

KNOW YOUR FAITH – III

by Pastor Don Marxhausen

The First Lesson Since the 1960's and especially with the LBW (Lutheran Book of Worship) it has been encouraged to have a First Lesson from the First Testament that for the most part reflects the theme of the Gospel reading. This changes for the Easter Season and the reading may come from the book of ACTs.

Psalmody Psalm means hymn or song. There are 150 Psalms from which whole or sections are taken to again help fill out the theme(s) for the day. Some read the psalms and other congregations chant the verses. Both the First Lesson and Psalm readings help us to remember that our roots come from our Jewish brothers and sisters. Martin Luther in his mind saw Jesus and God's grace in many places in the First Testament.

Gradual is the verse or song sung as the congregation rises for the Gospel reading. The word comes from the Latin *gradis* which means steps on which the choir would stand as the pastor/priest would move from one side of the altar to the other in former liturgies.

Gospel means Good News. The Good News of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God. Out of respect the Gospel is most often read with the congregation standing. Facing the altar/table the right side is the Epistle side of the altar area and the left side is considered the Gospel side of the altar in former liturgies.

Sermon Lutheran tradition suggests that the sermon be an explaining or interpretation (Exegesis or reading out of) of one or more readings of the day. However, there is a whole world of preaching that is called Topical Preaching or picking an idea and then picking a biblical text to support the preacher's point of view. In a liturgical church, sermons are usually 10-15 minutes. In non-liturgical churches, the sermons may go a half an hour with some loud music and maybe a prayer. Essential to preaching is in one way or another to announce God's grace and the Kingdom of God.