

Adult Education – St. Luke’s Church – Sedona, AZ – Class 13
Understanding & Using the Prayer Book – Collects, Epistles & Gospels / The Psalter
May 12, 2019

Note: for ease of accessing the web sites contained in this handout, download your own PDF copy here: <http://www.episcopalnet.org/DBS/Sedona/AdultEducation2019.html> and click on the live links in that copy. Questions or comments? Email me at dmc89az@gmail.com. Follow St. Luke’s on Facebook: “St. Luke’s Church Sedona AZ”.

Opening Prayer: O Lord, we beseech thee to keep thy Church and household continually in thy true religion; that they who do lean only upon the hope of thy heavenly grace may evermore be defended by thy mighty power; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.** (BCP p. 115 – *Collect for the Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany.*)

I. Follow-up from Last Week.

A. More on the Holy of Holies and Jesus the Great High Priest:

Leviticus 16:15; Hebrews 9:1-14.

B. Morning and Evening Prayer.

1. As suggested by the Bishop last week, it is recommended that you say your prayers aloud whenever possible. They were composed to be read aloud; improves pace and focus.
2. Persistence and Patience! Do not be surprised by periods of dryness and even doubt. Remember St. Monica, who prayed for years for the conversion of her husband and St. Augustine. Often, we will never see the effect of our prayers in this life.

II. Collects, Epistles and Gospels

A. These “Propers” of the Eucharist are the “variable” portions of the Mass, whereas the remainder of the Mass (BCP pp. 67-84) is “fixed.”

B. The selections are derived mostly from those used by the Church of Rome in the sixth and seventh centuries, with numerous changes and substitutions over time.

C. The Gospel recounts a portion of the life or teaching of our Lord; the Epistle contains Apostolic or Prophetic exposition on some portion of the Gospel; and the Collect gathers up both lessons into prayer.

D. Collects.

1. The “Collect of the Day” is a short prayer appropriate to the day of the Church Year and one which “collects” or sums up the thought of the Day or Season, said in the Holy Communion Service in connection with the reading of the Epistle and Gospel and also in Morning and Evening Prayer and other services of the Prayer Book. *Crum*, p. 25.
2. Many Collects pre-date the 1549 Prayer Book; many were written by Cranmer; and some were composed later.
3. Typical Structure (*Cox*, p. 109):
 - a. The Invocation, usually addressed to God the Father.
 - b. Statement of some doctrine or of some Gospel fact as the ground on which the petition is based.
 - c. A single petition.
 - d. Mention of the benefits hoped for.
 - e. The conclusion, when the prayer itself is not addressed *to* Christ our Mediator, is always *through* Him as our Mediator, often with a Doxology or Ascription of praise.
 - f. Example: Collect for the Third Sunday after Easter.
 - (1) The Invocation – “Almighty God,”
 - (2) Statement of doctrine or Gospel fact – “who showest to them that are in error the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness;”
 - (3) A single petition – “Grant unto all those who are admitted into the fellowship of

Christ's Religion,"

- (4) Mention of the benefits hoped for – “that they may avoid those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same;”
- (5) The conclusion – “through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*”
- (6) This, by the way, is one of the oldest Collects in the Prayer Book. It clearly refers to the newly baptized.

D. Collects, Epistles and Gospels Appointed for Use at the Mass (BCP pp. 90-269)

1. Liturgical Year

- a. Advent Season (BCP pp. 90-96) – Purple
- b. Christmastide (BCP pp. 96-107) – White
- c. Epiphany Season (BCP pp. 107-118) – Green
- d. Pre-Lenten Season (BCP pp. 118-114) – Purple
- e. Lenten Season (BCP pp. 124-131) – Purple
- f. Passiontide – Passion Week and Holy Week (BCP pp. 132-162) – Purple
- g. Eastertide (BCP pp. 162-177) – White
- h. Ascensiontide (BCP pp. 177-180) – White
- i. Whitsuntide (Pentecost) (BCP pp. 180-186) – Red
- j. Trinity Season (BCP pp. 186-226) – Green

E. Those Appointed for Holy Days, Ember Days, Rogation Days, Marriage, Burial, etc. (BCP pp. 226-269) – colors vary, often red (thus, the term “red letter days”).

F. Numerous Other Collects, Epistles and Gospels Embedded Within Specific Regular and Occasional Services (*e.g.*, Morning and Evening Prayer, Baptism, Ordinations).

G. Additional Collects.

1. Prayers and Thanksgivings (BCP pp. 35-53). For example:

- a. *A Prayer for Congress* (BCP p. 35). Adapted from the 1662 Book's prayer for the High Court of Parliament.
- b. *For Courts of Justice* (BCP p. 35). At the time, the only prayer for the judiciary in any of the Anglican Prayer Books.
- c. *For Rain* (BCP p. 40). Written by Cranmer for the 1549 Prayer Book and unaltered since then. (Somewhat controversial – unfairly.)
- d. *For the Sick and the Afflicted* (BCP pp. 45-46).

2. Additional Prayers (BCP pp.594-600). All added in the 1928 revision. For example:

- a. *For the Spirit of Prayer* (BCP p. 594). Particularly suitable before Morning and Evening Prayer.
- b. *At Night* (BCP. p. 594). Particularly lovely.
- c. *For Quiet Confidence* (BCP p. 595). Written by the Rev. John W. Suter, Jr., Custodian of the Standard Book of Common Prayer – who wrote several other prayers included in the 1928 Prayer Book.
- d. *For Those We Love* (BCP p. 597). A particularly good intercession for family and friends.
- e. *For Those in Mental Darkness* (BCP p. 598). Suggested to the 1928 Revision Committee by a laywoman who was concerned for those who could not (or were not inclined to) pray for themselves.

III. The Psalms (Psalter).

- A. “[T]he Psalter is longer, more frequently quoted in the New Testament, and more extensively read in the Lectionary than any other Old Testament book. Since the time of the Church Fathers, if not before, it has been considered a summary of the teaching of the entire Old Testament, or even all of divine revelation, together with a comprehensive description of all the states of the soul in the presence of God [T]he Psalms continue to be the living heartbeat of the Church's prayer to the present day.” *Bergsma*, p. 561.

- B. 150 Psalms / 5 Books. Each book has a distinctive “mood.”
1. Book I (Psalms 1-41) – Introduction and Laments of David (BCP pp. 345-92).
 2. Book II (Psalms 42-72) – The Rise of the Davidic Kingdom (BCP pp. 392-428).
 3. Book III (Psalms 73-89) – Fall of the Davidic Kingdom (BCP pp. 428-53).
 4. Book IV (Psalms 90-106) – Reflections on the Fall of the Kingdom and Exile (BCP pp. 453-75) (thematically the most “cohesive” of the Books).
 5. Book V (Psalms 107-150) – Rejoicing and Restoration of the Temple (BCP pp. 476-525).
- C. The title “Psalms” comes from the Greek word *psalms*, for “song.” They have uniformly been considered canonical in all Jewish and Christian traditions.
- D. All of the Psalms are poetry, not prose. Unlike much of English poetry, it does not rhyme. It often relies on “parallelism.” *See, e.g.*, Ps. 2:1 (synonymous parallelism); Ps. 1:6 (antithetical parallelism); other, more technical forms.
- E. Types of Psalms.
1. *Lament*. Most common. *See, e.g.*, Ps. 22 (BCP p. 366).
 2. *Thanksgiving*. *See, e.g.*, Ps. 66 (BCP p. 417).
 3. *Hymns*. Similar to Thanksgiving Psalms, but more general or comprehensive in nature. Generally in Books IV and V. *See, e.g.*, Ps. 90 (BCP p. 453).
 4. *Royal*. Focus on the king, offering praise to God or offering petition on his behalf. *See, e.g.*, Ps. 45 (BCP p. 396).
 4. *Mount Zion*. Focus on the attributes and glories of the holy city of Jerusalem. *See, e.g.*, Ps. 48 (BCP p. 399).
 5. *Wisdom*. Place emphasis on wise or righteous behavior. *See, e.g.*, Ps. 1 (BCP p. 345).
 6. *Other*. Psalms that don’t neatly fit into any of the above categories, such as *acrostic, confidence, imprecatory, didactic, psalms of ascent, messianic psalms*.
- G. Dates of Composition and Authorship.
1. Some Psalms are clearly pre-exilic (*i.e.*, before 597 B.C.)
 2. Others lament the fall of Jerusalem and are, therefore, post-exilic.
 3. Many Psalms (73) are attributed to David (tenth century B.C.); others are attributed to Moses, Solomon, Asaph, Ethan, etc. (These attributions – or “superscriptions” – often appear in various translations of the Psalms but not in the BCP.)
 4. The attributions are hotly debated among scholars; however, Jesus and certain authors of the New Testament referred to David as the author of some Psalms that are not even attributed to him. *See, e.g.*, Matthew 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:42-44; Acts 1:16; 2:25-34; 4:25-26; Romans 4:6-8; 11:9; Hebrews 4:7.
- H. Jesus and the Psalms (and Why We Should Pray Them).
- “These prayers, above all others, remain ‘essential’ to the worship of the Church because they are the only prayers we possess that are both inspired by the Holy Spirit and prayed by Jesus himself during his earthly life In the language of later Trinitarian theology, one could sum it up this way: the Psalms were (1) inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, (2) prayed by Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, and (3) offered to the Father, the First Person of the Trinity. In this way, Jesus’ praying of the Psalms consecrates them as a special entry into the life of the Trinity.” *Bergsma*, p. 589. [This helps explain the comment from last from last week’s class that reciting the *Gloria Patri* “Christianizes” the Psalms.]
- F. The Prayer Book Psalter.
1. The version included in the Prayer Book is the translation by Miles Coverdale, first printed in 1535 and later included in the Great Bible of 1540. Notably, they were not replaced by the King James translation in the 1662 Prayer Book (or later versions). However, the 1928 Prayer Book made over 100 changes to the Coverdale version, primarily correction of words mistranslated by Coverdale and substitution of modern words for archaic English terms.
 2. Option 1: Read according to the schedule in the Daily Office Lectionary. Psalms are often

selected to be appropriate to the day or season.

3. Option 2: Read all of the Psalms in a 30-day cycle, according to the daily Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer divisions indicated in the Psalter. In months with 31 days, the 30th day is repeated.

I. As Saint Athanasius noted, the Psalter contains prayers for every possible occasion of a Christian's life. *See, e.g.*, "Selection of Psalms" (BCP p. ix).

J. For a complete, choral version of the Psalter, go here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ID5rrL1U-xI&list=PLQ9-50qJL_DYdbPd_MxLKUZtAHRiNqAek&index=17

Every Psalm is indexed with a hyperlink, and they are grouped into the 30-day Morning and Evening Prayer reading cycle.

IV. Looking Back – We've Covered a Lot of Ground in Three and a Half Months.

A. Pauline Epistles: Colossians, I Thessalonians, Galatians, I Corinthians.

B. Prayer Book: History and Structure, Morning and Evening Prayer, Collects, Epistles & Gospels / Psalter.

C. Memory Verses.

1. The Inspiration and Purposes of Scripture (II Timothy 3:16-17).

2. Seven Deadly Sins.

3. The Nature of Temptation and Our Ability to Resist It (I Corinthians 10:13).

4. The Seven Lively Virtues.

5. The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

6. How Often Should We Pray? (I Thessalonians 5:17).

7. The Ten Commandments.

D. Saul of Tarsus – Persecutor of the Way; Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles; Christ's Suffering Servant Paul and the Supernatural; Prayer Warrior; Mysteries of St. Paul.

E. History of the Ember Days and the Critical Role of the Laity.

F. Vocabulary: amanuensis, ascetic, exegesis, hortatory, Judaizer, syncretism, etc.

Closing Prayer: O God of peace who hast taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be our strength; By the might of thy Spirit lift us, we pray thee, to thy presence, where we may be still and know that thou art God; through Jesus Christ our Lord **Amen.**

(BCP, p. 595 – *For Quiet Confidence*, by the Rev. John W. Suter, Jr.)

Sources

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Cox, W. *The Heart of the Prayer Book*. Richmond, VA: Dietz Press 1945.

Crum, R. *A Dictionary of the Episcopal Church*. Philadelphia, PA: Trefoil Publishing Society, 1960.

Shepherd, M. *The American Prayer Book Commentary*. NY: Oxford Univ., 1950.

Where to Buy

- Amazon.com – search for “1928 Book of Common Prayer”
- Anglican Parishes Association - <https://anglican-parishes-association.myshopify.com/collections/prayer-books>
- Anglican Province in America - <https://anglicanprovince.org/shop/>

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