11:00 services. Eucharistic Prayer A is also arguably the most Protestant of the four Rite Two Eucharistic prayers. Eucharistic Prayer B (367ff) includes Eastern influences and a place to commemorate specific saints. Eucharistic Prayer C (BCP 369ff) has particular emphasis on the creation and subsequent events of salvation history from the Old Testament, and includes much congregational response. Eucharistic Prayer D (BCP 372ff) is adapted from a fourth century Eucharistic prayer attributed to Basil the Great and reflects significant Catholic influence.

As is the case in the Rite One service, “The Holy Communion” section of the Rite Two service is in turn divided into two main sections: “The Great Thanksgiving” and “The Breaking of the Bread.” Since we addressed “The Holy Communion: Rite One” in detail last week, today we will emphasize the aspects of the “The Holy Communion” liturgy unique to Rite Two. What follows are these unique aspects of the liturgy of “The Holy Communion” part

of the service from “The Holy Eucharist: Rite Two” (Eucharistic Prayer A, BCP 361ff) with observations and references to Scripture.

Following the offertory, *sursum corda*, preface, and *Sanctus*, the celebrant continues:

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself, and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

Last week we saw how Scripture states that God is holy (Lev. 11:44; Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8, etc.) and our Heavenly Father (Matt. 6:9; Luke 11:2; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 4:6, etc.). God is also gracious. He gives us his grace, his unearned favor, his one-way love, not because we deserve it, but because he is a gracious God. The ultimate demonstration that God is gracious is in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ: “grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17b). It is through the grace of God that we are saved through Jesus Christ: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). The Apostle Paul gives particular emphasis to the grace of God, not only in the body of his letters, but in the fact that near the beginning and end of each of his thirteen New Testament letters he proclaims the grace of God to his recipients (Rom. 1:7 and 16:20, et al).

Scripture tells us that God created us in his image (“So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them”—Gen. 1:27) and for himself (“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created”—Rev. 4:11). Scripture also tells us that God is love (1 John 4:8b) and that the ultimate proof of his love is the death of Jesus Christ on the cross for our sins: “God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). At the fall of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3) humankind

became “subject to evil and death.” As an entire race “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23) and “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way” (Isa. 53:6a).

God had mercy on us and sent Jesus to do for us what we could not do for ourselves, save us: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him” (John 3:16-17). Jesus is God’s only and eternal Son (Mark 1:1, et al). God the Father proclaimed this at both Jesus’ baptism (Matt. 3:17; Mark 1:11; and Luke 3:22) and at the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:5), and the centurion proclaimed it at Jesus’ death on the cross (Matt. 27:54). As we affirm in the Nicene Creed, Jesus is “the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made” (BCP 326 and 358).

Through his incarnation Jesus came “to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us” to God. Scripture assures us that Jesus can relate to our temptations and sufferings and therefore especially cares for us: “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:15-16). His death on the cross did all that is needed for us to be reconciled to God, as we see in Romans 5:10 (“For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life”), 2 Corinthians 5:18a (“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ”), and Colossians 1:19-20 (“For

in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross”). Through his death Jesus reconciled us to “the God and Father of all” (Eph. 4:6a).

Jesus willingly offered his life on the cross: “He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.” Jesus was not forced to do so, as he made clear: “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep... For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it of me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again” (John 10:11, 17-18). And yet his death was in obedience to the will of God, as Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want” (Matt. 26:39). As we emphasized last week, Jesus’ death on the cross indeed serves as “a perfect sacrifice for the whole world:” “But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2).

As with the words of institution in Eucharistic Prayer I of the Rite One service, the words of institution in Eucharistic Prayer A of the Rite Two service beautifully incorporate the various aspects of the four biblical accounts of Jesus’ institution of Holy Communion at the Last Supper (Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20; and 1 Cor. 11:23-25):

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, “Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.” After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, “Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the

new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me.”

Everyone present, both clergy and congregation, then proclaim together, “Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.” Christ’s death, resurrection, and Second Coming are central truths of the Christian faith. In 1 Corinthians 11:26 Paul states that when we celebrate Holy Communion we “proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.” Moreover, in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 Paul reiterates the centrality of Jesus’ death and resurrection: “For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures.” At Jesus’ Second Coming he will complete his redemptive work in our lives: “But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation so that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself” (Phil. 3:20-21). We are reminded of Jesus’ death, resurrection, and Second Coming each time we celebrate Holy Communion.

As we addressed last week, we do not sacrifice Christ afresh at Holy Communion, but rather we remember the once for all sacrifice he already made on the cross (Rom. 3:23-25a; Heb. 10:10; 1 Pet. 3:18a; 1 John 2:1b-2 and 4:10, etc.) and offer a “sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving” in response (Ps. 116:17 and Heb. 13:15): “We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection and ascension, we offer you these gifts.”

This is followed by the epiclesis:

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

As with the epiclesis in Eucharistic Prayer I of the Rite One service, in Eucharistic Prayer A of the Rite Two service the Holy Spirit is also called down upon the congregation, so that we can “faithfully receive” Holy Communion and serve God “in unity, constancy, and peace.” It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to proclaim Jesus as Lord (1 Cor. 12:3); it is the Holy Spirit who sanctifies (Rom. 15:16); and it is the Holy Spirit who enables us to serve God (Phil. 2:13). On “the last day,” the day of Jesus’ Second Coming, God will indeed “bring us with all (his) saints into the joy of (his) eternal kingdom,” as Jesus promised at the Last Supper: “In my Father’s house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:2-3). Through Jesus Christ we have the hope of eternal life, and the best is yet to come.

Eucharistic Prayer A is comprehensive as it begins with God’s work of creation, continues with God’s work of salvation through the death of Jesus Christ, and concludes with the hope of God’s everlasting kingdom. All of this is possible only because of Jesus Christ, and so this prayer fittingly concludes with emphasis on Jesus Christ and a Trinitarian doxology: “All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ: By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. AMEN.”

As in the Rite One service, this is followed by the Lord’s Prayer, “The Breaking of the Bread,” and the words of invitation. However, the prayer of humble access is noticeably absent. The longer form of the words of administration used at the Rite One are not used in the

Rite Two; rather the two shorter forms are used instead: “The Body (Blood) of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life” or “The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven” and “The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.”

Following the administration of Holy Communion there are two different post-communion prayers from which to choose (both of which differ from the Rite One post-communion prayer):

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(or)

Almighty and everliving God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom. And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

These prayers assure us that because of the grace of God given us in Jesus Christ, we have been “graciously accepted” by God and made “living members” of the Body of Christ, the Church: “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it” (1 Cor. 12:27). We also pray that God would enable us, in response to his gracious redemption through Jesus Christ, to love him (Matt. 22:37-39) and serve him (Ps. 100:1) “with gladness and singleness of heart” as “faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord” (Acts 1:8). We are dependent on the grace of God to respond to God’s grace in these ways, for only God can give us the “strength and courage” (Josh. 1:9) to “do the work (he) has given us to do” (Eph. 2:10). All the honor and glory goes to God.

The post-communion prayer is followed by an optional blessing, and unlike the Rite One service, there are no specific blessings given from which to choose. This is followed by one of the same four dismissals as in the Rite One service, and the response to each is the same: “Thanks be to God.” At Christ Church “Alleluia, Alleluia” (the Latin form of the Hebrew “Hallelujah,” “Praise the Lord”) is added except during Lent. As we saw last week, our response to the grace God gives us through Jesus Christ at Holy Communion is thanksgiving and praise.

Class 6: Reverence and Unity at Holy Communion

The liturgies for Holy Eucharist in The Book of Common Prayer that we use at Christ Church show us that we are to receive God’s grace at Holy Communion with reverence before God and unity with one another. The sacrament of Holy Communion, like the sacrament of Holy Baptism, is a means by which God assures us of his grace towards us:

Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our Faith in him (Article XXV, BCP 872).

At Holy Communion God gives us his grace and we receive his grace. Our reverence at Holy Communion is not reverence for the clergy or reverence for the bread and wine, but reverence for God in response to the grace given us in Jesus Christ, particularly in his death on the cross for us. This reflects the classic Protestant emphasis regarding Holy Communion on remembering the once for all death of Jesus Christ on the cross, rather Christ being sacrificed again at a Mass; as well as the bread and wine being “effectual signs of grace, and God's good

will towards us” rather than transubstantiated into the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ.

These emphases are summarized in the Articles of Religion:

The Offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits (Article XXXI, BCP 874).

(and)

Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions” (Article XXVIII, BCP 873).

Reverence for God at Holy Communion is marked by gratitude, humility and faith. Moreover, Holy Communion is not the solitary act of an individual Christian, but a corporate act of the Church, the Body of Christ, and as such is a powerful demonstration of unity in Christ. The themes of reverence and unity are woven throughout the liturgies for Holy Eucharist in The Book of Common Prayer of 1979.

Reverence at Holy Communion

The title of “The Holy Eucharist” itself is derived from the Greek verb *eucharizo* (to give thanks), and gratitude pervades the liturgy of “The Holy Communion” of both the Rite One and Rite Two services in The Book of Common Prayer. The first section of the “The Holy Communion” section of the service is literally called “The Great Thanksgiving,” and gratitude is found in the *sursum corda*: “*Celebrant*: Let us give thanks unto our Lord God. *People*: It is meet and right so to do” (BCP 333) or “*Celebrant*: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. *People*: It is right to give him thanks and praise” (BCP 361). The celebrant then acknowledges that we are to give thanks to God “at all times and in all places” (BCP 333) or “always and

everywhere” (BCP 361), which reflects 1 Thessalonians 5:18. In the words of institution of both Eucharistic Prayer I and Eucharistic Prayer A mention is made of Jesus himself giving thanks to God the Father at the Last Supper (BCP 335 and 363). In Eucharistic Prayer I we render unto God “most hearty thanks for the innumerable benefits procured unto us” (BCP 335) by the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. In both Eucharistic Prayer I (BCP 335) and Eucharistic Prayer A (BCP 363) we offer to God a “sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving” in gratitude for what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. At both services the invitation to receive Holy Communion is marked by gratitude: “feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving” (BCP 338 and 365). In the post-communion prayer for Rite One we “most heartily thank” God for feeding us with the “spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood” of Jesus Christ (BCP 339); and in the second post-communion prayer for Rite Two we thank God “for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood” of Jesus Christ (BCP 366). Finally, at the conclusion of both Rite One and Rite Two the people respond at the dismissal, “Thanks be to God” (BCP 339-340 and 366).

The Rite One service of “The Holy Eucharist” is particularly characterized by humility. In “The Word of God” section of The Holy Eucharist service humility is found in the collect for purity (in which we ask God to “cleanse the thoughts of our hearts”), the *Kyrie*—or *Gloria* or *Trisagion* (in which we ask God to have mercy upon us), the Prayers of the People (in which we “humbly beseech” God for help in all areas of life, BCP 329), the confession (in which we “humbly confess our sins unto Almighty God,” BCP 330), and the absolution and comfortable words (in Rite One) (in which we receive God’s mercy for our sins). Moreover, the posture for the majority of “The Holy Communion” section of the Rite One and Rite Two services is standing or kneeling, both of which denote reverence and humility before God. In

Eucharistic Prayer I of “The Holy Communion” section of the Holy Eucharist: Rite One there are several direct references to humility in the liturgy (Eucharistic Prayer A of the Rite Two service lacks such direct references to humility). We acknowledge we are God’s “humble servants” who “humbly beseech (God) to hear us,” offer “our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving... most humbling beseeching” remission of our sins, and “humbly beseeching (God) that we... may worthily receive the most precious Body and Blood” of Jesus Christ at Holy Communion (BCP 335-336). In addition, we pray the prayer of humble access (BCP 337) and in the post-communion prayer we “humbly beseech” God to assist us with his grace. This recurring theme of humility is biblical, as three times scripture clearly states that “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (Prov. 3:34, Jas. 4:6, and 1 Pet. 5:5).

The theme of faith is also found in the liturgy of Holy Communion. As noted above, when we receive Holy Communion God often quickens, strengthens, and confirms our faith (Article XXV, BCP 872). Article XXVIII also emphasizes the role of faith when receiving Holy Communion, “a Sacrament of our Redemption by Christ's death,” in that “to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same, the Bread which we break is a partaking of the Body of Christ; and likewise the Cup of Blessing is a partaking of the Blood of Christ;” and “The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is Faith” (BCP 873). In Rite One Eucharistic Prayer I we pray that “through faith in his (Jesus Christ’s) blood” we “may obtain remission of our sins and all other benefits of his passion” (BCP 335). This draws directly from Paul’s Letter to the Romans in which Jesus’ death on the cross is described as “a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith” (3:25). Moreover, the prayer of humble access reaffirms that we receive Holy

Communion by faith: “We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies” (BCP 337). At the epiclesis of the Rite Two Eucharistic Prayer A we ask the Holy Spirit to “Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament” (BCP 363). At both the Rite One and Rite Two services faith is emphasized at the words of invitation: “Take and eat in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith” (BCP 338 and 365). In the post-communion prayer for the Rite One service we are reminded of how the grace God gives us at Holy Communion strengthens our faith as we thank God for “that thou... dost assure us thereby of thy favor and goodness towards us” (BCP 339). Similarly, in the second post-communion prayer of the Rite Two service we thank God for “assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son and heirs of your eternal kingdom” (BCP 366).

Unity at Holy Communion

Holy Communion is also a powerful expression of unity. Unity in the Church matters to God, as is clear when Jesus prayed on the night he was betrayed, “I ask not only on behalf of these (the disciples), but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word (the Church), that they may all be one” (John 17:20-21a). Christians are members of the Church, the Body of Christ: “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it” (1 Cor. 12:27). The unity of the Church is expressed particularly at Holy Communion, as Paul states: “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Cor. 10:16-17).

From the opening acclamation through the response at the dismissal the liturgy of “The Holy Eucharist” is a corporate service of both the celebrant and the people, and as such can be a powerful demonstration of unity. This is evident in the “Word of God” section of the service in the corporate saying or singing of the *Kyrie* (or *Gloria* or *Trisagion*), the responses at the readings, the recitation of the Nicene Creed, the corporate Prayers of the People, the invitation to the confession (Rite One: “Ye who do earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors...”—BCP 330; and Rite Two: “Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor”—BCP 360), and the passing of the peace.

The corporate nature of The Holy Eucharist service continues in “The Holy Communion” section of the service with the call and response of the *sursum corda*, the corporate saying or singing of the *Sanctus*, the use of the first person plural in the Eucharistic prayers, the corporate recitation of the Lord’s Prayer, the call and response at “The Breaking of the Bread,” and the invitation to receive the “Gifts of God for the People of God.” The congregation then receives together the bread and wine (the wine from a common cup), and then joins with the priest in the post-communion prayer of thanksgiving to God for being “members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, the blessed company of all faithful people... that holy fellowship” (Rite One, BCP 339) or being “graciously accepted... as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ” (Rite Two, BCP 365) or being “living members of the Body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom” (Rite Two, BCP 366). All of this attests to the powerful theme of unity at Holy Communion. Such unity at Holy Communion is not just for the sake of the Church, but for the sake of the world: “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor. 11:26).

At Christ Church there is unity among the clergy regarding how Holy Communion is celebrated. Historically the liturgical style of both the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia and Christ Church is “low church.” “Low church” (as opposed to “high church”) does not mean informal or casual, but Protestant rather than Anglo-Catholic. This is not to deny the valued Anglo-Catholic tradition within Anglicanism, but rather to clarify that at Christ Church we are traditionally “low church” in keeping with our Protestant Anglican heritage. At Christ Church the emphasis at Holy Communion is on receiving the grace God gives us through the once for all death of Jesus Christ on the cross for the sins of the world, as opposed to sacrificing Christ again at a Mass. The clergy at Christ Church celebrate Holy Communion in a manner consistent both with the historic “low church” liturgical heritage of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia, and the historic “low church” liturgical heritage of Christ Church (“the ritual is ‘Virginia low church’”—from the 1978 Parish Profile of Christ Church). This, in turn, is consistent with our Protestant Anglican heritage going back to Thomas Cranmer and the English Reformation, which in turn found its roots in scripture and the early church. This is why the clergy at Christ Church do not venerate the bread and wine after the words of institution or lift the bread at the breaking of the bread: “The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped” (Article XXVIII, BCP 873). The clergy at Christ Church break the bread at the words of institution rather than “The Breaking of the Bread” because there are no rubrics in the 1549 and 1552 English Prayer Books regarding the celebrant breaking the bread, and the rubrics in the service in the 1662 English Prayer Book and the 1928 American Prayer Book instruct the celebrant to break the bread during the words of institution. In addition, the clergy at Christ Church are

minimal in their use of gestures during the celebration of Holy Communion in order to encourage focus on our corporate Eucharistic prayer to God, not the actions of the celebrant.

The vestments typically worn by Christ Church clergy also reflect our Protestant Anglican heritage. Although the 1549 English Prayer Book included a rubric instructing the clergy to wear a “white Albe plain” (an alb is a long white robe worn by a Catholic priest at Mass, and symbolizes purity), the 1552 Prayer Book, which as we saw in class three was much more Protestant than the 1549 book, does not include a rubric specifying what the minister was to wear. In fact, toward the end of their lives the English Reformers (Thomas Cranmer, Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley, etc.) typically wore a cassock and surplice when leading a Holy Communion service. A cassock is black (although often bishops wear a purple cassock), and together with the white surplice over it, symbolizes the imputed righteousness of God (white surplice) placed on the sinner (black cassock); that is, a minister, like every Christian, is *simul iustus et peccator* (at the same time justified and a sinner). In short, historically an alb denotes Roman Catholic churchmanship while the cassock and surplice, which technically are not considered vestments, denote Protestant churchmanship. Therefore, the clergy at Christ Church typically wear a cassock and surplice in keeping with the Protestant Anglican “low church” liturgical heritage of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia and of Christ Church. Clergy at Christ Church also wear a stole, which has long been used in the Church to denote the role of being a servant, and the color worn depends on the season of the church year or the occasion of the service.

At Christ Church, in receiving the grace God gives us at Holy Communion, we seek to demonstrate reverence for God—marked by gratitude, humility, and faith—and unity with one another. We celebrate Holy Communion in obedience to Jesus’ institution at the Last

Supper (week one), and we do so having been influenced by the Early Church (week two) and the English Reformation as expressed in the English Prayer Books of 1549 and 1552 (week three). We do so in the traditional language of the Rite One service (week four) and in the contemporary language of the Rite Two service (week five). Lord willing, we will continue to celebrate Holy Communion at Christ Church until Jesus Christ returns.