**A Word From Our Pastor**

It has been our tradition as Lutherans to receive and make use of the historical order of worship in the Christian Church. This is known as the Liturgy and also referred to in the Missouri Synod as the Divine Service.

In this regard the Lutheran Reformers did not break from the Roman Catholic Church. Rather than abolishing the Mass, the Lutheran Reformers merely cleaned up a few places that obscured the gospel. But the ordering, most of the wording, and many of the trappings remained. These accoutrements included furnishings, vestments, paraments, and symbols such as crucifixes, banners, and candles.

Speaking of furnishings, three stand out in importance. They are the Baptismal Font, the Pulpit/Lectern, and the Altar/Table. And each accentuates the Word of God and how in the Divine Service God’s Word comes to us. The Word comes especially to offer and sustain us in the forgiveness of sins that we so desperately need. And our response of thanksgiving for this gift is also shaped in the Liturgy with God’s Word.

At the Baptismal Font when we first enter the worship space we are reminded and renewed in and by the washing of God’s Word in our baptisms (cf. Ep 5:26). It is appropriate as you enter to dip your fingers into the font and then trace the sign of the cross on your brow retracing the mark of the cross that was made at your baptism.

And then as we progress toward the chancel we sit before the Pulpit/Lectern. The Word of God rests upon this furniture, and from the Pulpit we have our ears filled with God’s Word as Scripture is read and the Gospel is proclaimed.

At the climax of the Divine Service, baptized, repentant sinners are invited to stand before and around the Altar, the Table of our Lord. There the Incarnate Word’s body and blood are given to the faithful to eat and drink for the forgiveness of sins. Indeed, we taste and see that the Lord is good!

**Since You Asked**

**What is meant by the term “catholic” as when we confess, “I believe in the holy catholic Church?”**

The term “catholic” means whole and refers to a church which receives the Christian faith intact without alteration or selection of matters of the faith. The opposite of catholic is heretic, one who picks and chooses which parts of the faith to accept. Thus “catholic” is more specific than “Christian” and is not a synonym for “ecumenical” or “worldwide”. *(from “Manual on the Liturgy” companion to the LBW, from Augsburg Pub.)*

- often when the “C” is capitalized “Catholic” is referring to the Roman Catholic Church, and when the “c” is lower case “catholic” is referring to the Church receiving the whole of the faith.