

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.