



Worship Formation & Liturgical Resources: Frequently Asked Questions

What is Church Music Sunday?

The worship staff receives a number of similar inquiries on worship-related topics from across the church.

These responses should not be considered the final word on the topic, but useful guides that are to be considered in respect to local context with pastoral sensitivity.

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For centuries, the Introit (a small portion of a psalm text chanted at the beginning of the liturgy) for the Fourth Sunday of Easter was from Psalm 98, “Sing to the Lord a new song” (“*Cantate Domino*”) This day was often known as “Cantate Sunday” and, in some traditions, became a day to celebrate music in the church. The Introit no longer exists in today’s Lutheran worship. However, in current lectionaries, Psalm 98 is appointed to be sung between the first and second reading on the Sixth Sunday of Easter during Year B. For that reason, since the publication of *Lutheran Book of Worship* in 1978, that Sunday has often been known as “Church Music Sunday.”

Since this Sunday often falls near the end of the choir season, some congregations use this opportunity to publicly thank all who make music in their congregation. This usually takes the form of festive music and specific prayers. A luncheon or party may follow the liturgy.

Although the connection to a particular Sunday in the church year is no longer strong, the idea of publicly recognizing ministries in the church is an excellent idea. This can be done on any appropriate Sunday or festival as long as it does not detract from the central focus of the day. *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* provides a Recognition of Ministries in the Congregation. See *Occasional Services for the Assembly*, pp. 93-97. In addition to the Sixth Sunday of Easter, consider recognizing church musicians on the Sunday nearest July 28 (Commemoration of Bach, Schütz and Handel, musicians) and October 26 (Commemoration of Philipp Nicolai, Johann Heermann and Paul Gerhardt, hymnwriters). (see also, [“What is a commemoration?”](#))

RESOURCES

[Frequently Asked Questions:](#)

- ↪ What is a commemoration?
- ↪ What is the role of the choir in worship?

[Resources Available from Augsburg Fortress:](#)

- 📖 *Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Occasional Services for the Assembly*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2009.

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