

With Our Whole Hearts We Give You Thanks

A Thankoffering Service for Women of the ELCA Based upon Psalm 111

Planning tips (also see the final two pages of this text)

- *Use the setting typical to your worshipping community or try something new.*
- *Scripture readings may be selected from the Revised Common Lectionary for the day of the Thankoffering service.*
- *Omit the Great Thanksgiving if the Thankoffering service does not include communion.*

GATHERING

Music for assembly

Come, All You People (ELW 819)

Confession and forgiveness

Thanksgiving for baptism

Heart song

Take, Oh, Take Me As I Am – *sing twice, thrice is better* (ELW 814)

Prayer of the day

O God, with our whole hearts, ***we give you thanks.***

For your loving kindness and tender mercies, ***we give you thanks.***

For the bounty of the harvest, ***we give you thanks.***

Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, ***we give you thanks.***

WORD

First Reading – Ezra 3:8-13

God's steadfast love endures forever

Psalm - 111

I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart

Second Reading – 1 Thessalonians 5:12-24

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel Reading – Matthew 6: 19-21

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Sermon

Hymn of the day

Give Thanks (TFBF 292)

Apostle's Creed

Beloved, let us affirm our faith by use of the Apostle's Creed.

I believe...

Prayers of Intercession

Called together as the body of Christ, we pray for the church, those in need, and for all of God's Creation.

For the church universal, and the whole body of Christ, called, gathered, and sent in your holy name. We pray, **with thanksgiving in our hearts.**

For the beauty of creation, from the largest blue whale to the smallest bacteria and all that lives or breathes between. We pray, **with thanksgiving in our hearts.**

For peace in the all the world, for leaders and activists who labor for justice, for the beloved community that pursues love at all costs. We pray, **with thanksgiving in our hearts.**

For the opportunity to follow the way of Jesus, as we compassionately hear the cries of our siblings who are poor or oppressed in any way, give us courage to share the abundance of your earth, with all. We pray, **with thanksgiving in our hearts.**

For the ELCA, our synod, and local congregation that we may be the hands, feet, and smile of Jesus in a world that so

desperately needs him. We pray, **with thanksgiving in our hearts.**

[Insert additional prayer petitions]

For the faithful departed who now rest from their labors in eternal communion with you. We pray, **with thanksgiving in our hearts.**

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also, with you.

Let us share a sign of this peace, with one another.

MEAL

Thankoffering

The Thankoffering is collected

Offering song

Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise – *sing through at least twice; thrice is better (WOV 623)*

Offering prayer

O God, we give you thanks for your overwhelming generosity toward all your children. We thank you for the ministry of the Women of the ELCA. Help us to continually heed your call to go out of this building, and into the neighborhood, that

we might be for our communities signs of your gracious presence in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord's Prayer

Communion

Communion Songs

Let us Break Bread Together (ELW 471)

Here Is Bread (483 ELW)

Eat This Bread (472 ELW)

Prayer after Communion

Gracious God, in this meal you have drawn us to your heart and nourished us at your table with food and drink, the body and blood of Christ. Now send us forth to be your people in the world, and to proclaim your truth this day and evermore, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

We give thanks to God with our whole hearts. **Hallelujah!**

Great are the works of our God. **Hallelujah!**

Gracious and merciful is God. **Hallelujah!**

God sent redemption to the people; holy and awesome is God's name.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Sending Song

Hallelujah! We Sing Your Praises (ELW 535)

Blessing

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

Amen!

Dismissal

Go now to love and serve the Lord. Go in peace.

Amen. We go in the name of Christ.

Postlude continues with

Hallelujah! We Sing Your Praises (ELW 535)

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ELW: Evangelical Lutheran Worship

TFBF: This Far by Faith

WOV: With One Voice

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 children. Work with the leaders of your congregation, including your pastor, worship planning team, audiovisual team and music director.

Choose a date, time, and place

The service can be held any time of year. Some congregations and women's units work together and hold the Thankoffering service during Sunday worship. Some units host the service at another time. And you can have more than one Thankoffering service per year. Consider online alternatives to accommodate those who will be participating at home or elsewhere. Your congregation's audiovisual team — whether staff or volunteer — will be very helpful with the technicalities.

Plan the service

The Thankoffering order of service printed here is entirely optional. You may use all or part of it. For Scripture readings, planners may choose to create a Thankoffering service using the Revised Common Lectionary (the weekly cycle of texts commended for use in the ELCA) or may choose other Bible texts that evoke discipleship or stewardship. Lectionary citations can be found in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (pp. 18–63) or on the ELCA website, www.elca.org/lectionary. Decide together with your congregation's pastor whether to include communion.

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. You might also consider [Giving Thanks to God – All Day, Every Day](#), a resource encouraging the daily practice of giving thanks to God.

Choose a preacher

Consider inviting a woman, lay or ordained, to preach.

Invite participation by all

It is appropriate to invite the entire congregation to participate in this service. You might invite the youth group to serve as ushers or tech support. Through their involvement, they will learn more about Women of the ELCA. Consider inviting women from other ELCA congregations, too.

Use our special envelopes

Thankoffering envelopes are available free of charge in packets of 100. Call 773-380-2730 or email women.elca@elca.org to request envelopes.

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 mementos and photos of women's ministries or add personal testimonies to the sermon. During the weeks leading up to the service, invite women to speak about Women of the ELCA during worship or at an adult forum. Display *Gather* magazine, program

resources, and other items that exemplify the many ministries of Women of the ELCA.

Make Thankoffering containers

Traditionally, women set aside their offerings throughout the year, using containers dedicated to Thankofferings. Encourage women to gather supplies (empty jars, boxes, envelopes, labels, decorations) to make home Thankoffering containers before or after the service.

Plan how to receive the offering

Think creatively about how to receive the offering. For instance, if you are gathering in person, 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 giving in gratitude for blessings and bringing those gifts together for the Thankoffering service. Or, if you are gathering online, you might display the Women of the ELCA website, including the Thankoffering page at welca.org/thankofferings and the online giving page at welca.org/give.

Provide food and fellowship

If gathering in person, you might host breakfast before worship or a special coffee hour after. You might include a table for making Thankoffering containers and a display area for photos and other materials about Women of the ELCA. If you are gathering online, you might consider a virtual coffee hour — your audiovisual team will be helpful with that. What other ways can you offer hospitality and companionship?

Promote the service thoroughly

Write a bulletin insert or an article for the church's newsletter telling about Thankofferings and how they support women's ministry today. Send invitations and make announcements starting a few weeks in advance. Make sure to promote the service online and through social media, too.

Wrapping up

Afterward, use the same channels to thank everyone and tell them how well your Thankoffering service went. Write an article telling about how you planned and carried out your successful Thankoffering service and send it to your church newsletter, to your synodical women's organization, and to the churchwide women's organization. Other women will want to know all about how you did it!

Sending in your Thankofferings

Many people will make their Thankofferings online at welca.org/give, but others will also give by check or cash during the service. Ask your treasurer to deposit all the Thankoffering checks or cash into the congregational unit's bank account and then write one check for the total amount to Women of the ELCA. (This is so that the churchwide organization can report out how many congregational and special units sent in Thankofferings.)

Write "Thankoffering" on the memo line and mail it to the address below. (Mailing it to any other address, even one you've used before, will delay your Thankoffering.)

[Download Form B](#), complete it, and send it with your check to

**Women of the ELCA
c/o ELCA Gift Processing
P.O. Box 1809
Merrifield VA 22116**

And then congratulate yourself! It feels good to act on gratitude, doesn't it? Thank you for all you do for Women of the ELCA. You really do make a difference in people's lives.