Service of the Word Part 2

Old Testament Lesson

Beginning of the first peak, the rest of the Service of the Word is in preparation for this
OT patterns of reading the Scriptures in the synagogue and temple liturgies (our service of the Word possibly developed from this?)
Yearly cycle of the lectionary
Pericopes: carefully chosen selections, not trying to read the entire Scriptures
One year vs. three year cycle? Why use a lectionary at all?
Western lectionary in Rome ~800 AD, used continually with slight modifications (same lessons as Luther and generations before him!)
OT lessons added recently (a modern, but fitting innovation); perhaps anciently? Or covered in the Daily Office (Matins)

Epistle

"Letter" from the NT
Pointing to Christ, as the Old Testament lesson, but from the other "direction"
Coordination with the Gospel (sometimes you have to put some work in!)
Moral/sanctification

Gradual

Hearing the Word of God moves us to sing His praise
A few, chanted Psalm verses (like the Introit)
Bridge of contemplative praise
Sung responses since the synagogue: variation in the service, musical echo to what has already been read and a transition to the next
Gradual is one of the most ancient: well-established in the time of St. Augustine (400s)
Became known as the "gradual" in the Middle Ages; chanted from the step (*gradus*); altar horns

Alleluia Verse / Tract

We sing it with the gradual, in view of the more ancient practice
Same "function" of the gradual, but here a note of praise
"Alleluia" = Hebrew, "praise the Lord;" ancient word of praise (although this piece was added ~800s)
We express joy as we prepare to listen to the Gospel, in which we most directly encounter Christ
Three Alleluias with a short Psalm verse in the middle (we also have a sung response)
The "tract" replaces the Alleluia Verse in Pre-Lent and Lent, when the Alleluia is omitted
More somber tone, "a song of tribulation," fitting for penitential seasons

Sequence

Over time, the Alleluia Verses expanded, hymn-like additions
Every Sunday/Feast had its own Sequence, this got pared back
Many Lutheran hymns were designed to be sung in alteration with these Sequences
Local practice, limited to what's available

Gospel

"Good news"
All Scripture is equal, but the Gospel is afforded the most honor
Culmination and fulfillment of the Scriptures; we encounter Christ Himself
All other Propers tie into and take the theme from the Gospel
Special ways to emphasize this: words of praise (we praise Christ as one present among us, as He promised!), standing, Gospel book/procession (OSL)
These ceremonies are a "garden of fragrant flowers"

Creed

"Credo" = Latin, "I believe"
Having heard the Word, the congregation responds by confessing its faith
"I believe," individual confession joined with other Christians ("We All Believe in One True God")
To whom?
More than a confession of faith: a hymn of praise and thanksgiving recounting God's saving deeds
The creeds themselves are ancient: Nicene Creed (381, Council of Nicea), Apostles' Creed (400s-800s, Roman baptismal creed), Athanasian Creed (~500)
But not said in the Divine Service until ~600 and not mandated until ~1000 (thus omitted on weekdays)
Sign of the cross ("life of the world to come" / "life everlasting"), signifying that the life we hope to receive in heaven is already ours by baptism

Chief Hymn

Meditative response to the readings and a proclamation of the Gospel's theme
Product of the Reformation; before the hymns (and Gradual chant) were complicated and sung only by choirs
Luther kept the Gradual in his Latin Mass, but replaced the gradual with the "Gradual Hymn" (hymn of the day) in the German Mass to be sung by the people
Standard list developed by the end of the 16th century (this is usually a good Lutheran hymn)

Sermon

Our Lord speaks through the Prophets, Apostles, Evangelists, and now the Pastor; Ephesians 4:11-12 (edification)
The Word of God in the Scriptures brought to bear on our lives through Law and Gospel
Preaching (and reading) of Scriptures is one of the most ancient parts and is commanded by our Lord (who sent His apostles to preach!)
The pastor speaks that same message, which is not his own, the message of Christ and Him crucified ("Preach the Word" and "preach the Gospel")
The sermon is liturgical, builds upon and incorporates the liturgy of the day (therefore usually on the Gospel; sermon omitted is a grave abuse!, complaint of Luther)
Begins with Paul's apostolic greeting (Rom, 1 & 2 Cor, Gal, Eph, Php, Col, 1 & 2 Thess, Phil); ends with the blessing of Philippians 4:7 (the peace of God is offered and bestowed in the Word)

Offertory Verse (Create in Me)

Ancient offertory procession: members would come forward and bring their offerings (often in kind), from which the elements for the Lord's Supper would be taken
Elaborate medieval prayers and ceremonies were added which obscured the true nature of the Sacrament
Sacrificial thank-offering of the people became a sin-offering made by the priest
Luther eliminated the Offertory and the prayers and chants associated with it
The Common Service Offertory serves a different purpose: a response to the sermon and a prayer for its effectiveness
But it does retain some of its original connections (link with the offering (RWH "We Give Thee but Thine Own") and with the elements (OSL))
Psalm 51:10-12
In the offering, our faith shows itself in works
Why I don't place the plates on the altar (RWH)

Prayer of the Church

Acts 2:42, preaching, supper, prayers/liturgy: a main part of our service!
Prayer as a response to God's gifts is throughout the service, sharpest focus in the General Prayer/Prayer of the Church
1 Tim 2:1-4; prayers for all sorts and conditions of men
Everything but the kitchen sink, which is our duty!
In the early church, prayers were offered for the (soon-to-be-dismissed) catechumens, followed by the prayers of the faithful (similar to our prayers)
These prayers were slowly dropped out and replaced with lengthy commemorations of the saints and prayers for the dead, eventually engulfed in the Canon of the Mass
Luther removed the Canon and made the first steps toward restoring these prayers with an expansion of the Lord's Prayer

Later Lutherans developed a series of several collects (RWH) or the Litany (OSL, “Lord have mercy.”)
Our practice hearkens back to the Reformation and the Early Church

(RWH) Hymn of Preparation

Sense of the Offertory: preparation of the altar (441:1 is presentation of the gifts)
Usually a Lord’s Supper hymn