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Thankoffering Service

2014-2015

Lutheran women have gathered in the setting of Thankoffering worship since the early 1900s. To this day, many women practice the Thankoffering daily by setting aside coins or small offerings to give thanks for blessings in the ordinary and extraordinary moments of life. The Thankoffering Service grounds this gratitude in a community of women, gathering together to joyfully give thanks and praise for what God has given to them.

This Thankoffering Service was celebrated by more than 2,300 women on July 24, 2014, during the Ninth Triennial Gathering in Charlotte, N. C.. The theme of the triennial gathering - “of many generations” - was inspired by Isaiah 58:12.

Gathering

Music may be played or sung as the congregation gathers.

**Litany of Many Generations**

For the many generations,

we give thanks to you, O God.

**For the many generations,**

**we give thanks to you, O God.**

We give thanks for Eve, **God be praised.**

Sarah and Rebekah, **God be praised.**

Deborah and Esther, **God be praised.**

Miriam and Naomi, **God be praised.**

For Abigail and Ruth,

**God be praised.**

Rachel and Rahab,

**God be praised.**

Hagar and Hannah,

**God be praised.**

All the faithful of Israel,

**God be praised.**

For the many generations,

we give thanks to you, O God.

**For the many generations,**

**we give thanks to you, O God.**

For the mother of our Lord,

**God be praised.**

And Mary Magdalene,

**God be praised.**

Joanna and Elizabeth,

**God be praised.**

Mary and Martha,

**God be praised.**

For Anna and Lydia,

**God be praised.**

Dorcas and Phoebe,

**God be praised.**

The Samaritan woman,

**God be praised.**

All who walked with Jesus,

**God be praised.**

For the many generations,

we give thanks to you, O God.

**For the many generations,**

**we give thanks to you, O God.**

For Agnes and Lucy,

**God be praised.**

Joan and Cecilia,

**God be praised.**

Perpetua and Felicity,

**God be praised.**

All who died for the faith,

**God be praised.**

For Elizabeth Fedde,

**God be praised.**

Hildegard of Bingen,

**God be praised.**

Clare of San Damiano,

**God be praised.**

All who vowed to serve you,

**God be praised.**

For the many generations,

we give thanks to you, O God.

**For the many generations,**

**we give thanks to you, O God.**

For Birgetta of Sweden,

**God be praised.**

Florence Nightingale,

**God be praised.**

Julian of Norwich,

**God be praised.**

Teresa of Avila,

**God be praised.**

For Clara Maass,

**God be praised.**

Catherine of Siena,

**God be praised.**

Katharina von Bora,

**God be praised.**

All renewers of your church,

**God be praised.**

For the many generations,

we give thanks to you, O God.

**For the many generations,**

**we give thanks to you, O God.**

For Harriet Tubman,

**God be praised.**

Sojourner Truth,

**God be praised.**

Rosa Jensey Young,

**God be praised.**

All renewers of society,

**God be praised.**

For our mothers and daughters,

**God be praised.**

Our sisters and family,

**God be praised.**

Generations before us,

**God be praised.**

Generations to come,

**God be praised.**

For the many generations,

we give thanks to you, O God.

**For the many generations,**

**we give thanks to you, O God.**

Thanksgiving for Baptism

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,

the fountain of living water,

the rock who gave us birth,

our light and our salvation.

**Amen.**

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism,

we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness.

Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

Holy God, holy and merciful, holy and mighty,

you are the river of life, you are the everlasting wellspring,

you are the fire of rebirth.

Glory to you for oceans and lakes, for rivers and streams.

Honor to you for cloud and rain, for dew and snow.

Your waters are below us, around us, above us: our life is born in you.

You are the fountain of resurrection.

Praise to you for your saving waters:

Noah and the animals survive the flood,

Hagar discovers your well.

The Israelites escape through the sea,

and they drink from your gushing rock.

Naaman washes his leprosy away,

and the Samaritan woman will never be thirsty again.

Praise to you for the water of baptism

and for your Word that saves us in this sacrament.

Breathe your Spirit into all who are gathered here and into all creation.

Illumine our days. Enliven our bones. Dry our tears.

Wash away the sin within us, and drown the evil around us.

Satisfy all our thirst with your living water, Jesus Christ, our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**Song**

*We Are Called, ELW 720*

As a reminder of the gift of baptism, the assembly may be sprinkled with water during the singing.

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

Let us pray—

Holy and eternal One, from everlasting you are God,

our dwelling place in all generations.

With endless mercy you receive the prayers of all who call upon you.

By your Spirit lead us to acknowledge your goodness

and give thanks for your benefits;

show us the things we ought to do,

and give us the grace and power to do them,

through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

Word

First Reading

*Isaiah 58:6-12*

**Psalm**

*Psalm 112:1-9*

**Second Reading**

*1 Corinthians 2:1–12*

**Gospel Acclamation**

*Heaven Is Singing for Joy, ELW 664*

**Gospel**

*Matthew 5:13–20*

Sermon

Hymn of the Day

*Gather Us In, ELW 532*

Prayers of Intercession

Guided by the light of Christ made known to the generations,

we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

A brief silence.

Your light springs forth like the dawn.

Call your church to share the mystery of your grace

with a broken and searching world.

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Increase our care for the earth and all its creatures.

Help us reflect your light in our use of these good gifts.

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You care for the weak and the strong.

Raise up leaders who will free the oppressed in all places.

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Quickly send your healing for all in pain.

Feed the hungry and shelter the homeless.

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Give light and life to this gathering of faith,

that we may delight to know your ways

and share them with a world longing to know you.

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Bless the ministries of the Women of the ELCA

that they may be a blessing to others in their congregations and communities.

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Satisfy our needs until we gather with all your saints

from every time and place in your glorious light.

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Into your hands, O God,

we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray,

trusting in your abundant mercy,

through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

Meal

Offering

Thankofferings support the total outreach of Women of the ELCA through the ministries of the churchwide women’s organization. *(For more language to explain how Thankofferings are used, see “Tips for Thankoffering Worship Planners” on pages 6-7.)*

**Song**

*When the Poor Ones, ELW 725*

Great Thanksgiving

Communion

Hymns for distribution

*Lamb of God, ELW 198*

*Christ Be Our Light, ELW 715*

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray—

Lord, it is good for us to be here,

for we have tasted your glory in this holy meal.

Continue your goodness as we go out from here.

Open our eyes to see your face shining in every person,

and send us to be your servants in every place,

for you are the life and light of all,

both now and forever.

**Amen.**

Sending

Blessing

Sending Song

*When You Walk from Here\**

Sending

Go in peace. Christ is your light.

**Thanks be to God.**

\*This song is not published in ELW. At the Ninth Triennial Gathering, it was led by Glocal Musicians. Text: Linnea Good © 1996 Borealis Music. Music: Tom Witt © 2005 Bread for the Journey. All rights reserved. Another sending song may be chosen in its place.

Notes for Thankoffering Worship Planners

**Choose a date and time**

The service can happen at any time of year , whenever Thankofferings for Women of the ELCA are received.

In some congregations, the Thankoffering service happens during the weekly Sunday worship. Some host the service at another time.

**Form a diverse planning team**

Try to include women who are very involved in Women of the ELCA and women who are not involved. Invite women of varying ages, including youth. Work with the appropriate leaders in your congregation, like your pastor and music director.

**Prepare the liturgy and choose a preacher**

The Thankoffering order of service printed here is optional. You may use all or part of it. Decide whether to include communion in the service. Consider inviting a woman, lay or ordained, to give the sermon.

**Invite more participation**

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.

**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 might 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 churchwide ministries of Women of the ELCA.

**Include Thankoffering containers**

The Thankoffering service was traditionally a time when individual women brought the offerings they had collected during the year in their own Thankoffering containers. Today, some women continue this tradition, setting aside a jar or box in their home to collect daily Thankofferings. Others give a Thankoffering once annually at the Thankoffering Service. During the offering time, you might invite individuals with their own Thankoffering containers to place them on the altar. This visual highlights an important part of the Thankoffering tradition. Consider bringing supplies (old jars, small boxes, decorations) for attendees to make their own Thankoffering containers before or after the service.

**Promote and invite**

Send personal invitations and make general announcements. Write an article or bulletin insert for the church’s newsletter telling the history of Thankofferings and how they support ministry today. Use historical information from “All About Thankofferings,” a free resource available at womenoftheelca.org. Promote the service through social media, using your congregation’s website, Facebook page, and online calendar. Consider inviting women from other ELCA congregations in your community.

**Explain where the money goes**

Women of the ELCA Thankofferings support the total outreach of the churchwide women’s organization. Here is language that can be printed or spoken during the service to describe how Thankofferings support ministry:

As we collect the Thankoffering today, we share in a tradition dating back to the 1800s, when Christian women formed “mite” or “cent” societies to support local and international missions. When others in the church said there was not enough money to carry out these projects, the women believed otherwise. Each woman collected offerings at home until the community of women gathered with thanks and praise to combine their offerings and offer them up to mission. When Women of the ELCA formed more than 25 years ago, we committed to continue this tradition of giving in gratitude for blessings. Each year, in thousands of congregations, Thankofferings are collected to support the life-changing ministries of the churchwide women’s organization.

When you give to Thankofferings, your dollars support Women of the ELCA ministries that reach thousands of communities. Thankofferings provide for justice programs like Today’s Dream Tomorrow’s Reality, a network of racial justice advocates and educators who serve throughout the church. Thankofferings support advocacy for the health and safety of women and children. Your Thankofferings also support a publishing ministry that reaches more than 70,000 women through *Gather* magazine and Bible Study, and free program resources that bring Lutheran theology to topics ranging from women’s health and prayer to stewardship and human trafficking. Thankofferings also support extensive outreach to women of every generation through *Bold Café*, the free online magazine that features young adult writers in the church, and “Daily Grace,” a free daily devotional for smart phones and email.

Thankofferings help Women of the ELCA to thrive as a responsive and mission-driven organization. To date, Women of the ELCA has delivered more than $3.1 million in grants to domestic and international organizations, and more than $630,000 in scholarships to Lutheran women. Your Thankofferings support the total outreach of Women of the ELCA to live out its mission - mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ. 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, we now collect our Thankoffering.

(For more about the churchwide ministries of Women of the ELCA, go to womenoftheelca.org. )

**Create a Thankoffering devotion**

If your group chooses to not host a full Thankoffering worship service, consider creating a devotion, instead, to use during a retreat, Bible study, quilting group, or committee meeting, whenever a Thankoffering is collected. You might also use the devotion as part of your preparation for the worship service. The devotion can include elements from the Thankoffering Service, like a hymn, litany, prayer, or scripture.The devotion can also be a time for individuals to share more about their personal experiences with Women of the ELCA and the connections between gratitude and giving.