



# **We Are Church, We Are Called**

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50•40•10

Proclaiming • Reforming • Celebrating

## **WOMEN'S ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES WORSHIP MATERIALS**



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

[ELCA.org/50yearsofordainedwomen](http://ELCA.org/50yearsofordainedwomen)

## WORSHIP MATERIALS

for synodical and congregational use for commemorating the 50th anniversary of women's ordination among American Lutherans

### Included in this document:

- Alternative texts to the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), with short introductions to those texts
- Hymn suggestions
- Litany of Thanksgiving
- Confession and Forgiveness Rite
- Prayer of the Day (based on alternative texts)
- Intercessory prayers
- Prayer Before Communion/Offering Prayer
- Eucharistic Prayer/Thanksgiving at the Table (v.1 and v.2)
- Invitation to Communion
- Prayer After Communion
- Blessing
- Litany of Lament
- Litany of Thanksgiving v.2

**Texts for the Day: RCL texts suggested, but alternative texts could be:**

*Exodus 15:19-21*

*Psalms 57:1-3, 7-11*

*Galatians 3:26-29*

*Mark 5:21-43*

### **First Reading: Exodus 15:19-21**

*Miriam's song of celebration is possibly one of the oldest sections of the Hebrew scriptures. The song fragment predates the Song of Moses, which contains similar phrasing. This celebration scene demonstrates Miriam's role as a leader and a prophet, leading people in praising God and in a song of thanksgiving for salvation from harm.*

### **Psalm 57:1-3, 7-11**

*The psalmist gives thanks for the power of God in times of trial and in times of joy and wholeness. The way through trial comes from God and the glory for good things also belongs to the Lord.*

### **Galatians 3:26-29**

*Paul wants the Galatian Christians to understand that they are all equally valued by God. The distinctions that seem important in the world do not exist in God's kingdom. Christ calls, clothes, and commissions all people equally for God's work in the world.*

## Mark 5:21-43

*Jesus heals a woman with a bleeding disorder and a young girl. Their physical restoration also means their restoration to their community. While these two women may have seemed socially or politically insignificant due to their lack of standing or power, God values both of them and their healing is a sign of divine love.*

## HYMN SUGGESTIONS

### Gathering Hymns

- “Oh, Praise the Gracious Power” (ELW 651)
- “Praise, Praise! You Are My Rock” (ELW 862)
- “Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing” (ELW 886)

### Hymns of the Day

- “O Christ, the Healer, We Have Come” (ELW 610)
- “I’m So Glad Jesus Lifted Me” (ELW 860)
- “In Christ There Is No East or West” (ELW 650)
- “Wash, O God, Our Sons and Daughters” (ELW 445)

### Communion Hymns

- “I Come With Joy” (ELW 482)
- “We Are All One in Christ” (ELW 643)
- “Here Is Bread” (ELW 483)
- “United at the Table” (ELW 498)
- “Thy Holy Wings” (ELW 613)

### Sending Hymns

- “Rise, O Church, Like Christ Arisen” (ELW 548)
- “Go, My Children, With My Blessing” (ELW 543)
- “We’ve Come This Far by Faith” (ELW 633)
- “Build Us Up, Lord” (ELW 670)

### Hymns when marking the 50th anniversary during Advent

- “Come Now, O Prince of Peace” (ELW 247)
- “Unexpected and Mysterious” (ELW 258)
- “As the Dark Awaits the Dawn” (ELW 261)

### Hymns when marking the 50th anniversary during Easter

- “Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen!” (ELW 377)
- “Christ Is Risen! Shout Hosanna!” (ELW 383)

### Additional Hymnody

- “For All the Faithful Women” (ELW 419, verses 1, 3, 11)
- “Magnificat” (p. 314 in ELW Evening Prayer, ELW 251, ELW 573, ELW 723, ELW 882)

## HYMN OF THE DAY

Tune: CWM RHONDDA, Words: Julia Seymour

God who writes all people's story,  
Yours the glory in this hour;  
In the Spirit's inventory,  
Women can hold preaching pow'r.  
Ours the dancing, ours the singing  
for rejoicing in this hour,  
for rejoicing in this hour.

Miriam sang of your salvation,  
Dancing at the Red Sea's shore.  
Healing grace brought new creation,  
faithful sister bled no more.  
God is faithful, we are grateful  
for God's work in history,  
for God's work in history.

God, your love gives gifts of speaking  
prophecy and truth to pow'r;  
Open hearts of all who're seeking,  
to be found by you this hour.  
Stronger witness, stronger mercy,  
Be the story that we live,  
Be the story that we live.

In this world, you love our siblings  
Found in every race and clan.  
Jesus shown in many faces,  
Word for all since time began.  
Male and female, male and female,  
One in Christ to share God's love,  
One in Christ to share God's love.

## LITANY OF THANKSGIVING

For the vocations of pastor, deacon, and bishop, for those who lead churches and faith communities, for those whose life work is evangelical witness in word and deed,  
**We rejoice and give thanks to God.**

For 50 years of women's ordination in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its predecessor bodies,  
**We rejoice and give thanks to God.**

For the women of color who have been called by God to serve this church,  
**We rejoice and give thanks to God.**

For the faithful service of LGBTQIA+ pastors who have enriched this church and for the 10 years since the policy change enabling them to serve publicly out and in partnered relationships.  
**We rejoice and give thanks to God.**

For the work of seminary professors and staff, chaplains and administrators, those who work for nonprofits, and those who are retired from paid ministries,  
**We rejoice and give thanks to God.**

For those who are discerning a call to serve Christ's church, for those who are in candidacy, and for those in their internship congregations,  
**We rejoice and give thanks to God.**

For the witness of Mary Magdalene, the dance of Miriam, the hospitality of Lydia, the prayer of Mary, the discernment of Deborah, the courage of Rahab, and the faithfulness of our biblical foremothers,  
**We rejoice and give thanks to God.**

For witness of women in this church [*church/synod*], including ... [*insert names of local women leaders here*],  
**We rejoice and give thanks to God.**

Gracious and living God, we rejoice and give you thanks for your power on display throughout time and place, calling all kinds of people to be witnesses to your grace and power. We celebrate how the Spirit has blessed your church through the work of women and girls, including in this time and place. Guide us, as your people, into welcoming your prophets and teachers among us and hearing Christ's good news through them. With gratitude, we pray. **Amen.**

## **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

We are God's people, sheep of the Spirit's fold, lambs of Christ's flock, sinners of God's redeeming.  
**Amen.**

Let us come before God, who already knows our hearts and welcomes our humility.

**Loving God,  
Our thoughts, our words, and our deeds are an open book to you.  
You have seen where we fall short.  
You know where we have strayed as individuals  
And as your church.  
In your mercy, forgive us and guide us into right ways of being—  
Ways of welcome, paths of mercy, habits of grace—  
So that we may live renewed in the joy of our salvation,  
Prepared, equipped, and ready to meet Christ  
In our neighbors and in your creation.  
Amen.**

God's ways are not our ways  
And God's thoughts are not our thoughts.  
Before we were made, God brought creation out of nothing  
And peace out of chaos.  
In this same love, God unyokes you from sin  
And binds you to a new life and new living in Jesus Christ.  
Rejoice and be glad,  
Yours is the kingdom of God.  
**Amen.**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY** (for alternate texts)

Most high God, you know our whole truth, and you give us refuge in the shadow of your wings.  
Continue to raise up girls and women to serve Christ's church  
and strengthen all in the vocations to which you call us.  
And at the last, gather us  
with Miriam and the saints to dance on the safe side of the sea,  
through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## INTERCESSORY PRAYERS

With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

*A brief silence.*

For the women who faithfully serve as bishops, pastors, and deacons; for those first to be ordained and those most recently ordained [*especially ... in our synod*]. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

For the visible unity of the church, and for ongoing dialogue between church bodies that do not agree on the ordination of women. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

For laypeople, who do vital work through church ministries of hospitality, outreach, teaching, music and dance. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

For women and girls around the world who are ostracized from their communities for any reason, or treated as less than children of God. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

For those whose hard work is rarely praised, and whose names are forgotten though their work lives on. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

For those who suffer from bleeding disorders; for children who are too sick or weak to get up; for all who continue to pray for healing in their bodies [*especially ...*]. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

For the women who nurtured us in faith, whether in our family of birth or in the family of God. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

For what else do we pray? [*Silence.*]  
Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, most high God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting that your steadfast love is greater than the heavens and your faithfulness reaches to the clouds, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song. **Amen.**

## **PRAYER BEFORE COMMUNION/OFFERING PRAYER**

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things.

You have blessed us with our bodies, our minds, our hearts, our communities,  
and the resources of this earth.

Lead us and guide us to use these gifts in accordance with your will,  
for the sake of the one who is with us to the end, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## **EUCHARISTIC PRAYER/THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE V. 1**

*Please use the dialogue, preface, and Sanctus that are appropriate to your setting for this season,  
if desired.*

Holy and generous God,  
The source of all life-giving vocations,  
The nourisher of dreams and hopes,  
The joy of our souls and the song of our hearts:

You led your people from slavery into freedom  
And the women led the dancing and singing.  
You gave your psalmist words,  
And those verses formed the prayers of generations.  
You speak to those who listen,  
And new relationships are formed in community.  
You bring wholeness to the sick and the dead,  
And, in you, all creation knows true peace.

On the night  
In which he was betrayed,  
Our Lord Jesus 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 in 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 in remembrance of me.



Remembering, therefore, his life, his death, and his resurrection,  
We thank you for the grace that you have poured out on your creation.  
We thank you for the Spirit who strengthens the call to  
preach the good news to all people in all places at all times.  
With this bread and cup, we hold fast to Christ's life of love,  
revealing divine power,  
and we await the day when all shall be well and all things are made new.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts  
That we may rejoice together in Christ's faithfulness, live courageously, and  
Recognize the gifts and callings of all people in your church and in your world.  
Unite our prayers with Miriam, the healed woman, the risen girl,  
And all the saints of your word gathered on the banks of the river of life—  
Giving you honor, glory, and praise—  
Almighty God, Father, +Son, and Holy Spirit,\* one God, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

*\* If appropriate to your context, you may substitute "Almighty God, Holy Parent, Holy Son, Holy Spirit, + one God, now and forever."*

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Come to the table. Be made well, and live.

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Holy and healing God:

In this meal, you have given us your very self to eat, and you have made us one in Christ:  
there is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female.

As we go forth from this place, take us by the hand and free us from fear,  
that we might sing your praise with our lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **BLESSING**

May the joy of God's freedom cause your spirit to dance;  
May the presence of God's peace bring wholeness to your body and mind.  
May God give you blessing, and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe.  
In the name of God, Father, +Son, and Holy Spirit.

## EUCHARISTIC PRAYER/THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE V. 2 “REMEMBERING THE WOMEN”

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.

Genesis 18:12

With Ruth, we praise you for family and food.

Ruth 4:13

With Miriam, we celebrate our escape from the foe.

Exodus 15:21

Remembering Deborah, we honor the words of your prophets.

Judges 4:4-5

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

John 4:29

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

Romans 16:7

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

Mark 5:41-32

With Mary, we magnify your name:

Luke 1:46

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.

Luke 10:38-39

Living, he healed the bleeding woman;

Mark 5:29

dying, he cared for his mother;

John 19:26-27

risen, he sent Mary Magdalene in mission.

John 20:14-18

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. 1 Samuel 1:27  
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. Romans 16:1  
Send your Spirit on the church, that like Anna, we tell others of your mercy. Luke 2:38  
Send your Spirit into our hearts, that like Dorcas, we care for the poor and needy. Acts 9:40-41

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.**

## LITANY OF LAMENT

Leader: We come before God and each other today celebrating the anniversaries of the ordination of women in the Lutheran church in the United States. Within the celebration there is also our corporate need to acknowledge the ways in which we have not supported women in ministry, overtly and covertly, knowingly and unknowingly.

I invite you to respond to each petition with: "Hear our prayer."

O God, as we give thanks for the ministry of ordained women throughout the decades, we also acknowledge and name the ways in which we have not been faithful supporters of women in ministry.

For women who have been excluded from ministry because they were women, God of mercy ...

*Hear our prayer.*

Leader: For women who were dismissed from positions they held, those who quietly or not so quietly disappeared with little warning or explanation, God of mercy ...

*Hear our prayer.*

Leader: For women who have been bullied, harassed, mistreated or abused by ministers and laypeople in this church, God of mercy ...

*Hear our prayer.*

Leader: For women who have voluntarily left positions they held because they could no longer withstand the pressures and stresses placed upon them by impossible expectations, God of mercy ...

*Hear our prayer.*

Leader: For female pastors of color who have had to deal with microaggressions, insults and injuries, and for female pastors who had to wait many years for a call and those who never received a call, God of mercy ...

*Hear our prayer.*

Leader: For women who not only are targeted by sexism but also deal with intersecting burdens of racism, heterosexism, ableism and socioeconomic inequality, God of mercy ...

*Hear our prayer.*

Leader: For female pastors whose commitment to motherhood has been questioned or judged, and for female pastors whose singleness has been questioned or judged, God of mercy ...

*Hear our prayer.*

Leader: For women who were passed over for positions of leadership because they were women; for women whose gifts were rejected or never acknowledged because they were women. For the thoughts, words and deeds we have participated in that have excluded women; and for the work that is left undone, God of mercy ...

*Hear our prayer.*

Leader: Receive our confession, God of mercy, and give us strength to commit anew to the full inclusion of women at all levels of work and ministry in this church and throughout the world. Amen.

## **LITANY OF THANKSGIVING**

Leader: For the many ways that women have proclaimed the gospel, including as pastors for the past 50 years, and for the impact that proclamation has had on more people than we can ever count or know ...

*We rejoice and give thanks to God.*

Leader: For the ways the church's decision to ordain women allowed fresh air to blow through the church, opened up closed windows and flung wide closed doors, enabling new possibilities for women to answer God's call and fresh ways for people to hear the good news ...

*We rejoice and give thanks to God.*

Leader: For the ways women have pushed this church in new directions; for the distinctive gifts each woman brings, from her culture, her gender, her sexuality and far beyond ...

*We rejoice and give thanks to God.*

Leader: For the ministries of women of color, the vibrancy they bring, the wisdom they share, the Word of God they proclaim and the sacraments they administer ...

*We rejoice and give thanks to God.*

Leader: For the ministry of LGBTQIA+ pastors who have enriched the church by their dedicated service throughout history, and for the 10 years since the ELCA's policy change enabling them to serve publicly and live authentically, including while in partnered relationships ...

*We rejoice and give thanks to God.*

Leader: For the people who had the courage and perseverance to work for the ordination of women, including our predecessor women's organizations; for congregations who had the courage to call female pastors; and for the church's ability to change ...

*We rejoice and give thanks to God.*

Leader: For all women, the polite and the pushy, the troublemakers and the peacemakers, those who make the coffee, those who pay the bills, those who put the chairs away and lock the doors at the end of the night; for the deacons and deaconesses, the teachers, and the prayer-chain maintainers; for all those who stayed up late and got up early doing work that no one ever saw or acknowledged but that slowly transformed people's lives and the church; and for the generations of women who didn't get a title but served God just the same ...

*We rejoice and give thanks to God.*

Leader: For the support women have given and received over the decades; for the late-night phone calls, the chats over lunch, the affirmations and the hugs when words fell short; for the spouses, children, parents, mentors, teachers and theologians, whose impact cannot be measured; and for those who show up and those who speak out, in quiet and loud ways ...

*We rejoice and give thanks to God.*

Leader: For the apostolic witness of Mary Magdalene, the dance of Miriam, the hospitality of Lydia, the prayer of Mary, the discernment of Deborah, and the courage of Rahab, and for the faithfulness of our biblical foremothers ...

*We rejoice and give thanks to God.*

Gracious and living God, we rejoice and give you thanks for your strength on display throughout time and place, calling all kinds of people to be witnesses to your grace and power. We celebrate how the Spirit has blessed your church through the work of women and girls, including in this time and place. Guide us, as your people, into welcoming your prophets and teachers among us and into hearing Christ's good news through them. With gratitude, we pray. *Amen.*

The ELCA is grateful to Miriam Schmidt and Julia Seymour for the preparation of these materials. The second Thanksgiving at the Table comes from Gail Ramshaw. The additional litanies were written for the Women's Ordination Anniversary Banquet at the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly by J. Elise Brown and Heather Dean.