

# Bishop's Note



## Why I'm An Anglican #3 - *Because We Are Liturgical*

This morning I'd like to continue my explanation with why it is that I am an Anglican. One of the great strengths of the Anglican Reformers was their wisdom in seeking to "reform" Catholicism, not abandon her. One area where the more Protestant churches went afoul, was with their abandonment of liturgy and all things liturgical because they appeared "Romish."

The liturgies of the church are in fact deeply scriptural both in quoting scripture but also expressing it in a most pastoral manner.

So what is liturgy? Well, it is most often described as the "work of the people." I would expand that definition to say that it is the "Work of the people in ministering to the people of God and worshiping the Lord God almighty." Liturgy is what Christians do when they gather together for worship. I always find it odd when I meet Protestants who argue that they are not liturgical. However, if you go to a service you will find a set way of organizing worship - generally speaking they gather together, sing some songs, take an offering, offer prayers, hear some scripture, listen to a sermon, sing some more and have announcements. No matter how you slice it that is liturgy.

What I love about Anglicanism is that we embrace that liturgy and seek to make it as beautiful and transformational as possible. To do that we rely upon music that is ancient and modern. These are songs of praise that speak to a deep and profound theological reality of God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ. When I sing those hymns I am proclaiming the Truth of Jesus Christ and worshiping God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit! Whether that hymn is Ode to Joy or In Christ Alone. **"Joyful, Joyful, we adore thee God of Glory, Lord of Love; hearts unfold like flowers before thee praising thee their God above."** Is it possible to read those words and not hearing Beethoven's music in their minds ear? When those verses and that music was first written in the 18th Century it was the pop music of the time but speaks to a timeless truth and reality. So too with hymns 21st

century hymns like In Christ Alone - **"In Christ alone, my hope is found, he is my life, my strength, my song."**

In the Liturgy we very intentionally take up an offering of our treasure to be used for the Glory of God, the spread of the gospel and the ministry of the church. This offering is biblical and right allowing the entire church to return to the Lord a portion, (which should be a minimum of 10%), to him in gratitude for the other 90% that we use to support our families, ourselves and our communities. Note that when we gather up the offerings we bring them to the altar and hand them to the priest or deacon who raises them up before the Lord and the congregation with one voice either sings or says words from scripture known, as the Doxology - **"Praise God from whom all blessings flow. (James 1:17) Praise Him all creatures here below.(Psalm 145:21) Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts. (Rev. 5:11-14) Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen"** (2 Peter 1:11)

In the Liturgy we read the Word of God, and as I mentioned last week, if we gather for worship every Sunday over three years we will have read over 80% of the bible. However, in Anglican liturgy we not only hear the Word of God we interact with it - praying together the psalms and responding both physically (standing for the gospel and sometimes the psalms) and verbally responding to the Lector by proclaiming our affirmation to the proclamation of the Word saying **"Thanks be to God,"** a phrase given in scripture by St. Paul, among others, in his letters to the Corinthians.

In the Liturgy the Word of God is faithfully preached. This should be a challenging exposition of the scriptures read that day that include a practical application to the lives of the people gathered. Through the movement of the Holy Spirit who opens our hearts and minds this will sometimes be a very challenging and uncomfortable message, and at times a very comforting message of assurance. However, it should always be bible-based and include practical implications for life. I thank God for the preaching of my clergy in the diocese and regularly listen to them online.

In the Liturgy we offer, individually and collectively, prayers to God. Prayers of praise and thanksgiving, prayers of petition asking God for his assistance for ourselves and others, prayers for those in authority and prayers for the church. I love the fact that our liturgy forces us to look beyond ourselves and our perceived needs, wants and desires.

In the Liturgy, we proclaim our faith in the words of the Nicene or Apostles Creed. This profession of faith is so important as an affirmation of our faith and defining, for ourselves and others, who we are as Christians. Additionally, the public affirmation of our faith connects us with Christians from the first century to the present day and connects us with Christians around the world and across most denominational lines.

In the Liturgy we share in the sacraments of the church that speak into our mind, heart and soul. More on that next week.

Lastly, in Liturgy we participate in a beautiful work that through music, symbols, clothing and rituals, connect us to one another across time and across the divide of human and divine. I love the liturgy of the church because in that eighty minute time frame, give or take, I can intentionally set myself in the presence of God and have a glimpse into His Kingdom!

God bless you all!

Bishop Menees

Bishop's Calander

August 2-3 Caminemos Juntos! in El Paso, TX

August 4 Bishop @ St. Martin's Fresno, CA

August 11 Bishop @ Christ Church Oakhurst, CA

August 17 Diocesan Council

August 18 Bishop @ St. Timothy's in Bishop, CA

August 20 Ordination of Noah Lawson in Fresno, CA

October 4 Clergy Wives Retreat

October 12 Diocesan Honored Women's Luncheon in Lemoore, CA

November 8-9 Diocesan Convention in Fresno, CA

