



## What Does That Mean?

*As we celebrate the arrival of the 2019 Book of Common Prayer, it seems an appropriate time to review some of the vernacular that we use in our worship service. Here's one of those terms.*

### What is the [Opening] "Acclamation"? Why that term?

The word, "acclamation," (pronounced, "a-klə-'mā-shən") comes from the classical Latin word, *acclamatio*, or "shout at." Webster defines it as "a loud eager expression of approval, praise, or assent." Think of it as describing what happens when a celebrity, a rock star, or wildly popular person walks on to the stage – the crowd goes crazy with "acclamation" or approval.

In Anglicanism, the service for Holy Communion begins with an [Opening] Acclamation which will vary depending upon the season. The most common Acclamation is: "Blessed be God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" said by the Celebrant to which we respond "Blessed be His Kingdom, now and for ever. *Amen.*"

What is our response when we hear the Celebrant proclaim a blessing? To cross ourselves [optional] and enthusiastically respond. We recite it to genuinely reflect our gratitude to the Trinity for delivering us: we are here first and foremost to worship the Triune God. It also sets the tone for the service and is based on Ephesians 1:3, "Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

For centuries, the Hebrews shouted acclamations as part of their religious practices. Consider the "Amen" that concludes many Psalms. Think also of the how the Jews shouted, "Hosanna" showing their approval to Christ as He entered Jerusalem on what we now call Palm Sunday. Like many traditions, the early Church adopted and modified this practice of acclamation.



### Sources:

- *Liturgical Acclamations* (2003)
- *Commentary on the American Prayer Book* (1995)
- Webster's Online Dictionary

