

Handout to *Insights from early Lutheran worship*, presented by Joseph Herl at the WELS National Worship Conference, July 22–23, 2002

**Schedule of services in 16th to 18th-century German Lutheran churches** (the schedule was fairly uniform throughout Germany, but some places had more or fewer services and observed more or fewer holy days)

*Three-day festivals* (First Vespers followed by confession on eve of festival, mass and Second Vespers on Day 1, mass and Vespers on Day 2, mass on Day 3) — Christmas, Easter, Pentecost

*One-day festivals* (First Vespers followed by confession on eve of festival, mass and Second Vespers on festival day) — ordinary Sundays (on which catechism instruction was also held), Circumcision or New Year's (January 1), Epiphany (January 6), Purification of Mary (also called Presentation of Our Lord; February 2), Annunciation (March 25; moved to another day if it fell during Holy Week), Ascension, Trinity, St. John the Baptist (June 24), Visitation (July 2), St. Michael and All Angels (September 29)

*Half-day observances* (mass in the morning) — days of the apostles, Conversion of St. Paul (January 25), Mary Magdalene (July 22), Beheading of John the Baptist (August 29); in some places these observances were moved to the nearest day with a regularly scheduled sermon

*Observed in some places (half-day)* — Holy Innocents (December 28), Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, St. Lawrence (August 10), All Saints (November 1), monthly or seasonal days of penitence, harvest thanksgiving (found only in a few later orders)

*Rarely observed in Lutheran churches* — Corpus Christi (Thursday after Trinity), Assumption of Mary (August 15); in some places the Visitation was observed on August 15 rather than on its proper day to avoid keeping workers from the fields twice with a week when two holy days fell during the same week (the other being SS. Peter and Paul on June 29)

*Weekday services in places with Latin schools* — Matins (generally in Latin) six days per week, Vespers (in Latin or German) six days per week, sermons on several weekdays, the Litany sung on Wednesday or Fridays (often omitted except in time of war or danger). The largest cities (with more than a few thousand people) held mass daily at alternating churches. The weekday prayer service developed in the early seventeenth century.

*Weekday services in villages and rural areas* — one weekday sermon; daily Matins or Vespers or both might be held in German in places with German schools

### **Titles of church and school officials**

*superintendent* — a pastor overseeing churches in a given region; equivalent to a bishop or rural dean

*parson (Pfarrherr, Pfarrer)* — the resident pastor of a parish church

*priest (Priester, Prester), pastor (Pastor), minister (Minister, Kirchendiener)* — the usual terms for an ordained clergyman (the term used varied by region)

*deacon (Diacon), chaplain (Kapellan)* — an assisting priest who read the Gospel and carried the chalice at communion

*subdeacon* — an assisting priest who read the Epistle and carried the houseling cloth (a towel used to catch crumbs that might fall from the host while it was being distributed); found only in a few large churches with a great deal of ceremony

*preacher (Prediger, Predicant)* — most often used to designate the priest preaching the sermon on a given day; some cities called preachers specifically to preach in one or more churches and not be in charge of a parish

*clerk (Cüster, Custos, Opfermann)* — a lay assistant to the pastor who maintained the church, rang the bells, set up for services, led the singing during services, and taught catechism; in small villages he doubled as the schoolmaster, and in some places he also kept the church's books

*rector* — the first teacher and headmaster in a Latin school for boys

*cantor* — a second teacher in a Latin school who was also responsible for music in the church

*succentor, subcantor* — a teacher in a Latin school responsible for the simpler hymn and chant singing while the cantor directed the more complex polyphonic music; found only in larger cities

*schoolmaster (Schulmeister)* — the teacher of a German school in a village; frequently doubled as organist

*organist* — a teacher or layman who played the organ during services; lay organists were of a lower social class than teachers, as they were not "educated," but merely "trained"

## Terms for musical ensembles

*choir (Chor)* — the usual term for the group singing the liturgy in church; also called simply the *schoolboys (Schüler)* because it comprised boys from the Latin or German school

*chorus musicus, chorus symphonicus* — a select choir consisting of the musically most accomplished boys

*Adjuvantengesellschaft, Kantorei* — a combination of musical ensemble and social club consisting of laymen from various professions who sang polyphonic music in support of the school choir; not to be confused with the *Hofkantorei*, a court ensemble of professional singers and instrumentalists

*Kurrende* — a schoolboy choir that raised school tuition for its members by walking the streets and singing in front of houses in anticipation of a financial reward; the level of proficiency was lower than that of the regular *Chor*, and this group did not normally sing in church services

## Christian Gerber's criticisms of contemporary church music (1699)

1. Music is the gift of God, but it is commonly abused in church.
2. Italians often serve as musicians in Lutheran churches; and many musicians, whether Italian or German, are unspiritual people.
3. The music currently performed in churches entertains the ear but does not benefit the soul.
4. Current church music is just so much noise, and often the text cannot be understood clearly.
5. The music of the Old Testament and the early church was truly spiritual.
6. Congregational hymns are to be preferred to performed music.
7. Some performed music is appropriate in the service, but large sums should not be spent on it.

## Questions for discussion

1. How would the large number of services on weekends and on the many holy days have affected individual and community life? What can we learn from this?
2. What can we learn from the attendance and demeanor at services?
3. How was the Daily Office observed, and who was in attendance? What can we learn from this?
4. How was private confession and absolution regarded? What does this say to us?
5. Why did Lutherans retain the choral mass for so long after the Reformation? How can this be reconciled with Luther's teaching of the "priesthood of the baptized"? Is a choral mass appropriate today?
6. Why did many Lutherans continue to use Latin in church for so long after the Reformation? Would it be appropriate to use Latin today?
7. Why was everything chanted in the service except for the sermon? Would more or less chanting be appropriate today?
8. What was the relationship between music in the school and music in the church? Is this relationship worth reestablishing today? If so, how?
9. How much time was spent on music instruction in school? What form did this instruction take? What can we learn from this?
10. Were Christian Gerber's criticisms of church music valid? If so, are they still valid today?
11. Is there a conflict between participatory music and performance music in the church today? If so, how does it manifest itself?
12. How did the perception of church music's purpose change from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century? How should we understand the purpose of music in church today?
13. If the entire congregation is able to sing the liturgy, then what is the proper role of the choir?
14. Were 18th-century musicians correct in assuming that music had the power to move emotions and instill devotion? If so, then to what extent should church music explicitly strive to do these things?
15. Why did the Enlightenment writers criticize the liturgy as being too complex and ritualistic for churchgoers? How are such concerns an issue today?
16. How are those critical of the liturgy today similar to the Enlightenment writers? How are they different? Does this make a difference in how we respond to them?



### *Explanation of abbreviations and symbols*

+ indicates a part of the service sung or spoken by the priest or deacon.

L indicates a part of the service done in Latin; G indicates a part done in German; if the language is not explicitly specified in the church order but is evident with a high degree of probability from context or other evidence, the language indication is placed in parentheses. If the language to be used is less certain, the letter is followed by a question mark (L?).

L/G indicates a part of the service that may be done in either Latin or German; the order (L/G or G/L) is that given in the source.

L-G indicates a part of the service that is done in Latin, then done again in German.

A check mark (✓) indicates a part of the service that either is untexted (e.g., Elevation) or whose language cannot be determined from the source and Latin or German both seem equally likely.

A cross (X) indicates a part of the service whose omission is explicitly directed in the source.

A blank space indicates a part of the service not mentioned in the source.

A raised circle to the left of a letter (°L) indicates a part of the service explicitly assigned to the choir; a raised circle to the right (G°) indicates a part of the service explicitly assigned to the congregation.

Lowered circles are used only in connection with the Agnus Dei. A lowered circle to the left of a letter (L) indicates that the Agnus is sung before the distribution of communion; a lowered circle to the right (G<sub>l</sub>) indicates that it is sung after communion; and a lowered circle directly below (G<sub>u</sub>) indicates that it is sung during communion. If nothing is indicated in this position, the place of the Agnus Dei cannot be determined.

*Italics* indicate a part of the service that may be omitted if desired or that is sung only on certain festivals.

Raised numbers refer to notes below.

References to the Salutation are omitted; it may be sung before any collect and at the beginning of the Preface.

Minor deviations from the usual mass order, such as when the Verba precede the Sanctus, are not noted.

Extraliturgical figural and organ music mentioned in the sources is not noted.

### *Notes*

1. Preceded by the Benedictus.
2. Followed by a versicle, corporate confession and absolution and another hymn.
3. Preceded by an organ prelude and a motet.
4. The text of a "Latin" Kyrie is actually in Greek.
5. The Gloria and Et in terra are typically omitted during Lent (and sometimes Advent) even where this is not indicated.
6. In villages where no one understands Latin the Epistle and Gospel are read only in German.
7. If there are no schoolboys the Alleluia is not done.
8. A German song is sung by the people, followed by a Latin Alleluia and Sequence or Tract.
9. On high feasts and sometimes during their seasons, the Sequence is typically performed with a German version sung by the congregation placed between phrases of the Latin sung by the choir.
10. Either a Latin sequence or a German psalm or other song is sung.
11. In some orders the Gospel is omitted because it is read from the pulpit before the sermon.
12. An offertory or a German psalm is sung.
13. The exhortation, which includes a paraphrase of the Our Father, may occasionally be replaced with a Latin preface, Latin Sanctus and German Our Father, with the Latin Agnus Dei sung during the communion.
14. Follows the Agnus Dei and a prayer in Latin. The Agnus Dei precedes the other songs during communion.
15. Followed by a collect.
16. The Sanctus is indicated only when it is sung after the Preface or the Verba. When the German Sanctus is sung during the communion distribution, it is counted under "psalm(s) or hymn(s) during communion."
17. The Preface and Sanctus may remain even if there are no schoolboys, for "one enjoys singing such a thing" ("me wolde denne susse gerne singen").
18. The Our Father is never omitted, but occasionally it may appear only as a paraphrase within the exhortation to communicants.
19. Sung after the responsory or German song.
20. Followed by the Pax Domini in German.
21. Sung in Latin during the communion distribution and in German when the communion is done.
22. Preceded by a Latin motet.