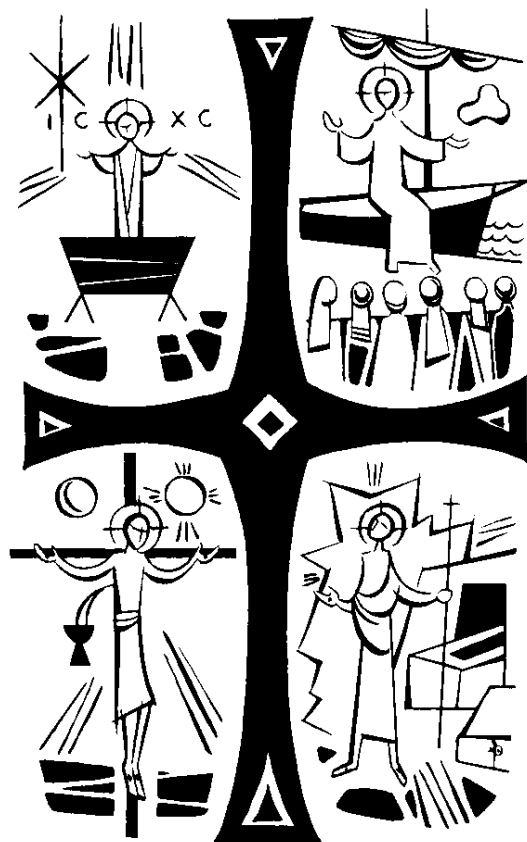


Enhancing the Liturgical Year



A presentation for the
WELS National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts

Gustavus Adolphus College
St. Peter, Minnesota

July 20, 2011 3:45 p.m.
July 22, 2011 9:45 a.m.

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A Note about the WELS School of Worship Enrichment

This presentation is an expanded version of a lecture typically given at the WELS School of Worship Enrichment (SoWE). The SoWE is a weekend worship seminar offered to groups of WELS congregations around the country that enables participants to analyze existing worship practices and to plan strategies for beneficial innovation and renewal that keep the Means of Grace at the center of public worship. This presentation is normally the final lecture in the SoWE schedule, and is preceded by lectures on the theology of worship, planning for worship, and forms for worship. Further information about the SoWE is available on the WELS Connect website (intranet). For more information about hosting or participating in a future SoWE, contact your district's Worship Coordinator or the synod's Commission on Worship office.

PRESUPPOSITIONS

1. Worship and Faith

Worship communicates what we believe (*lex orandi, lex credendi*)

- What is the theology behind the Baptist altar call?
- What belief is reflected by a Roman Catholic genuflecting toward the tabernacle, where previously consecrated communion hosts are stored?
- What fundamental understanding of the Lutheran Church is reflected by our use of a Word-and-Sacrament structured service?

2. Worship and Communication

Communication is not only verbal. The Word can be communicated with more than words.

- The Lord created us to be creatures with five senses. Social science research suggests that up to 80% of communication is non-verbal.
- What was the message behind the divinely-prescribed ceremonies and sacrifices of the Old Testament?
- Notice how the Means of Grace also engage multiple senses as they apply Christ's grace and forgiveness to our souls.
- Younger generations and many minority cultures tend to be more visual and tactile.
- Ceremony and symbolism are an important part of our lives even though we may not always recognize familiar ceremonies and symbols as such.
 - In secular life: sporting team introductions, award ceremonies
 - In civic life: Memorial Day ceremonies, National Anthem, American flag
 - In personal life: birthday cake and party, marriage proposal, wedding dinner
- Worship speaks to both our head and heart.
 - Words communicate to the "left brain" (cognitive, logical).
 - Ceremony and symbolism communicate to the "right brain" (affective, emotional).
 - The Word must be proclaimed faithfully for ceremony and symbolism to effectively communicate law and gospel. Without faithful preaching and teaching, ceremony and symbolism become empty ritualism at best.
 - Wordy explanations and commentary about ceremony and symbolism tends to empty them of their ability to communicate affectively.

3. Worship and Anamnesis

Worship is not merely remembrance (reviewing history).

Worship is anamnesis (bringing the past to us in a real way, right here and now).

- The Lutheran and Protestant views of the Lord's Supper – Real Presence vs. Representation – exemplify this distinction.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

- The Confessions recognize that public worship presents us with Christ's benefits now.

For to remember Christ is not an empty celebration or a show nor something instituted for the sake of an example, the way plays celebrate the memory of Hercules or Ulysses. It is rather to remember Christ's benefits and to receive them by faith so that we are made alive through them (Apology XXIV, "The Mass").

- Luther notes a similar distinction between forgiveness won (a past, historical event) and received (here and now in the Means of Grace).

We treat the forgiveness of sins in two ways. First, how it is achieved and won. Second, how it is distributed and given to us. Christ has achieved it on the cross, it is true. But he has not distributed or given it on the cross. He has not won it in the supper or sacrament. There he has distributed and given it through the Word, as also in the gospel, where it is preached. He has won it once for all on the cross. But the distribution takes place continuously, before and after, from the beginning to the end of the world. For inasmuch as he had determined once to achieve it, it made no difference to him whether he distributed it before or after, through his Word, as can easily be proved from Scripture. But now there is neither need nor time to do so.

If now I seek the forgiveness of sins, I do not run to the cross, for I will not find it given there. Nor must I hold to the suffering of Christ, as Dr. Karlstadt trifles, in knowledge or remembrance, for I will not find it there either. But I will find in the sacrament or gospel the word which distributes, presents, offers, and gives to me that forgiveness which was won on the cross. Therefore, Luther has rightly taught that whoever has a bad conscience from his sins should go to the sacrament and obtain comfort, not because of the bread and wine, not because of the body and blood of Christ, but because of the word which in the sacrament offers, presents, and gives the body and blood of Christ, given and shed for me (LW/AE 40:213-214).

- Therefore, our public worship and its various rites and ceremonies will be designed both to review Christ's past work and to apply his redeeming work to our hearers today.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

Every Sunday and special occasion we observe in our congregations takes place within the context of the church year. As you consider the “tree” of an individual Sunday’s focus and readings, do not neglect the “forest” of the church year. The big picture of the church year and its seasons assists us in our task of faithfully proclaiming law and gospel through the specific emphasis of a particular day. Here are some general suggestions for enhancing the liturgical year:

1. Purchase **paraments** of high quality and in substantial sizes. Purchase or prepare seasonal **banners and tapestries** of high quality.
2. Design and prepare **service folders** that reflect the changing seasons.
3. Use the appointed **Psalm of the Day** and **Verse of the Day**. Incorporate the adult choir, school choir, Sunday School children, and/or soloists to sing the Psalm and Verse.
4. In addition to hymns that reflect the sermon and hymns from the *Communion* section of the hymnal, select **seasonal hymns** to be sung during the distribution of Holy Communion.
5. Look for seasonal emphases in the **Prayer of the Church** (CW:AB and the LCMS’s *Let Us Pray*).
6. **Preach** in a way that reflects the integrity of the various seasons. “Every text has a thousand sermons in it, and you only have to preach one of them” (D. Deutschlander).
7. Carefully compare **traditions** of short and long experience in the church. “Old” isn’t necessarily good, and “new” isn’t necessarily bad. But historic customs have stood the test of time for a reason, and wisdom suggests that we be more cautious with something that has not yet had the opportunity to stand the test of time.



PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: Dear Father in heaven, with your gift of a Savior you restored hope for our fallen world and brought glory to your name. We thank you for the good news that you have reconciled the world to yourself through your Son.

C: Be with us as you give us opportunities to proclaim your glorious name of salvation in Jesus Christ our Savior.

THE TIME OF CHRISTMAS

THE SEASON OF ADVENT

<p>First Sunday in Advent November 27 to December 3 <u>READINESS</u> <i>Preparation for the Second Advent</i></p>		
<p>Second Sunday in Advent December 4 to 10 <u>REPENTANCE</u> <i>John the Baptist (I)</i></p>		
<p>Third Sunday in Advent December 11 to 17 <u>REJOICING</u> <i>John the Baptist (II)</i></p>		
<p>Fourth Sunday in Advent December 18 to 24 <i>Transition to the First Advent</i></p>		
Year A – Matthew 1:18-25	Year B – Luke 1:26-38	Year C – Luke 1:39-55

Advent is not Christmas – just as Lent is not Easter! American society exhausts Christmas long before Christmas Eve and Day, but the church prepares for Christmas during Advent and then begins the celebration on Christmas Eve and Day. As much as possible, reserve Christmas hymns for the Christmas season. Delay the display of Christmas decorations and the like until just before Christmas (perhaps the Fourth Sunday in Advent). If that is not feasible, take a gradual approach to Christmas décor in the church, adding something to the church’s display each Sunday in Advent rather than displaying all the Christmas decorations immediately on the First Sunday in Advent.

Worship Thoughts for Advent:

1. Which color best symbolizes the season: Blue (hope) or Purple (repentance)?
2. Consider using a Gathering Rite as an alternate beginning to the Sunday service.
3. Incorporate an advent wreath and the *Lighting of the Advent Candles* rite (CW:OS).
4. Are Midweek Advent services a custom in your congregation? Unlike midweek Lent services, there is not a distinct theme assigned to midweek services in Advent.
5. As a transition Sunday between Advent and Christmas, you might use the *Service of Lessons and Carols for Advent* (CW:OS) or offer the children’s Christmas service on Advent 4.

Advent Gathering Rite Sample #1

Adapted from G-4131 by GIA Publications, Inc.

GATHERING SONG

The congregation remains seated. The choir or cantor sings the refrain once, and the congregation repeats the refrain continuously.

Refrain:

The musical notation is for a refrain in 3/4 time, key of D major. It consists of two staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody starts on a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The lyrics 'Come, come Emmanuel' are written below the notes. The second staff continues the melody with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The lyrics 'Come, Emmanuel' are written below the notes. The piece ends with a double bar line.

As the refrain is sung by the congregation, the choir or cantor sings:

For the Lord of creation will come...
Oh the son of Mary will come...
See God's marvelous deeds and come...
For God chose us, and so we will come...
For the angel proclaims he will come...
As the servants of God we come...

The congregation sings the refrain the final time when the minister turns to face the people.

GREETING

M: The grace of our Lord ✠ Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

CONFESSION OF SINS

M: Beloved in the Lord: let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

C: **Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

Advent Gathering Rite Sample #2

Adapted from CWS Gathering Rite on the Word of God

INVOCATION

Minister: In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

ADDRESS *This paragraph is added to the CWS Gathering Rite to adapt it for Advent.*

M: In this Advent season, we gather around the Word of God to anticipate the birth and the return of Jesus Christ, the Word who became flesh and lived among us. Let us hear God's call to repentance in his Word, confess our sins, and find peace in the forgiveness that Christ's advent brings and his Word proclaims.

The congregation sings:



Bless - ed Je - sus, at your Word We are gath - ered all to
Let our hearts and souls be stirred Now to seek and love and



hear you.
fear you, By your teach - ings, sweet and ho - ly,



Drawn from earth to love you sole - ly.

DIALOGUE

M: Oh, how I love your law!

C: I meditate on it all day long.

M: Your commands make me wiser than my enemies,

C: for they are ever with me.

M: I have more insight than all my teachers,

C: for I meditate on your statutes.

M: How sweet are your words to my taste,

C: sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Psalm 119:97-99,103

Lighting of the Advent Candles Sample

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 18
Christian Worship, page 69

SECOND LESSON

Romans 13:11-14
Our salvation is nearer now

LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLES

M: We light one Advent candle, remembering Jesus, who is coming again.
He will come to gather his people from everywhere, both the living and the dead.

C: **We remember Jesus, who will come at the end of time.**
None of us know what day that will be.

M: We hear his call to watch.

C: **We light one Advent candle as a sign of our watchfulness and waiting.**

M: Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.

C: **Through your Word and Spirit may our souls be blessed.**

One Advent candle is lit.

STAND

GOSPEL

Matthew 24:36-44
The day and the hour are unknown

After the Gospel is announced:



After the Gospel is read:



THE SEASON OF CHRISTMAS

Christmas Eve December 24		
Christmas Day December 25 <i>The beginning of the "Twelve Days of Christmas"</i>		
St. Stephen December 26	St. John December 27	Holy Innocents December 28
First Sunday after Christmas		
New Year's Eve December 31	Name of Jesus January 1	
Second Sunday after Christmas		
Epiphany Day January 6		

Christmas is both a day and a season. The twelve days of Christmas include a number of minor festivals that could be observed, especially when one of the occasions occurs on a Sunday. The full season provides ample opportunity to wonder and marvel at the mystery of the Word who became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

Worship Thoughts for Christmas:

1. Analyze your parish's objectives for services on Christmas Eve:
 - Early family service (starting between 4:30 and 7:30 p.m.)
 - Late outreach/adult service (starting between 10:00 p.m. and midnight)
 - Does *Nine Lessons and Carols* (CW:OS) fit into your parish's plans?
2. Emphasize the service on Christmas Day
 - Emphasize the grand mystery of the incarnation of our Lord.
 - Substitute the traditional canticles with stanzas from familiar Christmas hymns that contain similar thoughts as the regular canticles.
 - Use the Christological section of the Athanasian Creed as the confession of faith.
 - Include the Lord's Supper. The Sacrament of our Savior's body and blood would not be possible if the Word had not become flesh!
3. Observe one of the minor festivals if it occurs on a Sunday. Some of them lend themselves particularly well to the larger Christmas season.

Christmas Day Samples

HYMN OF PRAISE *This hymn would replace the Gloria.*

Angels We Have Heard on High
Christian Worship #63, stanzas 1&3

The Gloria in Excelsis (Latin for "Glory [to God] in the highest") has been the traditional song of praise sung near the beginning of Christian services for centuries. The text of the Gloria may be found on pages 16-17 in Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal. The refrain of the following hymn quotes the opening words of the Gloria, the same words that the angels first proclaimed on Christmas night.

Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo;
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo;
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks,
O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord,

for in the wonder and mystery of his birth
you have opened our eyes to the glory of your grace
and renewed in our hearts the fervor of your love.

Therefore with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven,
we praise your holy name for the incarnation of your one and only Son.

HYMN *This hymn would replace the Sanctus.*

Now Sing We, Now Rejoice
Christian Worship #65, stanzas 2&4

Come from on high to me;
I cannot rise to thee.
Cheer my weary spirit,
O pure and holy Child;
Through thy grace and merit,
Blest Jesus, Lord most mild,
Draw me unto thee!
Draw me unto thee!

Oh, where shall joy be found?
Where but on heav'nly ground?
Where the angels singing
With all his saints unite
Sweetest praises bringing
In heav'nly joy and light.
Oh, that we were there!
Oh, that we were there!

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE SEASON OF EPIPHANY

<p>Epiphany Day January 6</p>		
<p>First Sunday after Epiphany <i>Baptism of Our Lord</i></p>		
<p>Second through Eighth Sundays after Epiphany</p> <p><i>Epiphany 2:</i> Gospel is an excerpt from John 1-2 in all three years</p> <p><i>Epiphany 3-8:</i> Gospel is from early chapters of one of the Synoptics</p>		
<p>Year A – Matthew 4-6 <i>Preaching</i></p>	<p>Year B – Mark 1-2 <i>Miracles</i></p>	<p>Year C – Luke 4-6 <i>Teaching</i></p>
<p>Last Sunday after Epiphany <i>Transfiguration of Our Lord</i></p>		

The word epiphany means “to reveal.” During the Epiphany season, we see the many different ways Jesus is revealed as the Savior of the world. The star revealed Jesus to the Magi. The voice of God revealed Jesus as the Savior at his baptism and transfiguration—events which serve as bookends to the season. During the heart of the Epiphany season, we see Jesus revealed as the promised Messiah through his miracles, ministry, message, and mission work.

Worship Thoughts for Epiphany:

1. Epiphany is often a forgotten festival. Is a midweek service feasible? If not, consider celebrating Epiphany on the Second Sunday after Christmas.
2. Consider highlighting the mission emphasis of Epiphany: Mission festival, Bible Class on WELS mission work, renewed evangelism efforts in the community, etc.
3. The First Sunday after Epiphany celebrates Jesus’ baptism and the inauguration of his ministry. Jesus’ baptism provides an opportunity to discuss the blessings of our own baptisms. In place of the Creed, use *Remembrance of Baptism* (CW:OS) or read responsively the questions and answers under Holy Baptism in the Small Catechism.
4. Remember that the Epiphany season in our three-year lectionary is an adaptation of the first segment of *Ordinary Time* in the Roman Catholic lectionary. As a result, some of the middle Sundays of the Epiphany season are “generic.” Note the *lectio continua* from 1 Corinthians for the Second Lesson in all three years.
5. The Last Sunday after Epiphany celebrates Jesus’ transfiguration and is observed on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, regardless of the length of the rest of the season. The service on Transfiguration may conclude with *Farewell to Alleluia* (CW:OS). Consider visual ways of highlighting this rite (e.g. recessing an “Alleluia” banner).

Transfiguration Farewell to Alleluia Sample

BLESSING

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

C: Amen.

This text is slightly adapted from the text in CW:OS. Once the rite becomes well-known in the congregation, this spoken paragraph

FAREWELL TO ALLELUIA *could be omitted and/or replaced with a brief, printed explanation.*

M: Brothers and sisters in Christ, we will gather for worship next on Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. On that day we will begin our solemn journey to the Savior's cross. While the joy of faith remains undiminished throughout the year, our rejoicing during Lent is muted and quiet. For centuries, therefore, Christian churches have omitted their most jubilant songs during this season, including the word *alleluia*, which means, "Praise the Lord."

Now for a time we say farewell to *alleluia*. We do this to prepare ourselves for the quieter days of Lent. The *alleluias* will return on Easter dawn as we gather to shout our praise to the risen Lord.

CLOSING HYMN

Alleluia, Song of Triumph

from Christian Worship: Occasional Services



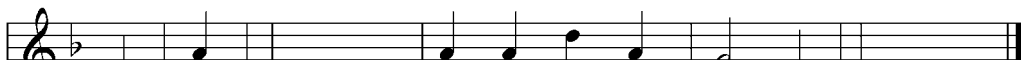
1 Al - le - lu - ia, song of tri - umph, sound of joy that
2 Al - le - lu - ia we are sing - ing, voic - ing hymns in
3 Al - le - lu - ia can - not al - ways be our song while
4 May our hymns be filled with long - ing— hear us, Ho - ly



can - not die; Al - le - lu - ia is the an - them
pure ac - cord, With Christ's ho - ly Church u - nit - ed,
here be - low; Al - le - lu - ia our trans - gres - sions
Trin - i - ty— As we look to your blest Eas - ter,



ev - er dear to choirs on high; Saints a-dorned in robes of
jus - ti - fied, re-deemed, re - stored, And with all his faith - ful
make us for a while fore - go. For the sol - emn time is
here, and then e - ter - nal - ly, When we shall once more be



THE TIME OF EASTER

THE SEASON OF LENT

Ash Wednesday <i>First Day of Lent</i> Luke 18:9-14		
<p style="text-align: center;">Sundays in Lent</p> <p><i>Lent 1:</i> Temptation of Jesus</p> <p><i>Lent 2-5:</i> Christ battles sin, death, and the devil on our behalf. Major Scriptural truths and themes are reflected in these Sundays (e.g. justification by faith alone, Jesus’ active and passive obedience, theology of the cross).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Midweek Lent Services</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Passion History:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upper Room 2. Gethsemane 3. Sanhedrin 4. Pilate’s Court 5. Calvary 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Palm Sunday</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sixth Sunday in Lent</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Hosanna!” Jesus enters Jerusalem to the praises of the people.</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">----- Holy Week “Triduum” -----</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Maundy Thursday</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Institution of Holy Communion</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Good Friday</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Crucifixion of Jesus</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Holy Saturday</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Great Vigil of Easter</i></p>

The forty days of Lent (which exclude Sundays, hence the nomenclature, “Sundays in Lent”) extend from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday. Lent takes us to the heart and core of our faith. Midweek services present us with the key events of our salvation in our Lord’s Passion History. Sunday services underscore the great teachings and truths of our faith. Although Lent is the somber season of the church year, we observe this season with muted joy, not maudlin sorrow. It is by the serious historical events we remember in this season that our Lord has rescued us from sin, death, and hell, and has redeemed us to be his very own people. The season concludes with the observance of Holy Week. The church’s rich liturgical customs from this week provide a fitting opportunity to meditate and ponder on the key events of our salvation.

Worship Thoughts for Ash Wednesday:

1. Ash Wednesday has a unique focus on repentance. Celebrate it so that it is distinct from the Sundays and especially the other midweek services in Lent. Use the appointed readings for the day; reserve the Passion History for the remaining midweek services.
2. Black, rather than purple, is the preferred liturgical color of the day. The pastor may choose to wear a black vestment, or he may wear a black stole over his alb or forgo the stole altogether (likewise on Good Friday). However, in liturgical practice, the white alb (and stole), rather than the black academic robe, remains the standard vestment throughout the season of Lent.
3. Will the imposition of ashes be a part of your observance? If so, how will you introduce the concept? Are there any pastoral or practical concerns to consider?
4. CW:OS offers two orders of service: *Ash Wednesday: Imposition of Ashes* (which could be used without the imposition) and *Corporate Confession and Absolution*.
5. Will Holy Communion be included in the service? Pro: The strong repentance emphasis calls for an equally strong gospel emphasis. Including the Sacrament also helps to set the day apart from the other midweek services. Con: Some tend to view absolution merely as preparation for Holy Communion instead of a means of grace by itself. Ash Wednesday provides a natural opportunity to teach the value of absolution.

Worship Thoughts for Lent:

1. Sundays in Lent

- As in Advent, consider using a Gathering Rite as an alternate beginning.
- The Song of Praise (*Gloria*) is traditionally omitted, as are all uses of “alleluia.” Watch your hymn selections! Substitute CW 317:1 for *Thank the Lord* in the Service of Word and Sacrament. These types of Lenten customs help to intensify the joy of Easter, when the Alleluias and Songs of Praise return in worship.

2. Wednesdays in Lent

- *Prayer at the Close of Day* (CW:NSS and CW:OS) provides a good alternative to *Evening Prayer* as the order of worship for these services.
- Follow the Passion History in the corresponding synoptic Gospel for that year in the lectionary (A = Matthew, B = Mark, C = Luke). John’s account of the Passion is traditionally reserved for Good Friday. The text is printed and divided for five midweek services in CW:OS (pages 152-168), including an option to read a harmony of the Passion from all four Gospels (pages 168-179).
- In settings where midweek services are not possible, observing Palm Sunday as the Sunday of the Passion is another way to present the Passion History to the congregation. Suggestions are in CW:OS, page 152. With this option, you might forgo the other appointed lessons for the day, and follow each of the five segments of the Passion History with one stanza of a five-stanza Lenten hymn such as “Upon the Cross Extended” (CW #113) or “Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious Battle” (CW #122).

Worship Thoughts for Holy Week:

1. Palm Sunday

- *Palm Sunday: Procession with Palms* (CW:OS) can begin the service. If a procession with the entire congregation is not possible or desirable, consider beginning the service in the church with a processional group (e.g. children's choir) in the back, processing forward during the opening hymn and laying palm branches in an appropriate place in the chancel.
- Observe the *Sunday of the Passion* if midweek Lent services were not feasible.

2. Maundy Thursday

- CW:OS includes *Maundy Thursday (including the stripping of the altar)*.
- The CW:OS rite places the sermon after the opening hymn. This placement may be seen as paralleling the events of the first Maundy Thursday (Jesus' discourse and footwashing, Passover with the institution of the Sacrament, Gethsemane). "This unusual arrangement allows the minister to explain the meaning of the Sacrament and the liturgical actions that are to take place so that they may proceed uninterrupted and vividly from this evening through Good Friday to the Easter Vigil" (CW:OS, page 183). If this arrangement is not desired, the sermon can be moved to its usual location after the Hymn of the Day.
- The congregation does not sing the closing psalm (Psalm 88), but passively listens to the psalm and watches as the altar appointments are reverently removed in token of Jesus' abandonment in Gethsemane.
- Consider how the stripping of the altar will take place: Who will be involved? Where will the appointments be carried? Will any other items near the altar be removed? How will the lighting in the church and the dismissal be handled?

3. Good Friday

- Good Friday is the only day in the calendar when the church's main service takes place in the afternoon.
- The conclusion of the Maundy Thursday service suggests that the altar will remain bare (no paraments) and essentially unused during Good Friday services. A bare chancel may be just as effectively visually as a chancel adorned with black paraments.
- CW:OS offers three rites: Service of the Cross of Christ, Service of Seven Words, Service of Darkness (*Tenebrae*).
- Carefully consider the logistics of the service(s) your congregation uses on Good Friday. What appointments are necessary (rough-hewn cross, tenebrae candelabrum, etc.)? What specific details need to be discussed and rehearsed before the service (procession of cross, extinguishing candles, church lighting, etc.), and with whom (ushers, acolytes, organist, choir director, cantor, etc.)?

Lent Gathering Rite Sample #1

Adapted from G-4640 by GIA Publications, Inc.

GATHERING SONG

The congregation remains seated. The choir or cantor sings the refrain once, and the congregation repeats the refrain and sings it throughout the song as indicated.

Refrain:



Re - mem-ber your love and your faith-ful-ness, O Lord.



Re - mem-ber your peo-ple and have mer-cy on us, Lord.

The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom should I fear?

The Lord is my life and my refuge, when I call God hears. *Refrain*

If you dwelt, O Lord, upon our sinfulness, then who could stand?

But with you there is mercy and forgiveness and a guiding hand. *Refrain*

O Lord, hear the sound of my call and answer me.

My heart cries out for your presence; it is you I seek. *Refrain*

GREETING

M: The grace of our Lord ✠ Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C: And also with you.

CONFESSION OF SINS

M: Beloved in the Lord: let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

C: **Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

Lent Gathering Rite Sample #2
Adapted from CWS Gathering Rite on Holy Baptism

INVOCATION

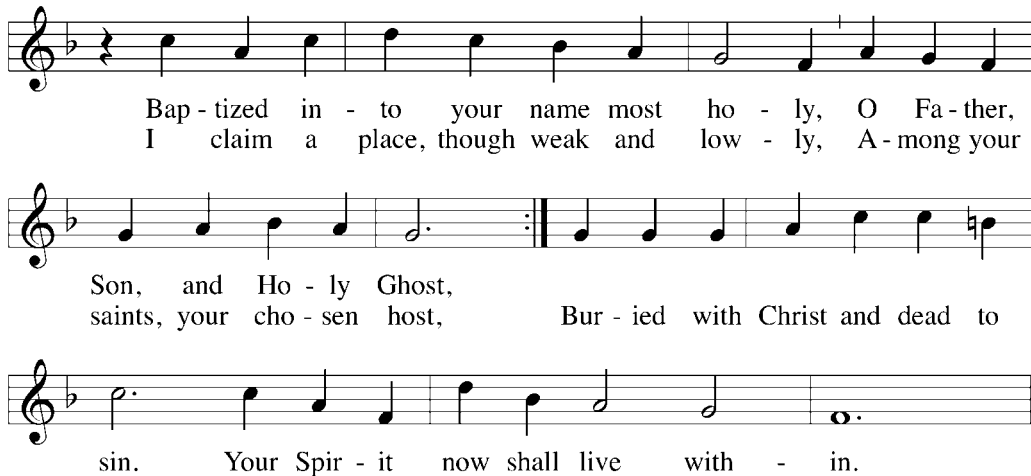
Minister: In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

ADDRESS *This paragraph is added to the CWS Gathering Rite to adapt it for Lent.*

M: In Holy Baptism, God our Father connects us to Jesus in his death to sin and resurrection to new life. As we make our Lenten journey to the cross, let us remember the blessings of our baptism, which connects us to Christ's death and brings us the salvation he has won for us on the cross.

The congregation sings:



Bap - tized in - to your name most ho - ly, O Fa - ther,
I claim a place, though weak and low - ly, A - mong your
Son, and Ho - ly Ghost,
saints, your cho - sen host, Bur - ied with Christ and dead to
sin. Your Spir - it now shall live with - in.

DIALOGUE

M: I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

C: **Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.**

John 3:5-6

M: Surely we were sinful at birth, sinful from the time our mothers conceived us.

Psalm 51:5

C: **But we were washed, we were sanctified, we were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.**

1 Corinthians 6:11

Palm Sunday Sample

An adaptation of the CW:OS Palm Sunday rite

STAND at the presiding minister's invitation and face the processional group in the back of the church.

INVOCATION

Minister: In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

CALL TO WORSHIP

M: Dear friends in Christ, for five weeks of Lent we have been preparing for the celebration of our Lord's paschal mystery. Today we come together to begin the solemn celebration of Holy Week. Christ entered in triumph into his own city to complete his work as our Messiah: to suffer, to die, and to rise again. Let us remember with devotion his entry that culminated at the empty tomb and follow him with a lively faith. United with him by Baptism, we share in his resurrection and new life.

M: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

C: **Hosanna in the highest!**

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

All Glory, Laud, and Honor
Christian Worship #131

As the processional hymn is sung, please turn toward the front of the church as the cross is carried past your pew. The cross is placed by the pulpit, where it stands as a symbol of the central message of our worship and preaching.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

M: Let us pray.

We praise you, O God, for the great acts of love by which you have redeemed us through your Son, Jesus Christ. As he was acclaimed by those who scattered their garments and branches of palm in his path, so may we always hail him our King and follow him with perfect confidence; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

BE SEATED

THE SEASON OF EASTER

The Resurrection of Our Lord		
Easter Vigil	Easter Dawn <i>John 20:1-18</i>	Easter Day <i>Easter Gospel from Synoptics</i>
Second Sunday of Easter John 20:19-31 <i>Doubting Thomas</i>		
Third Sunday of Easter Luke 24; John 21 <i>Further post-Resurrection appearances</i>		
Fourth Sunday of Easter John 10 <i>Good Shepherd Sunday</i>		
Fifth & Sixth Sundays of Easter John 13, 14, 15 <i>Jesus prepares the disciples for Ascension, Pentecost, and beyond</i>		
The Ascension of Our Lord <i>40 days after Easter</i> Acts 1:1-11; Ephesians 1:16-23; Luke 24:44-53		
Seventh Sunday of Easter John 17 <i>Jesus' High Priestly Prayer</i>		

The resurrection of our Lord is the essence of our faith (1 Corinthians 15:17-23), and its festival is the pinnacle of the Christian calendar. The various volumes of CW materials provide resources for three different Easter celebrations: a Holy Saturday Easter Vigil, an Easter Dawn service, and the main service on Easter Day. Like several other seasons, Easter is both a day and a season. The fifty-day long Easter season may be divided into two sections. The first three Sundays of the season focus on the historical facts surrounding Jesus' resurrection. The later Sundays consider our relationship with the risen Lord and with one another in light of Christ's resurrection. The later Sundays also prepare believers for the day of Ascension, forty days after Easter, and the day of Pentecost, 50 days after Easter.

Worship Thoughts for Easter:

1. Easter Vigil (CW:OS pages 228-244)

- This elaborate service completes the *Triduum* (three days) of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. Like the services of Good Friday, consideration must be given to the many logistics involved in this service. When done well, the Easter Vigil serves as a dramatic turning point in the church year, ending the solemn Holy Week observance and ushering in the celebration of our Lord's resurrection from the dead.
- Historically, converts to Christianity were baptized during this overnight vigil. "When there are no baptisms, the congregation is invited to remember their own baptism using the form included in the service order" (CW:OS, page 242). Modern adaptations of the service are much shorter than the ancient Vigil. Jesus' resurrection is announced sometime after sunset on Holy Saturday, and the congregation celebrates the Lord's Supper to conclude the *Triduum*.

2. Easter Dawn

- Elements of the Vigil may be incorporated into this service in a congregation that does not use the Vigil. If the sunrise service is early enough in the morning, the Vigil could be offered as the sunrise service.
- Consider the inclusion of Holy Communion in this service if the later service is intended for outreach.

3. Easter Day & Season

- "This Is the Feast of Victory" (CW #265) replaces the Song of Praise on Easter Day and throughout the season. Several settings are available (CPH no. 982305 or no. 98-3609; Ionian Arts no. CH-1012). "A Canticle to the Lamb" (CWS #787) or "Thanks Be to God" (CW #788) could also serve as alternate canticles during the Easter season. Use the same setting for the entire season (with possible exceptions on Easter Day and Ascension Day).
- Use festive settings of the Psalm of the Day (Psalm 118). In Year C, the First Lesson, Exodus 15:1-11, may be changed to Exodus 14:10-31, and the Song of Moses (the appointed First Lesson) may be sung in place of the Psalm (e.g. CWS #786; GIA no. G-4623).
- Establish the use of the paschal candle for the season. (The paschal candle is a required feature for the Easter Vigil).
- Retain the Easter mood with Easter hymns throughout the season (especially as opening hymns and distribution hymns).

4. Ascension

- Like Epiphany, Ascension is often a forgotten festival. Celebrate Ascension on the Seventh Sunday of Easter if a midweek service is not feasible.
- The Paschal candle is extinguished at the reading of Jesus' Ascension in the Gospel, or it is recessed at the conclusion of the service.

Easter Day Sample

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

M: Let us pray.

Almighty God, by the glorious resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ you conquered death and opened the gate to eternal life. Grant that we, who have been raised with him through baptism, may walk in newness of life and ever rejoice in the hope of sharing his glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be dominion and praise now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

BE SEATED

FIRST LESSON

Exodus 14:10-15:1a

Israel crosses the Red Sea safely

The music for the "Song of Moses" (from Exodus 15, immediately after this lesson) will be sung as an extension of this lesson. The introduction will be played as the final verses of this lesson are read.

CANTICLE

Song of Moses

Refrain *Each refrain is sung in the following manner:*

The minister sings the first line and the congregation repeats the first line.

The minister then sings the second line and the congregation repeats the second line.



I will sing, I will sing to the God who sets me free!



Phar-aoh's ar-my and his char-i-ots God cast in - to the sea!

Verse The Lord is my strength, my protection and my shield; Pharaoh's army and his chariots God cast into the sea. Our God is a warrior whose name is the Lord, God of might, God of victory.

Ascension Day Sample

INVOCATION

Minister: In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

DIALOGUE FOR THE ASCENSION

Selected Verses from the Psalms

M: Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights above.

C: Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly hosts.

M: How majestic is the Lord's name in all the earth!

C: He has set his glory above the heavens.

M: For the Lord is the Most High over all the earth.

C: He is exalted far above all gods.

M: God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the Lord amid the sounding of trumpets.

C: God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne.

M: The Lord reigns, let the nations tremble.

C: He sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake.

M: The throne of our God will last forever and ever.

C: A scepter of justice will be the scepter of his kingdom.

M: Praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted.

C: His splendor is above the earth and the heavens.

THIS IS THE FEAST OF VICTORY

The refrain is introduced by the choir and then repeated by the congregation.

The congregation sings the refrains throughout the canticle.

Refrain:

The musical notation for the refrain is written on two staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. It contains a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) followed by a quarter note (C5), a quarter note (B4), and a quarter note (A4). The second staff begins with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. It contains a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) followed by a quarter note (C5), a quarter note (B4), and a quarter note (A4). The lyrics are: "This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God. Al-le-lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!".

Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God.

Refrain

THE TIME OF THE CHURCH

THE SEASON OF PENTECOST

<p>The Coming of the Holy Spirit <i>Pentecost Day</i> Acts 2:1-21</p>		
<p>First Sunday after Pentecost <i>The Holy Trinity</i></p>		
<p>Sundays after Pentecost Depending on the date of Easter, there may be up to 24 Sundays after Pentecost.</p>		
<p><u>Year A</u> Matthew</p>	<p><u>Year B</u> Mark John 6, the “Bread of Life” chapter, is included on Pentecost 10-14.</p>	<p><u>Year C</u> Luke</p>

We have reviewed the life of Christ during the first half of the church year. Now, in the second half of the year, we consider the Christian’s life and the Church’s life in light of the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord. Pentecost Day, the birthday of the Church, appropriately begins the “Time of the Church.” Although there are up to two dozen Sundays after Pentecost, a careful examination of the lectionary will reveal a number of smaller, thematic units in this season (especially among the Gospels) that the pastor may use to organize the season for himself and his hearers.

Worship Thoughts for the Pentecost Season:

1. Pentecost Day is the last of the five major festivals in the calendar. Highlight the day visually with red banners and décor in the church.
2. Use Luther’s Small Catechism explanation of the Third Article as the Confession of Faith on Pentecost Day. Use the Trinitarian section of the Athanasian Creed as the Confession of Faith on Trinity Sunday. Due to its length, the Athanasian Creed could be read responsively.
3. Notice that the psalms for Pentecost Day and Trinity Sunday in CWS include refrains specific to the occasion. (This is also true for several other CWS psalms).
4. Choirs are often off for the summer months. During this time, special music could be provided by soloists or small groups (trios, quartets).

Pentecost Day Sample

FIRST LESSON

Joel 2:28-29

Joel prophesies about the day of Pentecost

PSALM OF THE DAY

Selected Verses from Psalm 51

Christian Worship: Supplement, page 49

*The cantor introduces the refrain and the congregation repeats the refrain.
The psalm is then sung responsively by half-verse.*

Refrain

Come, Ho - ly Spir - it, God and Lord,
be all your grac - es now out - poured!

Psalm Tone

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.

Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me,
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Refrain

Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me

Trinity Sunday Sample

CONFESSION OF FAITH

Excerpts from the Athanasian Creed

The Athanasian Creed is traditionally used in worship on Trinity Sunday. This fifth-century Christian confession of faith was written to defend the Bible's teaching about the three persons of the Triune God and the two natures of Jesus Christ. The excerpts below come from the section that speaks about the Trinity. A translation of the entire Athanasian Creed may be found on pages 132-133 in Christian Worship.

The minister and congregation will speak the Creed responsively. The congregation speaks the bold, indented text.

Whoever wishes to be saved must, above all else, hold to the true Christian faith.

Whoever does not keep this faith pure in all points will certainly perish forever.

Now this is the true Christian faith:

**We worship one God in three persons and three persons in one God,
Without mixing the persons or dividing the divine being.**

For each person—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—is distinct,

**but the deity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one,
equal in glory and coeternal in majesty.**

What the Father is, so is the Son, and so is the Holy Spirit.

The Father is uncreated, the Son uncreated, the Holy Spirit uncreated;

The Father is infinite, the Son infinite, the Holy Spirit infinite;

The Father is eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Spirit eternal;

**yet they are not three who are eternal, but there is one who is eternal,
just as they are not three who are uncreated, nor three who are infinite,
but there is one who is uncreated and one who is infinite.**

In the same way the Father is almighty, the Son is almighty, the Holy Spirit is almighty;

yet they are not three who are almighty, but there is one who is almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God;

yet they are not three Gods, but one God.

So the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Spirit is Lord;

yet they are not three Lords, but one Lord.

For just as Christian truth compels us to confess each person individually to be God and Lord,

so the true Christian faith forbids us to speak of three Gods or three Lords.

The Father is neither made nor created nor begotten of anyone.

The Son is neither made nor created, but is begotten of the Father alone.

The Holy Spirit is neither made nor created nor begotten,

but proceeds from the Father and the Son.

**So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons;
one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.**

And within this Trinity none comes before or after; none is greater or inferior,

But all three persons are coequal and coeternal,

so that, in every way, as stated before, all three persons are to be worshipped as one God and one God worshipped as three persons.

Whoever wishes to be saved must have this conviction of the Trinity.

THE END TIME SEASON

<p>First Sunday of End Time October 30 to November 5 <i>Reformation</i> THE CHURCH MILITANT</p>	
<p>Reformation Day October 31</p>	<p>All Saints' Day November 1</p>
<p>Second Sunday of End Time November 6-12 <i>Last Judgment</i> THE GATHERED CHURCH</p>	
<p>Third Sunday of End Time November 13-19 <i>Saints Triumphant</i> THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT</p>	
<p>Last Sunday of End Time November 20-26 <i>Christ the King</i> THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH</p>	

The final Sundays of the church year in CW resources are called the “End Time” season. These Sundays had been handled previously as the conclusion of the post-Pentecost season. Although this is a unique innovation among WELS, this approach codifies the final Sundays of the church year, providing a clear theme each week and a clear progression throughout the final Sundays of the year. Worship planners should take note of the changes in the CWS lectionary (especially the Gospels for the second and third weeks of Year B) that are intended to bring out the weekly emphasis more clearly. The themes in italics above reflect the sub-headings for each Sunday in CW. The themes in caps above are a way to view this season as the conclusion of the “Time of the Church.”

Worship Thoughts for the End Time Season:

1. There are Propers for Reformation in CW's three-year lectionary, and there are also Propers appointed for Reformation Day in the minor festival section in CW: Manual. The former could be used in local congregations, and the latter (or the CW one-year lectionary suggestions) could be used for area Reformation services.
2. Reformation service ideas: An adaptation of Luther's German Mass; substitute a Reformation-era *Gloria* as the Song of Praise (CW #262, #263); use the Second Article of the Large Catechism as the Confession of Faith (read responsively).
3. Some Lutheran congregations have the custom of standing for "A Mighty Fortress" (CW #200, #201; this is also applicable on the First Sunday in Lent).
4. Consider the inclusion of the Sacrament in area Reformation services.
5. In some settings, All Saints' Day is observed on the Sunday on or after November 1, and Reformation is observed on the Sunday on or before October 31. (The only years where this may cause a problem are years when November 6 or 7 occur on a Sunday; observing All Saints' Sunday in those years would eliminate one of the Sundays from End Time).
6. Be aware of a slight distinction between All Saints' Day and Saints Triumphant. All Saints' Day gives thanks to God for the lives and examples of the believers who have gone before us. Saints Triumphant (End Time 3) looks ahead to the eternal gathering of all of God's saints in heaven.
7. The Last Sunday of End Time has an Easter and eschatological flavor. "This Is the Feast" (CW #265), "A Canticle to the Lamb" (CWS #787), or "Thanks Be to God" (CW #788) may replace the *Gloria*.
8. Use Luther's Small Catechism explanation of the Second Article for the Confession of Faith for Christ the King: "All this [Christ] did that I should be his own and live under him in his kingdom." Another option would be to use excerpts from Luther's Large Catechism commentary on the Second Petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Your kingdom come."
9. Responsive Prayers of the Church for every Sunday in this season (two for Reformation) are available in CW:AB.

Reformation Sample #1

HYMN OF PRAISE ~ *Gloria in Excelsis*

All Glory Be to God on High
Christian Worship #263

The Gloria in Excelsis (Latin for "Glory [to God] in the highest") is the traditional song of praise sung for centuries near the beginning of worship. The following hymn is a paraphrase of the text of the Gloria, and was written by Nikolaus Decius, a contemporary of Martin Luther. The original German hymn was often used during Reformation-era services.



1 All glo - ry be to God on high, Who has our
2 We praise, we wor - ship you, we trust; We give you
3 O Je - sus Christ, the on - ly Son Of God, your
4 O Ho - ly Spir - it, pre - cious Gift, Our Com - fort -



race be - friend - ed! To us no harm shall
thanks for - ev - er, O Fa - ther, that your
heav'n - ly Fa - ther, You did for all our
er from heav - en, Our wea - ry hearts and



now come nigh; The strife at last is end - ed. The
rule is just And wise and chang - es nev - er. In
sins a - tone, And your lost sheep you gath - er. O
souls up - lift; For this our praise is giv - en. De -



Fa - ther's love, the Sav - ior's birth, Bring peace, good will, to
bound - less pow'r, with might - y reign, Done is what - ev - er
Lamb of God, to you on high From depths of woe we
liv - er us from doubt and fear; When Sa - tan trou - bles



all the earth; Oh, thank him for his good - ness!
you or - dain; Your rule brings count - less bless - ings!
sin - ners cry, Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus!
us, be near; We trust your love and pow - er.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Reformation Sample #2

A translation and adaptation of
Luther's German Mass
1526 A.D.

PRELUDE

The pre-service music this morning comes from a recording of music composed by Lutheran musicians during the Reformation era.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
Christian Worship #200

Please stand as the hymn is introduced, and turn to hymn #200 in the hymnal to sing the opening hymn. Face the processional cross in the back of the church and follow its path to the chancel.

KYRIE

Kyrie, God Father in Heaven Above
Christian Worship #266

Kyrie Eleison is Latin for "Lord, have mercy." The Kyrie is the first of the five customary songs of the traditional liturgical service used by the Western Church. The musical version of the Kyrie which Luther prepared for his German Mass is found in the "Common Service" on page 15 in Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal. The version used here was originally a Latin version that was translated and adapted for use in German services in 1541. The minister will sing the Kyrie.

M: *Kyrie, God Father in heaven above, you abound in grace and love, of all things the Maker and Preserver. Eleison, eleison!*

Kyrie, O Christ our King, salvation for all you came to bring. O Lord Jesus, God's own Son, our Mediator at the heavenly throne, hear our cry and grant our supplication. Eleison, eleison!

Kyrie, O God the Holy Ghost, guard our faith, the gift we need the most, and bless our life's last hour that we leave this sinful world with gladness. Eleison, eleison!

GLORIA

All Glory Be to God Alone
Christian Worship #262

Gloria in Excelsis is Latin for "Glory to God in the highest." The Gloria is the second of the five customary songs of the traditional liturgical service. The text of the Gloria may be found on pages 16-17 of the "Common Service" in Christian Worship. Luther wrote this hymn as a paraphrase of the text of the Gloria so that the worshippers could sing this song rather than the choir alone.

Christ the King Sample

CONFESSION OF FAITH

Luther's Large Catechism

Lord's Prayer, Second Petition (excerpts)

"Your Kingdom Come"

M: What is the "kingdom of God"?

C: **Simply what we heard in the Creed: that God sent his Son, Christ our Lord, into the world to redeem and deliver us from the power of the devil, to bring us to himself, and to rule us as a king of righteousness, life, and salvation against sin, death, and an evil conscience. To this end he also gave his Holy Spirit to deliver this to us through his holy Word and to enlighten and strengthen us in faith by his power.**

M: We ask here at the outset that all this may be realized in us and that his name may be praised through God's holy Word and Christian living. This we ask, both in order that we who have accepted it may remain faithful and grow daily in it and also in order that it may find approval and gain followers among other people and advance with power throughout the world.

C: **In this way many, led by the Holy Spirit, may come into the kingdom of grace and become partakers of redemption, so that we may all remain together eternally in this kingdom that has now begun.**

M: The coming of God's kingdom to us takes place in two ways: first, it comes here, in time, through the Word and faith, and second, in eternity, it comes through the final revelation. Now, we ask for both of these things: that it may come to those who are not yet in it and that, by daily growth here and in eternal life hereafter, it may come to us who have attained it.

C: **All this is nothing more than to say: "Dear Father, we ask you first to give us your Word, so that the gospel may be properly preached throughout the world and then that it may also be received in faith and may work and dwell in us, so that your kingdom may pervade among us through the Word and the power of the Holy Spirit and the devil's kingdom may be destroyed so that he may have no right or power over us until finally his kingdom is utterly eradicated and sin, death, and hell wiped out, that we may live forever in perfect righteousness and blessedness."**

M: From this you see that we are not asking here for crumbs or for a temporal, perishable blessing, but for an eternal, priceless treasure and for everything that God himself possesses. It would be far too great for any human heart to dare to desire it if God himself had not commanded us to ask for it.

C: **But because he is God, he also claims the honor of giving far more abundantly and liberally than anyone can comprehend—like an eternal, inexhaustible fountain, which, the more it gushes forth and overflows, the more it continues to give. He desires nothing more from us than that we ask many and great things of him.**

Reprinted from *The Book of Concord : The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, pp. 446–447.
Edited and translated by Robert Kolb, Timothy J. Wengert and Charles P. Arand; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000.

BE SEATED

OFFERING