

SIGHS TOO DEEP FOR WORDS

A Liturgy in Response to *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*

Pattern for Worship: The following resource follows the same basic pattern of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* services—gathering, word, meal, and sending. There is a high value on flexibility. Our hope was to create a setting that included all the central elements of a Holy Communion liturgy as well as texts that can be woven together with communities' previously established patterns of worship. Pastors and worship leaders are encouraged to adapt these resources to suit their own voices, communities, and contexts.

Background: Responding to members' consistent requests for more expansive images in worship, a team of fifteen church leaders from Twin Cities congregations (Holy Trinity, Grace University, St. Michael's, Edina Community, University Lutheran Church of Hope, Augsburg University, and Bishop Ann Svennungsen from the Minneapolis Area Synod) commissioned a new expansive language liturgy. The group was inspired by the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women, the 40th anniversary of the ordination of women of color, and the 10th anniversary of the ordination of LGBTQIA+ leaders in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), as well as the ELCA's newly published social statement entitled *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action*.

After having spent time with the voices of feminist, womanist, mujerista, and queer theologians and musicians, and having been awarded a Ministry Imagination Grant from the Minneapolis Area Synod, the team then contracted with two writers—namely, Rev. Tamika Jancewicz and Rev. Emilie Casey. Their work began just weeks after Minneapolis, along with the rest of the world, witnessed the brutal murder of George Floyd. Given these circumstances, the commissioners felt called to create an expansive language liturgy not only relating to gender and sexuality, but also to race and culture and were pleased that these two writers, with very different social locations, graciously agreed to work together to create something that would bring a richness and depth that could not be achieved by one individual working in isolation. The commissioning team then searched for a musician and found Anne Krentz Organ to join them as composer.

Together, Pastor Tamika Jancewicz, Pastor Emilie Casey, and Anne Krentz Organ shaped this liturgy entitled *Sighs Too Deep for Words* (Romans 8:26). This resource gives special attention to women's experiences in scripture and in everyday life, and it invites embodied prayer. This is a liturgy rooted in scriptural accounts of the breaths, sighs, groans, and shouts of God, humanity, and all creation. The writers have aimed to craft language and music that is not only theologically rigorous and aesthetically beautiful, but also clear, adaptable, and singable. May we pray and sing without knowing exactly what to say, for it is when "we do not know how to pray as we ought" that the "Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words."

GATHERING

Worship may begin with a call to worship, gathering song and procession, the confession and forgiveness, or the thanksgiving for baptism. The assembly is encouraged to gather outside the church, in the narthex, or in the nave for the call to worship in order to process into the worship space following the cross. This communal procession embodies the journey of faith in our movement.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Refrain can be sung or spoken. [Video recording](#) [Accompaniment](#) [bulletin graphic](#)

As we gather for worship let us come to God in silence
offering in prayer our sighs and breath.

Moment of silence to breathe prayers of praise and longing.

Leader:

We do not know how to pray. But the Spirit in - ter - cedes for us
with sighs, — with sighs too deep for words.

All:

With sighs, — with sighs too deep for words.

Option to continue with one or more of the following spoken petitions:

Don't worry about anything;
instead, pray about everything. (Ph 4:6) *Refrain.*

God responds to the prayers of the destitute
and will not reject their plea. (Ps 102:17) *Refrain.*

I will give you the treasures of darkness
and the riches hidden in secret places. (Is 45:3) *Refrain.*

All creation groans in labor pains; and we groan too,
awaiting the redemption of our bodies. (Rm 8:22-23) *Refrain.*

For Jesus said: Where two or three gather in my name,
I am there among them. (Mt 18:20) *Refrain.*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

+ Praise our Wonderful Maker,
who wove our bodies from the depths of the earth,
hems us in, behind and before,
and will knit us back together.

Amen. (Ps 139)

or this

Remember the Rock that bore you,
the God that gave us birth. (Dt 32:18)

or this

+ In the name of our God, Holy One and Holy Three.

Amen.

or this

+ In the name of our Creator, Healer, and Comforter.

Amen.

A Jesus said: Love God with all your heart, soul, and mind.
And love your neighbor as yourself.
**But we have sinned in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done
and by what we have left undone.**

Have mercy, O God.
Forgive us, renew us, and lead us.

Silence for personal reflection.

Jesus said: the realm of God is like a woman baking bread.
She adds a pinch of yeast to flour
and the dough rises and grows in ways we never imagined. (Lk 12, Mt 13)

By this ever-expanding grace, God fills us with new life.
We are freed to love our neighbors as God first loved us.
Alleluia! Amen.

B Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and one another,
saying: Have mercy on us.

Gracious God, we confess that we have turned from you
and given ourselves to the powers of sin.

Have mercy on us.

You call us into community,
but we are scattered.

Have mercy on us.

You demand we care for the least of these,
but we are swayed by wealth and power.

Have mercy on us.

You made us to live in harmony with creation,
but we have failed.

Have mercy on us.

You invite us to follow Jesus,
but we have lost our way.

Have mercy on us.

We are truly sorry. We repent and turn to you.

Have mercy on us.

Silence for personal reflection.

Friends, hear this good news:

Our God is like a woman who having ten coins and losing one
lit the lamps, swept the house, and searched everywhere
until she found the one coin that had gone missing. (Luke 15:8-10)

Our God, in Christ, has turned the world upside-down
to seek the lost and claim us as her own.

Amen.

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

These or similar words of lament may be used in place of confession and forgiveness.

A We join Jesus in the waters of baptism,
and we are raised to life anew.
Together let us give thanks for this gracious gift.

Mothering God, Our hearts are full of gratitude
for you formed us in your divine image.
Your living water joins our very beings together.
You meet us in our despair and embrace us with grace and love.

When Hagar felt abandoned
you gave her strength to live for generations to come.

When the Samaritan woman went to the well alone
you gave her good news to share.

We have joy in our hearts for your liberating waters.
You free us to see one another in this isolating world
and nourish our spirits when we feel unseen.

Fill us, renew us, and call us by our name.
We honor you, and we give you our praise,
through Jesus your anointed one
with the unifying breath of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

B God promises us new life through Jesus.

In the waters of baptism,
we journey with Christ into this new life
and all of it is a free gift from God.
Let's give thanks to God for this gift.

Like Nicodemus, we may not fully understand,
but your love for us—for the world—is endless. (John 3:1-21)
Thank you for loving us to life.

We thank you for your love.

Like the Ethiopian eunuch, we ask for guidance,
and you remind us that your grace is abundant. (Acts 8:26-40)
Thank you for washing us with your grace.

We thank you for your grace.

Like the woman whose tears wash Jesus' feet,
we seek forgiveness,
and you forgive us and see us for who we are. (Luke 7:36-50)
Thank you for your boundless mercy.

We thank you for your mercy.

Friends, nothing can separate us
from the love of God in Christ Jesus
and for that we give our thanks! (Romans 8:38-39)

God, we thank you.

God's gift to us is forever.
May we remember these gifts of love, grace, and mercy
in times when we do not feel our best.

And may we see one another as beloved children
of our loving God—made in the Imago Dei.

Amen.

COMMUNAL LAMENT

These or similar words of lament may be used in place of confession and forgiveness.

A In response to a particular injustice or harm inflicted on God's beloved children,
let us call out to the God who knows the depths of our sorrows
and shares the grief in our hearts using the words of Psalm 10.

After each petition, you are invited to respond saying:
Come near to us. Show us the way.

Let us pray:

O God, when evil feels inescapable
and it is hard to imagine justice,
you seem hidden and far away.

Come near to us. Show us the way.

There is wickedness in our world, O God.
Disrupt it.

We have witnessed the harm and suffering of your beloved children:
name a particular injustice or harm inflicted on God's beloved children.

Come near to us. Show us the way.

Help us to remember that you see.
You see our troubles and grief. You hold our pain.
We can leave it all to you. You are our helper.

Come near to us. Show us the way.

Help us to remember that you listen.
You listen to our desires. You calm our troubled hearts.
We can cry out to you. You will not abandon us.

Come near to us. Show us the way.

God will rise up and comfort us.
We no longer have to be afraid.
Let us trust in this promise
And hope in justice for oppressed and afflicted.

Amen.

B Together, we share our grievances and regrets before the divine and one another, using the words of Psalm 130.

Silence.

We cry out to you, O God!
Open your ears to our voices.
Be open to our request for mercy.

Where we have hurt our neighbor, one of your beloved,
help us acknowledge this harm and trust your forgiveness

Silence.

Where we have neglected your creation
help us acknowledge this harm and trust your forgiveness

Silence.

Where we have disregarded one another,
help us acknowledge this harm and trust your forgiveness

Silence.

Our whole being waits and hopes for your promise.
We wait and hope with our whole being.
Amen.

KYRIE: THE CANAANITE WOMAN'S SONG

This sung kyrie might be used in place of confession and forgiveness. These words are inspired by the Canaanite woman described in Matthew 15:21-28. She kneels before Jesus, insisting he heal her daughter.

[Video recording](#) [Accompaniment](#) [bulletin graphic, Show me mercy](#)



CANTICLE OF PRAISE: MARY'S SONG

[Video recording](#) [Accompaniment](#) [bulletin graphic](#)

Refrain

Leader: All: Leader: All:

Glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God, with all our hearts, with all our hearts.

Leader: All: Leader: All:

Come, wor-ship God, come, wor-ship God, with all our praise, with all our praise.

Our spirits join with Mary,
singing her song of praise
to God, whose name is holy,
with arms fully raised.

Refrain

Stories of God's great mercy
each generation shares.
New hope for lowly people:
we know that our God cares.

Refrain

In Jesus there is promise,
helping us on our way.
The Spirit always guides us;
we trust what she will say.

Refrain

WORD

FIRST READING

The reading may be announced: A reading from _____.

The reading may be concluded:

Blessed are they who seek Wisdom;
who treasure her ways and follow her paths. (Proverbs 2)

or this

Word of God, Word of life.
Thanks be to God

PSALM

SECOND READING

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The assembly is invited to pass the gospel book from one person to another, making sure that all have the opportunity to assist in the sharing of the good news. This communal procession of the gospel book is an embodiment of our baptismal call to proclaim the gospel in word and deed.

[Video recording](#) [Accompaniment](#) [bulletin graphic](#)

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Breathe, oh breathe, — breathe up - on us that we may live.

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

OR [bulletin graphic](#)




Give me wa - ter, liv - ing wa - ter, so that I may nev - er thirst a - gain.

Springs of wa - ter well - ing up to e - ter - nal life.

Give me wa - ter, liv - ing wa - ter, so that I may nev - er thirst a - gain

OR [bulletin graphic](#)



Ho - ly Spir - it, Ho - ly Spir - it, we are dust, by your breath we live.

Breathe, oh breathe, — breathe up - on us that we may live.

Ho - ly Spir - it, Ho - ly Spir - it, we are dust, by your breath we live.

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

The Word made flesh dwells among us.
Full of grace and truth.

The gospel according to _____.

....

This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
Praise to you, Word of life!

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

PROFESSION OF FAITH

On occasions there is a particular need for communal affirmation of God's love for women, girls, trans, and gender non-conforming people, use these or similar words:

God desires full life for all. As a church we recognize that women, girls, trans and gender non-conforming people are too often restricted from realizing abundant life due to sexism and patriarchy. This church identifies the social forces that silence, control, or devalue people on the basis of gender as sin. We affirm all people are created in God's image, and we reject any power, privilege, or prejudice that disrupts joy, gladness, and flourishing life for all people.

I invite you to profess your faith,
renouncing the forces of evil and the power of sin.

Do you renounce the devil and all forces that defy God?

I renounce them.

Do you renounce the powers of this world that rebel against God?

I renounce them.

Do you renounce the ways of sin that draw you away from God?

I renounce them.

Do you renounce the powers of patriarchy and sexism?

I renounce them.

Do you renounce systems of oppression that harm God's children?

I renounce them.

Do you renounce the sins of silence that draw one away from God and neighbor?

I renounce them.

Continue with the words of the Apostles Creed (A), the below prayer of praise (B), or another fitting statement of faith.

A

Do you believe in God the Father?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

**I believe in Jesus Christ,
God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand
of the Father,
and he will come again
to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

B

Let us profess our faith:

**We believe in you, O God,
who spoke all life into being,
author of heaven and earth,
architect of time,
quilter of the cosmos.
You shape our bodies
from the dust of the ground,
and by your breath we are given life.**

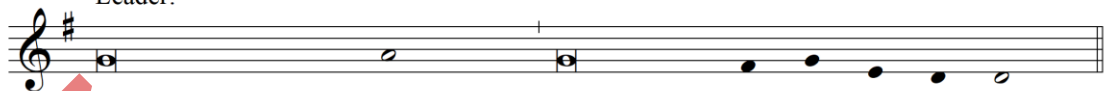
**We believe in you, O God,
who became incarnate in Christ Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
truly divine and truly human.
You lived among us
to reveal your justice,
died among us
to break the bonds of sin and death,
and were raised among us
to bring abundant life.**

**We believe in you, O God,
who transforms us by the Holy Spirit,
draws us into community,
moves us to action,
and inspires us to hope against hope.
You breathe new life
into a fallen world
and equip us to proclaim
the good news of resurrecting love.**

**All thanks and praise to you, O God,
our beginning and our end. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Leader:



We do not know how to pray. But the Spirit in - ter - cedes for us



with sighs, — with sighs too deep for words.

All:



With sighs, — with sighs too deep for words.

PEACE

On the first day of the week
the risen Jesus came among the disciples
and said, "Peace be with you."
When he had said this, he breathed on them
and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." (John 20:19, 21)

Let us greet one another with a sign of this spirit-filled peace.

The peace of Christ be with you always!

And also with you!

The people may greet one another with a sign of God's peace.

TABLE

OFFERING PRAYER

Generous God, we give you praise!
You freed the widow from her debt
by transforming a small jar of oil
into countless overflowing vessels. (2 Kings 4:1-7)
You liberate us from sin and death
by the abundance at this table.
Multiply these gifts and fill us with your spirit,
so that we may embody Christ and enfold your radical freedom. Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

Option A is a sung setting; option B is spoken.

A [Video recording](#) [bulletin graphic](#)



God is here! The Spirit is with us!

Lift up your hearts! We lift them to our God!

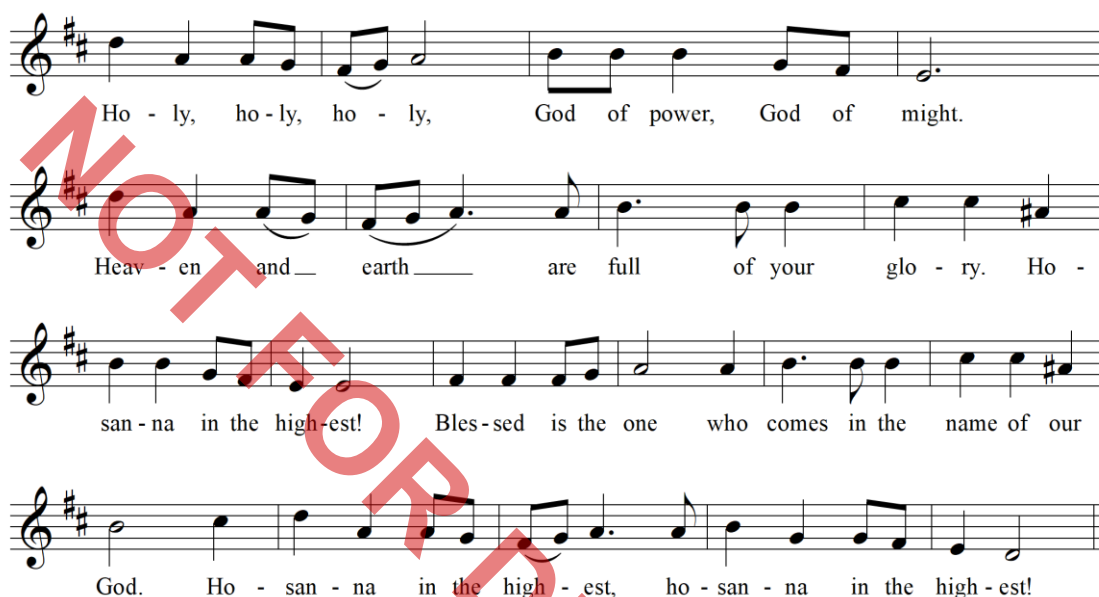
Let us give thanks to the Ho - ly One and Ho - ly Three.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The musical notation is written on four staves in G major (one sharp). The lyrics are: "God is here! The Spirit is with us! Lift up your hearts! We lift them to our God! Let us give thanks to the Ho - ly One and Ho - ly Three. It is right to give our thanks and praise."

The minister continues with these words or another appropriate preface for the day:

Now we give thanks for all we have received through the life, death, and resurrection
of our savior Jesus Christ. With all heaven and earth, we shout with joy:



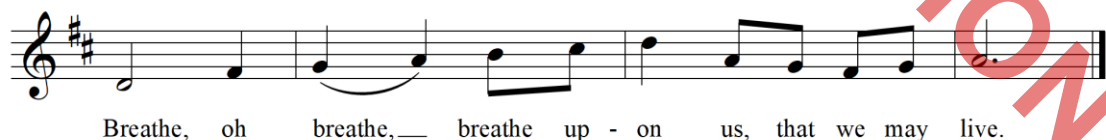
All thanks and praise are yours, O God,
for in Christ you became incarnate in a human body.
By your flesh we are freed from sin, death, and all that holds us captive.
You have been revealed to us as one who breathes, and you breathe into us new life.

Therefore, we breathe your loving Spirit:

Moment of silence to breathe prayers of praise and longing.

With the prophet Ezekiel, we cry out:

[Video recording](#) [Accompaniment](#)
[bulletin graphic](#)



In the night in which Jesus was betrayed.... Do this for the remembrance of me.
Groaning in expectation with all of creation, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

[bulletin graphic](#)



Christ has died. — Christ is ris - en. Christ will come a - gain.

Breath of God, in this bread and cup
you bring new life to your church / this community / this synod / this congregation.
May your Spirit intercede for us with sighs too deep for words, Romans 8:26
so that we might be made one body in Christ.

[bulletin graphic](#)



Breathe, oh breathe, — breathe up - on us, that we may live.

Revive our faith, infuse us with your peace, and reveal to us your justice,
so that we might witness to the resurrection in all that we say and in all that we do.
All thanks and praise to you, O God, Holy One and Holy Three.

[bulletin graphic](#)



A - men, a - men. A - men, a - men.

B

God is here!

The Spirit is with us!

Lift up your hearts!

We lift them to our God!

Let us give thanks to the Holy One and Holy Three!

It is right to give our thanks and praise!

The minister continues with these words or another appropriate preface for the day:

Now we give thanks for all we have received through the life, death, and resurrection of our savior Jesus Christ.

With all heaven and earth, we shout with joy:
Holy, holy, holy,
God of power, God might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory,
Hosanna in the highest,
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God,
Hosanna in the highest!

All thanks and praise are yours, O God,
for in Christ you became incarnate in a human body.
By your flesh we are freed from sin, death, and all that holds us captive.
You have been revealed to us as one who breathes, and you breathe into us new life.

Therefore, we breathe your loving Spirit:
Moment of silence to breathe prayers of praise and longing.

With the prophet Ezekiel, we cry out:
Breathe on us, that we may live! Ezekiel 37:9

In the night in which Jesus was betrayed.... Do this for the remembrance of me.
Groaning in expectation with all of creation, we proclaim the mystery of faith:
Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Breath of God, in this bread and cup
you bring new life to your church / this community / this synod / this congregation.
Breathe on us, that we may live!

May your Spirit intercede for us with sighs too deep for words,
so that we might be made one body in Christ.
Breathe on us, that we may live!

Revive our faith, infuse us with your peace, and reveal to us your justice,
so that we might witness to the resurrection in all that we say and in all that we do.
Breathe on us, that we may live!

All thanks and praise to you, O God, Holy One and Holy Three.
AMEN!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

A *May be spoken or sung.* [Video recording](#) [Accompaniment](#) [bulletin graphic](#)

Our God in heav - en, ho - ly is your name, your

realm come, your will done, on earth as in heav - en.

Give us to - day our dail - y bread. For - give us our

sins as we for - give those who sin a - gainst us.

Save us from the time of tri - al. De - liv - er us from e - vil. For

you reign in pow'r and glo - ry now and for - ev - er. A - men.

B Heavenly God, giver of life,
holy is your name,
your realm come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For you reign in power and glory
now and forever. Amen.

COMMUNION

A Wisdom has prepared the food, poured the wine, and set her table.
She calls, "Come, all are welcome to eat and drink." (Proverbs 9: 2, 4-5)

B Jesus said: My flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. John 6:55
Let us come to the table, all is ready!

GRACE UPON GRACE

[Video recording](#) Accompaniment: [Organ](#), [Piano](#)
[bulletin graphic](#)



The Word made flesh dwells among us, full of grace and truth. *Refrain.*
Behold our Savior who frees us from the sin of the world. *Refrain.*

SENDING

BLESSING

A + May the blessing of our Wonderful Maker,
who wove your body in the depths of the earth,
hems you in, behind and before,
and will knit you back together
be with you today and every day. (Psalm 139)

Amen.

B + May the deep breath of God
revive you with joy, infuse you with peace, and fill you with hope.

Amen.

C + May the blessing of God, Holy One and Holy Three,
be with you today and every day.

Amen.

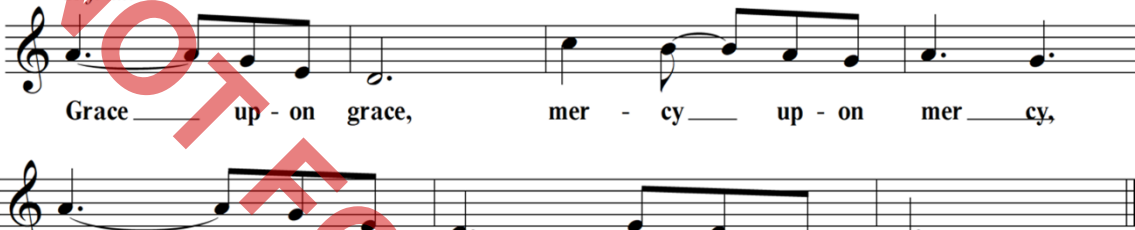
SENDING SONG

DISMISSAL

A *May be spoken or sung.* [Accompaniment](#) [bulletin graphic](#)

The Spirit sends us to share the news: abundant life for all! *Refrain.*

Refrain



Grace up - on grace, mer - cy up - on mer - cy,
peace up - on peace, giv - en for you.

B Go in peace!
You are already made whole.
Thanks be to God!

C Go in peace!
Be moved by the Spirit.
Thanks be to God!

D In the words of Teresa of Avila:
Let nothing disturb you.
Let nothing make you afraid.
All things are passing.
God alone never changes.
Patience gains all things.
If you have God you will want for nothing.
God alone suffices.
Go in peace!
Thanks be to God!

LINKS

Videos

[Sighs Too Deep for Words](#)

[Kyrie](#)

[Canticle of Praise](#)

[Gospel acclamation](#)

[Dialogue](#)

[Holy, Holy, Holy](#)

[Communion Responses](#)

[Lord's Prayer](#)

[Grace upon Grace](#)

Scores

[PDF Accompaniments](#)

[Music graphics for bulletins](#)

OTHER RESOURCES

The ELCA teaches that God's Word speaks through scripture. However, our Christian traditions are both a resource and a challenge. Within our holy texts, there are words, images, social patterns, and moral beliefs that are rooted in patriarchal values and that do not affirm all bodies as holy and beloved by God.

The following acknowledgments are an optional resource designed for occasions in which challenging texts are proclaimed. They might be offered as the assembly gathers for worship or adapted to include before readings or at the beginning of a sermon.

On occasions including scripture that has historically been interpreted in sexist and/or heterosexist ways, it might be fitting to acknowledge:

Today, we will read _____. Historically, this passage has been interpreted to promote the subjugation of women, girls, and those who do not conform to gender binaries. While we believe that God speaks to us through scripture, we also acknowledge that within our holy texts there are words and images, social patterns, and moral beliefs that reflect patriarchal values.¹ This church rejects interpretations of scripture that perpetuate sexism and heterosexism. This church affirms all bodies and genders are holy and beloved by God.

On occasions including scripture that has historically been interpreted in ableist ways, it might be fitting to acknowledge:

Today, we will read _____. Historically, this text has been interpreted through an ableist lens, characterizing those with disabilities as more sinful than others. This church rejects the idea that disabilities are punishments for individual or familial sins or are “a test from God meant to bless, refine, or redeem.”² This church affirms that all bodies are holy and beloved by God.³

On occasions including scripture that has historically been interpreted in ways hostile to Judaism, it might be fitting to acknowledge:

Today, we will read _____. Historically, this passage has been interpreted through an anti-Semitic lens that characterizes Jewish people as evil or more perverse than others. Such interpretations neglect Jesus' positionality within Jewish traditions and promote the hatred of Jews and Judaism. Therefore, we acknowledge Christianity's entanglement with

¹ ELCA Social Statement: “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action,” 2019.

² ELCA Social Statement: “A Message on People Living with Disabilities,” 2010.

³ The authors are grateful to Daryl Denelle, whose ministry inspired this acknowledgment.

anti-Semitic racism throughout history and today, and we reject any interpretation of our sacred texts that lead the subjugation of our Jewish neighbors.

On occasions that include scripture readings that invoke master-slave language to describe God's relation to God's people, it might be fitting to acknowledge:

Today, we will read _____, which uses master-slave language to describe God's relation to God's people. Historically, this scriptural language was used to defend the transatlantic slave trade and the enslavement of Black peoples across the world. Therefore, we acknowledge many Christian institutions' entanglement with white supremacy.⁴ We remember those who were taken from their homelands and enslaved; we lament the ongoing violence of racism; and we reject all interpretations of scripture that promote bondage of any kind. Rather, this church proclaims: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." (Gal 3:28)

On occasions in which traumatic themes (for example: racialized violence, sexual assault, self-harm or suicide, eating disorders) are discussed in the context of worship, it might be fitting to include a content warning at the beginning of the service. One example is:

Our worship today engages themes of sexual violence, trauma, and mental health. Naming the evils of this world is never easy, and naming evils as destructive as _____ can be extremely challenging work.

Optional: Please take care of yourselves as we explore these themes. You are empowered to leave the room, play with your phone, doodle, or find whatever support you need.

Let us ground ourselves in Jesus' words from the gospel of Matthew as a reminder that we do not do this work alone.

Jesus says: Come to me all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30)

Let us pray: Gentle God, Sustaining God, we come to you weary of injustice/ grieving for . . . /burdened by anxiety. May this time together be a reminder that even amid the violence of this world you are a God who dwells with us and your love is everlasting to everlasting. All this we ask in the name of the one who promises to make our burdens light, Jesus Christ. Amen.

⁴ ELCA Social Statement: "Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture," 1993.