

2023 WELCA Thankoffering Service

Women of the ELCA

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, or from the suggestions below.*
- *If the Thankoffering service does not include Holy Communion, following the Offering Prayer pray the Lord's Prayer and continue with the Sending.*

GATHERING

Thanksgiving for Baptism

Blessed be the triune + God,
who pours out love, justice, and mercy
in abundance.

Amen.

Joined by water to Christ and to creation, let us
give thanks for the gift of baptism.

Water may be poured into the font:

For all gifts of water,
we give you thanks, O God.

For rivers and lakes,
for streams and oceans,
[local bodies of water may be named];
for healing rains and clean water to drink:
we give you thanks, O God.

For Miriam's song of liberation on the far bank of
the sea,
For Isaiah's invitation to "come and drink,
without money and without price,"
For Jesus's baptism and commissioning in the
waters of the Jordan,
For the Samaritan woman, revived by living
water,
For your holy river that waters the tree of life:
we give you thanks, O God.

For the outpouring of the Holy Spirit,

For baptismal waters,
For the cleansing of our hearts,
For the refreshment of our spirits,
For waves of mercy,
For justice, rolling like rivers:
we give you thanks, O God.

Blessing, honor, and glory be to you, O God,
and eternal gratitude for all your good gifts.
Amen.

Gathering Song

Making Their Way (ACS 979)

or

Praise and Thanksgiving be to God (ELW 458)

Greeting & Prayer of the Day

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.

Let us pray.

God of abundance,

We give thanks every time we remember your
goodness. Teach us to respond to your love
with faithfulness and generosity. Keep us
mindful of your blessings, and especially the
blessing of wholeness and salvation that you
offer us through the life, death, and resurrection
of Jesus Christ, our savior.

Amen.

WORD

First Reading: 1 Kings 17:8-16

Psalm 107:1-9, 43

Second Reading: Philippians 1: 3-11

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Matthew 26:6-13

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Hymn of the Day

Holy Woman, Graceful Giver (ACS 1001)

or

We Raise Our Hands to You, O Lord (ELW 690)

Prayers of Intercession

With gratitude to God, we remember in prayer our church, our neighbors, and our world.

Silence is kept.

O God, we remember your church across the world. Let your good news be known through many and diverse forms of worship and service. Encourage your faithful people to generosity in all things. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

We remember the bounty of creation. In this harvest season, grant us and all creatures sufficient food and water. Heal the earth where it faces drought, flood, fire, and storms. Bless us with the gifts and inclination necessary to participate in the healing of the earth. God of grace,

receive our prayer.

We remember the nations of the world and their leaders. Transform the hearts of governments and authorities that compassion and grace overflow from their leadership. Empower us toward acts of charity and advocacy for those who are poor, neglected, threatened by violence, or forced from their homelands. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

We remember the struggles of our neighbors. Grant hope and healing to all who are sick, afraid, in pain, or facing transitions. (*We pray especially for...*). Bless and protect all who serve as caregivers, health care providers, and social workers. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

We remember all ministries of this church, and especially Women of the ELCA. Through these organizations, inspire faith, equip leaders, and accomplish works of service and justice. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

We remember those who have died (*especially...*). May the memory of the saints encourage us to follow their example of thankfulness and generosity. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all that for which we pray, trusting in your mercy, given for us and for all, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Sharing of Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

MEAL

Thankoffering

An anthem or other musical offering may accompany the offering.

Offering Song

As Saints of Old (ELW 695)

or

We Raise Our Hands to You, O Lord (ELW 690)

Offering Prayer

Gracious God,

We give thanks each time we remember you and your blessings. Receive what we have offered now: our gifts, our time, and our whole selves. Bless our thankofferings and the work of Women of the ELCA that these offerings make possible. Make us good and faithful stewards of your gifts, that all people know the bounty of your love. We pray in the name of Christ,

Amen.

Great Thanksgiving

Dialogue

Proper Preface

Holy Holy Holy

Thanksgiving at the Table

All praise to you, glorious God of grace.

Throughout the ages you have blessed us with foremothers of the faith.

With Sarah, we bless you for your gift of life.

With Ruth, we praise you for family and food.

With Miriam, we celebrate our escape from the foe.

Remembering Deborah, we honor the words of your prophets.

Remembering the woman at the well, we laud you for living water.

Remembering Junia, we thank you for those who minister among your people.

One with the daughter of Jairus, we wake to life in you.

With Mary, we magnify your name:

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

Remembering Martha and Mary, we join Jesus at this meal.

Living, he healed the bleeding woman;
dying, he cared for his mother;
risen, he sent Mary Magdalene in mission.

On the night before he died, he took bread, and gave thanks,
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,

and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

With Mary, again we magnify your name:

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

Mighty God of mercy,

as you heard the prayers of Hannah, so now hear us.

Send your Spirit on this bread and wine,
that sharing the body and blood of Christ we become his body in the world.

Send your Spirit on this assembly, that like Phoebe, we serve one another with zeal.

Send your Spirit on the church, that like Anna,
we tell others of your mercy.

Send your Spirit into our hearts, that like
Dorcas, we care for the poor and needy.

With Mary, once more we magnify your name:
My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

All praise to you, powerful God of peace.
We adore you, our God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
you who mother and feed and comfort us,
today, tomorrow, and forever.
Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Invitation to Communion

The table overflows with Christ's gifts of bread
and wine. Come and join in the feast of mercy.

Lamb of God

Communion Hymns

In This Feast of Love (ACS 962)

For the Bread Which You Have Broken (ELW
494)

Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ (ELW 674)

Prayer After Communion

Holy God,
You have provided for us a feast of life. We are
nourished and we are grateful. Strengthen us
through this meal and send us out to provide for
others, following the example of Jesus Christ,
our savior and Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

Blessing

God has filled the hungry and thirsty with good
things:

**Let us give thanks to God, for God's mercy
endures forever!**

God has done wonderful works for all people:

Let us rejoice in God's steadfast love!

God has looked upon us with grace and favor:

Let us remember God's mercy!

God has put into our hearts a song of
thanksgiving and freedom:

Let us join our voices in singing our praise!

The God of abundance,
Creator, + Redeemer, and Spirit,
bless you and keep you,
now and forever.

Amen.

Sending Song

Let Us Enter In (ACS 985)

or

Now Thank We All Our God (ELW 840)

Dismissal

Go in peace. Live with gratitude.

Thanks be to God

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ELW: Evangelical Lutheran Worship

ACS: All Creation Sings

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 audio-visual 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.