

Worship 101: The Invocation

For this month's newsletter article we continue what we started awhile back in what we call "Worship 101." As the name suggests, we are giving you some of the basics of what goes on here at church on a Sunday morning. The purpose is to help you understand why we do what we do in our time together on the Lord's Day.

Last time we talked about how we Lutherans look at worship. We refer to worship as "Divine Service" which emphasizes that when we gather together, God is the one serving. He is the one Who comes to us with His words of forgiveness and life through our Savior Jesus Christ. We then respond to this good news with worship: we give God thanks and praise for His gift to us of life eternal.

Today we continue with the first part of the Divine Service called "The Invocation." The word invocation means to "call upon someone." What we are doing is calling upon God to be present with us during our time of worship. The words of the invocation are "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Here we see that the invocation is a public statement that our church has come together to worship the only God there is, the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The invocation however is most importantly a reminder of our baptism. In what way? In this: the words of the invocation were spoken over us at our Baptism. What we have here is known as an ellipsis signified by "... " where it is understood that some words have been left out. In the invocation the words omitted are "I baptize you." So the invocation reminds us of all the blessings that God gave us at our baptism. How in baptism we were united with Christ's death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:3-7). How in baptism we were clothed with Christ and all He did to save us from sin and death (Galatians 3:26-27). How, in baptism our sins are forgiven (Acts 2:38-39). All of these blessings are received by faith, believing God's promises given to us in our baptism.

Our response to the invocation is a word that we hear throughout the Divine Service. It's the word "Amen." Amen means, "I agree with what has just been said." It means "so be it; yes, this is true."

And so we hope you'll hear the Invocation at the beginning of the church service as more than simply "words that have something to do with the Triune God." Instead, they are words of comfort for you to reflect upon: the fact that you are a baptized believer in Jesus Christ with all of your sins forgiven because of Him!

In Christ,
Pastor Bloom