
THE COLLECT (PRAYER OF THE DAY)

Adopted by the Commission on Worship, September 2001. This statement was prepared by the Department of Liturgics.

1 The reason for this statement

In this statement the Commission on Worship aims to present an appreciation of the form of prayer known as the collect, as normally used before the readings in the divine service, and give encouragement and guidance for its continued use in the corporate worship services of the church.

2 Foundation

Prayer is essentially a response to God and his word. The collect is a form of prayer which has become a recognised part of corporate worship. Christians pray ‘to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit’ (Eph 2:18; Council of Hippo, 393 AD).

3 Nature and purpose

- In the divine service, the collect is a brief transitional prayer. It concludes the preparatory acts (from entrance to hymn of adoration) and also introduces the reading and hearing of God’s word.
- The collect prepares the congregation for hearing the word. It presents what believers seek from God as they listen to the readings.
- More than one collect may be used. For example, on a Sunday that is also a saint’s day, the collect of the Sunday may be prayed, followed by the collect of the saint’s day.
- Collects may also be used elsewhere in the service, such as before or after the sermon.
- In services of prayer and praise, one or more collects may be prayed in the prayer section.

4 Content

- The content of the traditional collect is deliberately broad in scope and general in character and usually asks for one thing.
- The collect may relate to the festival or occasion being celebrated.
- The collect may pick up the thrust of the readings—particularly the gospel.

5 Form

- The collect usually consists of five parts:
 - Invocation or address
 - Scriptural or theological basis for the petition
 - Petition
 - Purpose of the petition— result of the prayer
 - Conclusion—mediation of Christ, with trinitarian doxology.Many collects omit either the basis for the petition or the result of the prayer, and some omit both.

- The collect is a sophisticated literary form, which takes care and skill to write successfully. Those who attempt to write their own collects locally need to be aware of the requirements for clarity, brevity, and good rhythm.

6 Leadership and involvement

- Traditionally, in both the eastern and the western church, the collect has, until recently in some parts of the Lutheran church, been prayed by the presiding minister. The ritual sequence consists of:
 - The greeting
 - The invitation to prayer by the presiding minister / assistant minister (perhaps with an indication of the topic of the collect)
 - Silence for personal prayer
 - The collect (summary prayer and conclusion) by the presiding minister
 - The assent of the congregation with 'Amen'.
- A pause for silent prayer immediately after the invitation 'Let us pray (for...)' enables worshippers to bring their own needs to God. The collect prayed by the presiding minister then gathers together ('collects') the prayers of the people of God.
- Fairly recently many congregations of the LCA have adopted the innovation of praying the collect in unison, perhaps in an attempt to increase participation by the worshippers. However, it should be noted that many people find it difficult to read aloud together an unfamiliar text and at the same time concentrate on its content.