



# Liturgical Thought

## EXPLANATION AND GUIDE TO THE LUTHERAN LITURGY

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### Why do we make a distinction between the Service of the Word and the Service of the Sacrament of the Altar?

*“The Father gives His Son; the Son freely submits Himself to the Passion and Cross; the Holy Spirit mediates the fruit of Christ’s saving work through Word and Sacrament.”<sup>1</sup>*

The **Service of the Word** proclaims, teaches, and explains the Gospel message of the **Word of God** through canticles, readings from **Holy Scripture**, **prayers**, **hymns**, and **sermon**, in order to awaken and strengthen faith in God’s holy people through the **hearing of the spoken Word**, for **“Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God”** (Romans 10:17).

Having heard that Word the congregation is prepared and invited **to receive in faith** the fruit and benefit of Christ’s sacrificial death given to the Church by Christ in His **Body and Blood**; His **Body given** and His **Blood shed** for the **forgiveness of all sin**. Therefore, in the **Service of Holy Communion**, also known as the **Service of the Sacrament of the Altar**, Christ **joins the act and deed of His sacrifice for us to His Word**, and gives to us His Body and Blood for the **forgiveness of our sins** and the **strengthening of our faith**; the same Body and Blood offered up **for the life of the world** on the **Cross of Calvary**.

✠✠✠ Soli Deo Gloria ✠✠✠

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<sup>1</sup> Evanson, Charles J., *Lutheran Worship History and Practice*, Precht, Fred L., ed., Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1993, p. 419.