



# Liturgical Thought

## EXPLANATION AND GUIDE TO THE LUTHERAN LITURGY<sup>1</sup>

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### Why does Pastor preach his Sermon from the pulpit?

From ancient times even down to today, the **four corners of the altar** have been called the **“horns.”** This tradition was born of the fact that the **corners of the altars** in the **Tabernacle** and **Temple** were actually **projections** to which the **sacrificial lamb was bound**. In our chancel today, the **lectern** from which the **Word of God** is read and the **pulpit** from which the pastor preaches may be seen as **modern extensions** of the horns from which the **Gospel** of our Lord sounds forth as it is **proclaimed to His people**. Just as the **sacrifice**, bound to the altar (Psalm 118:27) was a **symbol of God’s future fulfillment in His Son, Jesus**, so too today, in the **Age of Fulfillment**, the **Word of God** sounds forth with the message of **Christ, the crucified, our Sacrificial Lamb**.

As you may have observed when visiting other places of worship, **traditions vary** regarding the **placement** of the pulpit, some placing it at the **Gospel side** (the **left side or horn** as seen from the **Nave** or from where you sit, and the place from where the **Gospel** is read in many places), and others, such as here at Redford, at the right or **Epistle side** (the **right horn**, from which again, the **Epistle** is read in many places).<sup>2</sup> When the **pulpit** is placed on the **Gospel side** it serves to **highlight the relationship between the Gospel and the content of the Sermon** as an **exposition and proclamation** of the **Gospel**. When placed on the **right side**, the pulpit serves to emphasize the relationship **between the Gospel and the congregation** to, and for whom, the Gospel is preached. As the **Epistles** were written and **addressed specifically to the Church**, so the **Sermon is directed to the Church** which is nothing less than God’s people.

✠ ✠ ✠ Soli Deo Gloria ✠ ✠ ✠

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<sup>1</sup> Much of the content of this series on the Liturgy of the Church is found in *Why? A Layman’s Guide to the Liturgy*, by Rev. Burnell F. Eckardt Jr., Repristination Press, (Malone, TX.), and first published in *Gottesdienst, The Journal of Lutheran Liturgy*, in a series by the same name between the years 1985-2005. Used by permission.

<sup>2</sup> We here at Redford observe the readings from the Gospel and Epistle horns of the altar during Vespers.