Why do we worship?

Simply put, we are wired to worship. You and I, we are going to worship something. The question is not “will we worship?” the question is “what will we worship?”

As Christians, we worship the tri-une God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, most fully revealed to us in the Christ, Jesus.

We worship in response to who God is and what God does.

Though we worship many things and beings, God alone is worthy of glory and honor and praise. God alone is perfect. God alone is the creator, redeemer and sustainer of all that is, including us. The Psalms tell us God is worthy of praise (Ps 18, 48, 96, 145).

We worship God because He gives us life. We worship God because He redeems and frees us in Christ. We worship God because He is the giver of all good gifts.

We worship together, as a community, as one part of the Body of Christ. Corporate (gathered, public, of the body) worship has been part of the Christian tradition since the resurrection of Jesus. As an ember slowly dies when separated from the fire, so we gradually find our faith extinguished when separated from the Body.

We worship in Word and Sacrament. In the Episcopal tradition, we value both the Word of God and the Sacraments of the Church. We strive to balance them in our Sunday worship.

We worship with Scripture, read aloud for all to hear. We hold the Bible, and especially the Gospels, as the inspired, eternal, living Word of God. By living we mean that God speaks through Scripture to us today, by the power of His Holy Spirit, to bring meaning and truth into our lives. We read and preach the Bible in worship because God promises his Word never returns to him empty.

We worship with song. There is just something about singing that helps us get out of our own way. Singing in the car with the radio loud and the windows rolled up. Singing in the shower where no one else can hear. Singing along with the band at a concert, our voices drowned out in thousands of others. We can express and experience emotion through song which we cannot any other way.

We worship with prayer. We come before God in humility, opening our hearts and our lives to Him. We offer God our cares and concerns and thanksgivings, calling upon Him to move in His world.

We worship with attention. For a few short minutes (even though it may not always feel short), we gather ourselves and uncompromisingly focus our attention on God. We listen, we pause, we leave all else behind us and turn back to the One who is the true center.

We worship with sacrament. The main sacraments of the Church are Eucharist (communion) and Baptism, both of which we experience in worship on Sunday mornings. They are for us the outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace. We are filled with His word. We are fed with his body and blood.

Make no mistake, God is the subject in worship. We don’t come to be fed. We come to give God worship, not to receive. This is crucial. Because only when we give to God in worship do we find that in worship God has given to us.
Grace Church Worship
Epiphany 2013
Jan. 6 – Feb. 10
“Why do we do that?”

Welcome Slides loop @ 10:15
Music Video plays @ 10:25
Welcome Slides
Welcome

When the service begins:
• Instructions are in orange
• Leaders' words are in white
• Words you say are in yellow

We invite you to participate in worship however you are comfortable, but remember worship is not a spectator sport.

Announcements

Our primary liturgical resources are the Bible (we use either the New International Version (NIV) or the English Standard Version (ESV)) and the 1979 Episcopal Book of Common Prayer (BCP). We do often use other resources for prayers and Prayers of the People. Grace Church has permission from our Bishop to do so.

People today are unaccustomed to silence and stillness. So we show slides and play music videos prior to worship so people feel comfortable.

Because of our focus on guests and visitors, we always strive to be hospitable. That is why we begin with a welcome that invites people into worship and explains some of the basic expectations.

We sometimes make announcements here, and sometimes make them later in the service. Lately, we have been “framing” the Message by telling people briefly what the focus of our Scripture reading and preaching will be.
**Opening Song**
The leader invites the people to sing.

**Call to Worship**
The leader calls the people to worship. (Ps 95:1-2)
Come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving and raise a loud shout to him with songs of praise.

**Opening Prayer**
The leader and people say together
Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word, Jesus:
Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**One Song of Praise**

**Scripture Reading**
**Gospel Reading**
The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to _____________.
Glory to you, Lord Christ.
Insert reading here.
The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Christ.

**Message**
The opening song is generally fast and upbeat. We sometimes sing two songs here. We use fast songs to bring energy and enthusiasm into worship.

Call to Worship (Opening Acclamation, BCP 355) does just that. It calls us into worship. We take it from either the BCP or the Bible. We use verse and response format to engage the people.

In the Opening Prayer (Collect for Purity, BCP 355 and/or Collect of the Day, BCP 357) we ask God to open our hearts to His presence that we might worship Him and hear his voice. We use collects from BCP, collects from other sources or extemporaneous prayers.

FYI – a Collect (emphasis on the first syllable) is a specific type of prayer which names God, calls God to act, and concludes by proclaiming the Trinity.

The song of praise is generally slower and more reflective than the Opening Song. Our aim is to simply give God honor and glory and praise. We sometimes follow this song with extemporaneous prayer.

We always have at least one reading from the Bible. When there is only one reading, it is always from the gospel. We follow a lectionary, or systematic series of readings, of our own creation. We focus on the Old Testament in the Fall, Gospel in Winter/Spring and New Testament in the Summer. We do so because we presume people do not know the story of Scripture and want to teach it to them. Our lectionary takes us through the entire Bible in six years, reading each gospel twice (combining Mark & John).

At Grace Church the message, or sermon, always reflects and teaches the Bible lesson(s) read that Sunday.
The Nicene Creed
The Leader introduces the Creed, saying
If you want to know what the Church believes, not
just Grace Church, but the whole Church, then
listen to the Nicene Creed. If you want to proclaim
what the Church believes, we invite you to say
with us:

SLIDE
We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

SLIDE
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.

SLIDE
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the
Virgin Mary, and was made man.

“Typically, when Episcopalians gather for public worship
on a Sunday, we have a service of Communion, also known
as the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. We do this
because this is the way Christians have worshiped since the
earliest days of the Church. When Jesus instituted the first
eucharist at the Last Supper, he commanded all of his
followers to continue the practice. It is the clearest,
strongest way we know to tell the story of Jesus’ death and
resurrection, and to maintain our bond with him and with
one another.

Episcopal worship is structured, and it uses The Book of
Common Prayer as its source. The texts and patterns of
worship in the prayer book are derived from the earliest
surviving texts of ancient Christian worship, updated and
expanded as times and circumstances have changed. The
common words of the prayer book express our most deeply
held beliefs, keep us connected to the timeless elements of
Christian tradition, and allow us to participate as more than
just listeners.

A eucharistic service (with the eucharist) has two
main parts. The first part is known as the “Service of the
Word” or the “Liturgy of the Word.” The word liturgy
means the work of the people. In the Liturgy of the Word
we gather in the Lord’s name, proclaim and respond to the
Word of God, and pray for the world and the church. We
do this, not as a group of spectators watching a group of
performers, but as the people of God acting together, each
with their appointed part to play.”

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For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

All of the pieces of the Liturgy of the Word which occur after the Scripture reading are responses to God’s Word. The message is the work of the Holy Spirit speaking with and through the preacher into the hearts and minds of the people. Without those who hear the message, it is simply another kind of speech.

The Nicene Creed is the Church’s ancient summary statement of Faith. It is one of the oldest texts of Christian worship. In reciting the Creed, we proclaim the Faith of the Church. Because we respect that not everyone attending our worship may yet believe, we attempt to create an atmosphere where people feel comfortable not saying the Creed if it is not something they can say truthfully.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.
The Prayers of the People
The Leader introduces the Prayers, saying
Most compassionate God, give us sufficient love and commitment to reach out with prayer and compassionate action to people both in and beyond the church.

For those across the world who even now are being drawn into the body of Christ.
Lord of love and peace,  
*We offer you our prayer.*

For Christians baptized long ago, but whose first faith has been eroded by the secular acids of greed and cynicism.
Lord of love and peace,  
*We offer you our prayer.*

For the unbaptized whose first, urgent need is not words and rites, but food, medicine, employment and housing.
Lord of love and peace,  
*We offer you our prayer.*

For young people who are being drawn away from Christ by the glitter and dazzle of cunningly marketed pop culture.
Lord of love and peace,  
*We offer you our prayer.*

The Prayers of the People are the third part of the response to God’s Word. Collectively, we pray for the Church and for the World. We pray for six main area: the whole Church, the nation and those in authority, the welfare of the world, the concerns of the local community, those who suffer and those in any trouble, and those who have died.

We use many different forms of the Prayers of the People. We create some of them ourselves, use alternative liturgical resources, and take them from the BCP (BCP 383-393).

The forms always have in common the verse and response format because these prayers are from and by the people, not just the leader. These are not rote responses. The idea is to allow the prayers to guide your own praying so we are all praying with a similar focus even as we pray individually.

We sometimes include the prayers of our Grace Church community by use of the prayer board placed near the entrance of the chapel. There people may write down prayer requests to be prayed for during worship.
For those who live too much in the past, and in church culture of earlier times, that they cannot see any good in the faith and practice of younger Christians.
Lord of love and peace,
*We offer you our prayer.*

For all the insecure and wishful souls, who go looking for a better way of life but are exploited by false messiahs.
Lord of love and peace,
*We offer you our prayer.*

Loving Father, our prayers also reach out to those among us this day, who through sickness, grief, severe setback or cruel disappointment, are feeling the anguish and the tiredness of the bruised reed and flickering lamp.
Lord of love and peace,
*We offer you our prayer.*

Sometimes we include a fourth response to God’s Word, the Confession of Sin. The Confession would take place after the Prayers of the People. We don’t have the Confession in today’s worship service because it is Epiphany. We usually include the confession during Advent, Lent and the Season after Pentecost. The confession is a response to God’s Word in that God reveals to us how separate from Him we often choose to live. It is also a way to prepare ourselves to receive communion. The Confession used in worship is a General Confession of the community in our shared brokenness, not a personal or private confession, though it is often used that way. Sin is seldom undertaken alone.

The Confession always concludes with an Absolution. The Absolution is the priest’s proclamation of God’s forgiveness based on the authority granted him by the Church. The priest does not forgive you. Nor does the Church. Through the Church, the priest simply calls attention to the fact that God forgives you.

The Leader closes the prayers, saying
We pray also for the people and mission of Grace Church. Give us the means of grace and the hope of mercy, that we might carry your light in the darkness, speak your word into the noise and live as partners of the gospel.
*Amen.*
Offering of Gifts
- Connection Cards
- Offering Plates
- Set the table. A music video will play.

Offertory Sentence
The Leader sometimes says,
Let us walk in love as Christ loves us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God.

Sing 1 Offertory Song

Holy Eucharist (Communion)
All things come from you, O Lord.
From your own have we given you.

Eucharistic Prayer is Prayer A, BCP pg 360

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give him thanks and praise.

At the Offering, or Offertory, we give back to God from what God has given us. This includes, but is in no way limited to, the giving of money. We give the bread and wine as symbols of both crops and harvest and as human labor which makes bread from grain, wine from grapes.

We often make announcements at this point. We do that here because it kind of fits. But also because it is a way for us to offer our activities to God, as well.

The Offering typically concludes with the priest saying an offertory sentence (BCP 376-377).

We sometimes sing a song as an offering of praise and worship while the priest prepares the altar for communion. Other times we watch a video or a music video to remind us that our lives, also, are an offering.

“All things…” This verse and response is from 1 Chronicles 29:14. It is an offertory sentence in the 1928 BCP. It is often said at the reception of the offering during the Rite One communion service (BCP 323-340). We say it as a way to recognize both the Giver and the gifts.

This six sentence verse and response is called the Sursum Corda (Latin for lift up your hearts). It is our invitation to the eucharist.

“For at that most awesome moment we must indeed raise our hearts high to God, not keep them intent on the earth and on earthly matters. So the priest is virtually commanding you at that moment to lay aside the cares of this life, your domestic worries, and to keep your heart in heaven on God who loves men.” – St. Cyril of Jerusalem

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
everwhere to give thanks to you,
Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

We give you thanks for your beloved child, Jesus,
who you made known to the magi from the east,
who knew of him only what the silent stars could
tell. You have drawn us again to his feet and in
him we have found the fulfillment of all our
searching.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with
Angels and Archangels and with all the company
of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim
the glory of your Name:

Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name
of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Then the Celebrant continues
Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you
made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into
sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in
your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and
eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and
die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God
and Father of all.
Here we give thanks for creation. This initial thanksgiving
is what gives the Great Thanksgiving its name.

Proper Preface – a special prayer specific to the appropriate
season of the Church calendar (BCP 377-382). This is the
Proper Preface for Epiphany. Not every eucharistic prayer
includes a proper preface. This is one of the places in
worship people often find confusing because it is out of
order in the BCP and not always shown on screen.

Introduction to the Sanctus (Latin for Holy).
Sanctus – the song of praise sung by angels comes from
Rev 4:8, Isaiah 6:3 and Mark 11:9-10. Though our practice
is to say these words together, the Sanctus can be sung.

“The Sanctus and its introduction witness that the worship
of God is a cosmic act in which the congregation is
permitted to join, through Jesus Christ, in the power of the
Holy Spirit.” 3

Here and in the following paragraph we give thanks for
redemption. While we use several different forms of the
Eucharistic Prayer (aka The Great Thanksgiving), they each
include the elements you see in this one. All of the them are
from the BCP or approved alternative liturgical texts. Most
often we use Prayer A (BCP 360), Prayer B (BCP 366) or
Form One from An Order for Celebrating Holy Eucharist
(BCP 402).

3 Mitchell. 155.
He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, “Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.”

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, “Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me.”

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Celebrant and People
Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

The Celebrant continues
We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

These two paragraphs which begin “On the night…” and “After supper…” are called the Institution Narrative. The words which Jesus spoke to his disciples come from Mt 26:26-28, Mk 14:22-24, Lk 22:19-20 and are called the Words of Institution.

Further Notes on Communion
“The one who presides over eucharist is always an ordained person known as a presbyter or priest. In the earliest centuries of the church, the bishop, or chief pastor, would always preside, but soon the church grew too large for one person to do this. So the bishop ordains and delegates priests to celebrate the eucharist in each local congregation. The three-fold order of the ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons goes back to the beginnings of the church; that is why Episcopalians and others retain these orders to this day.

As the words and action at the altar unfold, they do so according to a four-fold pattern first used by Jesus when he miraculously fed the multitudes with bread and fish, and also used again at the Last Supper. First he took the bread. Then he gave thanks over the bread. He broke the bread, and finally he gave it to the people. As we involve ourselves in the drama of communion, together we remember what happened in such a vivid way that this memory is brought right back into the present moment.”

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever.

**AMEN.**

This paragraph is called the Epiclesis, “or invocation of the Holy Spirit, prays that the Holy Spirit ‘may descend upon us and upon these gifts’ to complete the work of sanctification…” The Stole is the scarf-like band of cloth worn by the priest. When worn over the neck draping straight down in front it is a symbol of the office of the priesthood. It is usually ornamented and often reflects the color of the Church season or feast day.

**Still Further Notes on Communion**

The Altar, or table, should be the architectural focal point of the worship space. It carries multiple meanings. The altar brings to mind the sacrificial altar in the Jewish temple and denotes the sacrifice of Christ as the Passover Lamb. As a table, it denotes the Passover meal and the gathering of Christ’s followers around it for the holy meal.

Candles placed on the altar can have a variety of liturgical meanings, though generally they are described as symbolizing the light of Christ. Of course, in pre-electrical times, they also provided light for the priest to read by.

Linens on the altar can be ornate and complex, or simple. We use a single cloth covering in the color of the day or season. It is called a fair linen.

There are a wide variety of communion vessels. Like the linens, they can be either ornate or simple. We only use a few simple items. They are:

- Chalice – the “cup” used to serve the wine
- Patten – the “plate” holding the communion bread
- Purificator – the “napkin” used to wipe the chalice
- Cruets – small pitchers holding wine and water
- Bread Box – small box holding communion wafers

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5 Mitchell. 167.
**Lord’s Prayer**
As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray, saying together:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.

Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Fraction**
Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

**SLIDE**
The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

We say the traditional version of the Lord’s Prayer because, oddly enough, it is still the version that most people know. So even though the traditional language does not fit with the rest of the service, this version is more hospitable to our guests and visitors because they are more likely to know it.

The Fraction is when the priest breaks the bread. The large wafer we use is called a priest’s host (host being another word for communion bread). We use a large one so people can see it. The imagery is of the one body of Christ broken for the many who receive him. The wafers we use are made of unleavened bread in remembrance of the Jewish Passover meal, which is when Christ first offered himself as the Passover (Mt 26:26-28). See also Lk 24:13-35, and Acts 2:42, 46.

This is an ancient invitation for the people to receive communion. The shorter form uses only the first sentence. At Grace, we use the shorter form during Lent.
Communion Slide
- One slide shows during communion

Instrumental Song (Picture only)

Sending Prayer
The leader and people pray together, saying:
Almighty and everliving God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom.

SLIDE
And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

We have an “open” table at communion. This means we invite any baptized Christian to receive communion with us, not only those who are Episcopalians. We invite only baptized persons to receive communion because that is the rule in the Episcopal Church and we have been charged by our Bishop to uphold it. This rule is based on the ancient practice of the Church and a (not universally accepted) theology which warns it may be harmful to one’s soul to receive communion in a wrongful or haphazard manner.

We give instructions on how to receive communion every week to be welcoming and hospitable to guests and visitors. Instead of assuming, as many congregations do, that everyone knows how to participate, we assume there is always someone who does not.

The Sending Prayer (Post-Communion Prayer, BCP 365-366) is the prayer we pray to remind ourselves and to ask God’s help in remembering that while we are filled and fed in worship and by the sacrament, we are not filled and fed for our own selves. We are filled and fed so we can take our experience of the presence of God out into the world with us, so we can live as light in the darkness, sharing what God has given us with those who do not know Him.
Sharing God's Blessing

The priest offers God’s blessing.

Go now,
seek out the Christ wherever he may be found, and
share the good news with those who know him not.
Bring light to those in darkness,
a voice to the speechless,
and hope to those who are alone or afraid.

The blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you this day and always.

Closing Song

Sending Out

- Invite people to fellowship on porch

The Peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

Carry the light of Christ out into the world. Alleluia, Alleluia.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia.

LOGO Slide (band plays)

Here the priest offers God’s blessing, not his or her own. This is somewhat redundant in that those gathered have already been blessed with God’s Word and the Sacrament. At Grace, we change the introduction to the blessing to fit the season of the Church calendar, but the blessing itself is always the same because that is the version Father Jay has memorized. Notice the blessing is always in the name of the Trinity.

The closing song is usually joyous and upbeat as we give thanks for what we have experienced of God’s presence in worship. At Grace, our practice is to invite children to come forward to play instruments and dance.

Passing the Peace is an ancient practice of the Church. Here we share, not our own, but God’s peace with one another. At Grace, we close our worship with the Peace because we experience this sharing in the relationships we carry on and develop during our fellowship time after worship.

Sending Out, or the Dismissal, marks the end of worship and charges us to go live our Faith in our daily life and work. Alleluia is an expression of joy particular to Easter and the resurrection, and therefore is omitted during Lent.