

Refreshed and Renewed

A Thankoffering Service for Women of the ELCA 2017–2018

GATHERING

Entrance Song

Gracious Spirit, Heed Our Pleading (*ELW 401*)

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, for (*you may name local lakes and rivers here*). 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, his family, 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.**

Sprinkling Song

Baptized and Set Free (*ELW 453*)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Renewing God, pour out your power and come. In the waters of baptism you claim us and call us to be your beloved children. May water be our ever-present sign that you make all things new. Refresh us with the good news of Christ's love and anoint us with your Holy Spirit, that we might know the fullness of the new life that you prepare for us in your kingdom. In the name of Christ we pray. **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.

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*WORD

First Reading

Exodus 17:1-7

Water from the rock

Psalm

Psalm 104

Second Reading

Titus 3:4-7

Saved through water and the Spirit

Gospel

John 4:5-26

Woman at the well

Hymn of the Day

Come to Me, All Pilgrims Thirsty, sts 1-3, 6 (ELW 777)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Called together into the Spirit's loving embrace, let us pray for the renewal of the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

We pray, holy God, for the unity of the church universal: Draw your church together into one great company of disciples, together following our teacher Jesus Christ into every walk of life, together serving in Christ's mission to the world, and together witnessing to your love wherever you send us.

Gracious Spirit, fashion us all anew.

(sing) Come, come, come Holy Spirit, come.

We pray, omnipotent God, for the well-being of creation: We give you thanks for transforming the chaotic waters of creation into saving waters that nourish and sustain our earth. Renew us every day by your water and word.

Gracious Spirit, fashion us all anew.

(sing) Come, come, come Holy Spirit, come.

We pray, righteous God, for peace and justice in the world: Lead the nations of the world away from the wilderness of sin and evil, and toward the light of love and peace. Give us a thirst for justice for all.

Gracious Spirit, fashion us all anew.

(sing) Come, come, come Holy Spirit, come.

We pray, compassionate God, for all in need: To those who are thirsty for love, for justice, for peace, for belonging, give the water of life. For those who are suffering or in pain, bring healing balm and peace.

Gracious Spirit, fashion us all anew.

(sing) Come, come, come Holy Spirit, come.

We pray, faithful God, for the renewal of all life: Refresh us with your living water and anoint us with your Holy Spirit. Embolden us with your promise and your presence.

Gracious Spirit, fashion us all anew.

(sing) Come, come, come Holy Spirit, come.

Receive our thanksgiving, eternal God, for all who have died in the faith: For the fervent witness and testimony of the woman at the well. May we know the fullness of the new life that you prepare for us in your kingdom.

Gracious Spirit, fashion us all anew.

(sing) Come, come, come Holy Spirit, come.

All these things, and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your care through Jesus Christ.

Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

THANKOFFERING

*You may introduce the offering with these words:
As we make our Thankofferings today, we share in a tradition that goes back to the 1800s or even earlier. Then, when it seemed that there was not enough money to carry out the work of the church, the women would take action. Gathering in groups called “cent” or “mite” societies, each woman would set aside offerings at home throughout the year, in thanksgiving for blessings received. And on occasion, the women would come together as we do today, joining their offerings together to support ministry of many kinds.*

When Women of the ELCA was formed 30 years ago, we committed to continue this tradition of giving in gratitude for blessings. Each year, 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.

Offering Song

Take My Life, That I May Be (ELW 538)

OFFERING PRAYER

God of grace, you have showered us with abundance and entrusted to us the ministries of Women of the ELCA. 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 our 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 AND WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**COMMUNION

Communion Songs

In the Singing (ELW 466)

Taste and See (ELW 493)

**COMMUNION PRAYER

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We thank you, gracious God, for loving all your family with a mother's tender care, and feeding us in a way our hearts can understand, with the saving body and blood of Jesus Christ. Renew and enliven us by your presence in this meal, that we may be your presence in the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

In our wilderness, God gives us water from the rock. May you find hope and healing in God's promise of new life. **Amen.**

Christ Jesus is the Messiah, the redeemer of the world. May you be refreshed by his life-giving water and Word. **Amen.**

The Holy Spirit renews the face of the earth. May you be transformed by God's great love and grace. **Amen.**

Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen.

Sending Song

Blessed Assurance (ELW 638)

Renewed and refreshed,
let us go forth in peace to share the good news.
Thanks be to God.

* 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.

Tips for planning your Thankoffering service

Form a planning team

Invite women who are regular participants in Women of the ELCA activities, and women who are less involved.

Invite women and girls of all ages, including young adults, teens and youth. Work with the leaders of your congregation, including your pastor and music director.

Choose a date and time

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

Plan the service

The Thankoffering order of service printed here is entirely optional. You may use all or part of it. For Scripture readings, a congregation may choose to create a Thankoffering service using 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.

Invite participation by all

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 special 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.

Celebrate Women of the ELCA

The Thankoffering service is a perfect 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 exemplify the ministries of Women of the ELCA.

Make Thankoffering containers together

Traditionally, people set aside their offerings at home throughout the year, using dedicated Thankoffering containers. Consider bringing supplies (empty jars, boxes, labels, decorations) for attendees to make their own Thankoffering containers before or after the service.

Plan how to receive the offering

Think creatively about how to receive the offering. For instance, you might invite people to place their Thankoffering envelopes or containers 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 for the Thankoffering 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 thoroughly

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 starting several weeks in advance. Promote the service through social media, using your congregation's website, Facebook page, online calendar and other outlets.