

All Anew

A Thankoffering Service for Women of the ELCA 2016–2017

2016–2017 Thankoffering Service

GATHERING

Blessed be the holy Trinity + one God, who creates and redeems and renews the face of the earth.

Amen

LITANY FOR GATHERING

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

O Lord my God, you are very great.

Today brings all we need to praise our loving God.

Creator, you have made us in your image.

Today brings all we need to live in peace and purpose.

Redeemer, you have called us to new life.

Today brings all we need to live abundantly.

Renewer, you have brought us together to sing your praise.

Today brings women of many generations who grow together in faith and affirm and support one another.

Companion, you guide us to your beloved community.

Today brings a world in need of healing and wholeness.

Healer, you inspire us to ministry and action.

For the church, the society and the world,

Lord our God, we humbly enter into worship.

Prepare our hearts.

Amen.

Looking for an alternative to a full worship service? Consider using a Thankoffering devotion during your circle meeting or other gathering where you collect the Thankoffering. Include prayers from this service or use “All About Thankofferings,” a free online resource about the history of Thankofferings.

ENTRANCE HYMN

“God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind” (ELW 400)

GREETING

The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, because without you we would not be able to serve you, mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and guide our hearts and minds; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

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FIRST READING*

PSALM

SECOND READING

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

GOSPEL

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Gracious Spirit, Heed our Pleading” (ELW 401)

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

With the whole people of Christ Jesus, let us call upon God for the sake of the church, the world and all in need of prayer.

God who made all things good, you create us to be caretakers and stewards in your creation. You equip us to provide for the people, places and ministries that you have entrusted to our care. Draw us together in the light of faith and hope so that we may recognize our calling to this work.

We pray in abundance,
Creator, draw us in.

God who blesses our labor, you light our paths with the histories of women who acted boldly on their faith to change the world—women like (insert names of bold women in your community) _____, _____ . Bring their influence to our attention and their stories to our lips and ears. May we see in them our own potential to live boldly.

We pray in abundance,
Creator, draw us in.

God who provides, you endow us with all we need to nurture, harvest and share the fruits of creation. In this abundance, direct our eyes and feet to our neighbors who are on the margins, both near and far. Give us curiosity and courage to live into the fullness of our communities.

We pray in abundance,
Creator, draw us in.

God who was and is and will be, through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Women of the ELCA, you have called us more deeply into relationship with you and the world. Bless every church, everywhere, that through our work, all may know your grace and accept your call to love one another.

We pray in abundance,
Creator, draw us in.

God who reaches every people, turn our hearts to see those with us now, gathered at this Thankoffering service to give thanks and praise to you. Urge us on to the fullness of life, in the name of Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

THANKOFFERING

You may introduce the offering with these words:
As we give our Thankofferings today, we share in a tradition that goes back at least to the 1800s, when Christian women formed “mite” or “cent” societies to support the mission of the church. When others said there was not enough money to carry out the church’s work, the women believed otherwise and acted together. In these societies, each woman collected offerings at home. On occasion, they would gather as we do today to worship and make their offerings with thanks and praise. When Women of the ELCA was formed 30 years ago, we committed to continue this tradition of giving in gratitude for blessings. Each year,

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in thousands of congregations, Thankofferings are given to support the life-changing ministries of Women of the ELCA. Together, we do more than we could ever do apart. In gratitude for all God has given to us, and with hope for all that is to come, let us now give our Thankoffering.

OFFERTORY

OFFERTORY PRAYER

God of grace,
You have showered us with abundance and entrusted to us the ministries of Women of the ELCA. Accept these offerings to further your mission. Help us to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society and the world. Accept these gifts and this prayer that, nurtured by your Word, filled with your Spirit, and fed at your table, we may share with gladness all that you have shared with us until all creation is satisfied. Amen.

**GREAT THANKSGIVING & WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**COMMUNION

** COMMUNION PRAYER

BLESSING

God bless you with courage, with peace, and with love, that you may freely live for God and freely give for others.

CLOSING HYMN

“O Living Breath of God” (ELW, 407)

BENEDICTION

*Scripture readings may be selected from the Revised Common Lectionary for the day of the Thankoffering service.

**Omit if Thankoffering service does not include communion.

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Tips for planning your Thankoffering service

Form a planning team

Include women who are involved in Women of the ELCA and women who are less involved. Invite women of varying ages, including youth. Work with the leaders of your congregation, including your pastor and music director.

Choose a date and time

The service can happen any time of year. In some congregations, the Thankoffering service happens during the weekly Sunday worship. Some host the service at another time. And you can have more than one Thankoffering service per year.

Plan the worship liturgy

The Thankoffering order of service printed here is optional. You may use all or part of it. For Scripture readings, a congregation may choose to create a Thankoffering service around the common lectionary (the weekly cycle of texts used by the ELCA) or may choose other Bible texts that evoke discipleship or stewardship themes. Lectionary texts can be found in the hymnal, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, or on the ELCA website, www.elca.org. Decide whether to include communion in the service.

Choose a preacher

Consider inviting a woman, lay or ordained, to give the sermon.

Plan for invitations

It is appropriate to invite the entire congregation to participate in this service. For instance, you might invite the children's choir to sing or the youth group to usher. Through their involvement, they will learn more about Women of the ELCA. Consider inviting women from other ELCA congregations in your community.

Use our offering envelopes and bulletin covers

Blue thankoffering envelopes are available in packets of 100 for only the cost of shipping. Packets of 50 bulletin covers are \$4.95 plus shipping. Both (and much more) are available at welca.org/shop or by phone at 800-638-3522.

Educate about Women of the ELCA

The Thankoffering service is a time to celebrate Women of the ELCA and tell about your commitment to the churchwide women's organization. You can display items, photos and stories or add personal testimonies to the liturgy. During the weeks leading up to the service, invite women to speak about Women of the ELCA during worship or to lead a Sunday school lesson about Women of the ELCA. Display *Gather* magazine, program resources and other items that illustrate the ministries of Women of the ELCA.

Be creative with offering collection

Think creatively about how to collect the offering. For instance, you might invite individuals with their own Thankoffering containers to place them on the altar. This visually highlights an important part of the Thankoffering tradition—the daily practice of making gifts in gratitude for blessings and bringing those gifts together during a Thankoffering service.

Make Thankoffering containers together

The Thankoffering service is traditionally a time when individuals bring the offerings they've collected during the year in Thankoffering containers. Consider bringing supplies (empty jars, labels, decorations) for attendees to make their own Thankoffering containers before or after the service.

Provide food and fellowship

Include a fellowship time before or after the service. Some units host breakfast before worship, lunch after or a special coffee hour. This could include a craft table for making Thankoffering containers and a display area for viewing photos and materials about Women of the ELCA.

Promote the service

Write an article or bulletin insert for the church's newsletter telling the history of Thankofferings and how they support ministry today. Send personal invitations and make general announcements. Promote the service through social media, using your congregation's website, Facebook page and online calendar.