

The Apostolic Greeting

Read 1 Corinthians 16:23.

After the Confession & Forgiveness, the Sharing of the Peace, and the singing of the Entrance Hymn, the pastor greets the sisters and brothers in Christ with the Apostolic Greeting.

The Apostolic Greeting is a blessing that the apostle Paul first gave to the Church in Corinth as a closing blessing (or benediction) in his epistle. We use this blessing as a greeting in our worship.

The pastor says, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all." And the congregation blesses the pastor in return by saying, "And also with you."

I personally have to admit that it is kind of odd having this blessing returned to me while nobody actually looks at me while they say this. They are either looking down at their hymnals or, in some churches that have the words on screens, they are looking past me toward the screen while they say, "And also with you." (I guess that I should be glad that either the hymnal or screen is being blessed at least.)

The Apostolic Greeting is a prayer, a blessing, and a proclamation at the same time.

1) Prayer:

I pray that the fullness of God's grace will come to you through Jesus Christ; that you will know the love of God in your life; and that you will become more of a part of the community that God makes through the Holy Spirit.

2) Blessing:

May God's grace continue to come to you through Jesus Christ; may the fullness of God's love be known in your life; and may the communion with the people of God continue in your life through the Holy Spirit.

3) Proclamation:

God's grace is made known to you through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; God does love you as a child of God; and you are already part of the communion of the Holy Spirit as the church.

The Apostolic Greeting also has a sense of the Holy Trinity made known. "In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen."

Close with this blessing that comes from the Service of Word and Prayer in With One Voice. (WOV, p.53; 1995, Augsburg Fortress).

May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ fill you with every spiritual blessing.

Amen.

May the God of faithfulness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another in accordance with Christ Jesus.

Amen.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.