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THE  
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# THE *Worship* SOURCEBOOK



Calvin Institute of Christian Worship  
Grand Rapids, Michigan



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Grand Rapids, Michigan



Baker Books  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

*The Worship Sourcebook*  
(CD included)

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>Preface</b> .....	9
<b>Prologue</b> .....	15
I. The Practice of Christian Worship .....	15
II. <i>The Worship Sourcebook: A Contemporary Experiment Based</i> on Classical Models .....	28
III. Using <i>The Worship Sourcebook</i> .....	36
<b>Part One: Elements of the Worship Service</b> .....	43
<i>Basic resources for worship, along with instruction about the meaning and function</i> <i>of each element in worship</i>	
1 Opening of Worship.....	45
1.1 Preparation for Worship .....	46
1.2 Call to Worship .....	48
1.3 Greeting.....	56
1.4 Opening Responses .....	61
2 Confession and Assurance .....	81
2.1 Call to Confession.....	82
2.2 Prayers of Confession .....	85
2.3 Lament.....	111
2.4 Assurance of Pardon .....	115
2.5 The Peace .....	125
2.6 Thanksgiving.....	126
2.7 The Law.....	127
2.8 Dedication .....	138
3 Proclaiming the Word .....	139
3.1 Prayers for Illumination .....	139
3.2 Introductions to the Reading of Scripture .....	146
3.3 Responses to the Reading of Scripture .....	147
3.4 Conclusions or Responses to the Sermon .....	148
3.5 Introductions to the Profession of Faith .....	150
3.6 Profession of Our Church's Faith.....	151

4	Prayers of the People .....	173
4.1	Invitations to Prayer .....	174
4.2	Gathering Prayer Requests .....	176
4.3	Preparing Extemporaneous Prayers .....	177
4.4	Complete Model Outlines and Prayers .....	187
4.5	Prayers on Pastorally Challenging Topics .....	220
5	Offering .....	235
5.1	Invitations to the Offering .....	236
5.2	Offering Prayers .....	240
6	Baptism .....	249
	Complete Model Liturgy for Baptism .....	252
6.1	God's Invitation and Promises .....	254
6.2	Response of Faith .....	264
6.3	Prayer of Thanksgiving .....	271
6.4	Baptism .....	274
6.5	Welcome .....	276
7	Profession of Faith and Remembrance of Baptism .....	283
	Complete Model Liturgy for Profession of Faith .....	286
7.1	Introduction .....	288
7.2	Declaration of God's Promises .....	290
7.3	Profession of Faith .....	293
7.4	Prayers of Thanksgiving, Blessing, and Dedication .....	297
7.5	Welcome and Encouragement .....	302
7.6	Call to Service and Blessing .....	303
8	The Lord's Supper .....	305
	Complete Model Liturgy for the Lord's Supper .....	308
8.1	Declaration of God's Invitation and Promises .....	310
8.2	Great Prayer of Thanksgiving .....	317
8.3	Preparing the Bread and Cup .....	340
8.4	Communion .....	341
8.5	Response of Praise and Prayer .....	344
9	Closing of Worship .....	351
9.1	Sending .....	351
9.2	Blessing/Benediction .....	360

**Part Two: Central Themes of the Christian Faith . . . . . 369**

*Supplemental resources for biblical themes for worship drawn from the Nicene Creed  
and focusing on commonly celebrated events in the Christian year*

*We believe in one God . . .*

A Creation . . . . .	371
B Providence . . . . .	389
C Thanksgiving . . . . .	399

*We believe . . . in one Lord Jesus Christ . . .*

D Advent . . . . .	421
E Christmas . . . . .	465
F Epiphany . . . . .	493
G Baptism of Our Lord . . . . .	519
H Transfiguration . . . . .	531
I Ash Wednesday . . . . .	541
J Lent . . . . .	551
K Passion/Palm Sunday . . . . .	581
L Maundy Thursday . . . . .	593
M Good Friday . . . . .	605
N Easter . . . . .	625
O Ascension of Our Lord . . . . .	655
P Christ the King . . . . .	673

*And we believe in the Holy Spirit . . .*

Q Pentecost . . . . .	687
R Trinity Sunday . . . . .	713
S Unity of the Church . . . . .	727
T Communion of the Saints . . . . .	747

**Appendix: Worship Evaluation Forms . . . . . 763**

**Indexes**

Acknowledgments . . . . .	773
Central Themes in Statements of Faith . . . . .	821
The <i>Revised Common Lectionary</i> . . . . .	823
Dates in the Liturgical Calendar . . . . .	831
Scripture References . . . . .	833

# PREFACE

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The genesis of *The Worship Sourcebook* goes back to a comment made during a discussion at the 1999 Conference on Liturgy and Music in Wheaton, Illinois. Responding to a question about what resources would be most helpful to worship planners and leaders, one person suggested (receiving enthusiastic support from others), “It would be so helpful to have all of the *Reformed Worship* prayers, litanies, and other resources compiled for easy use!”

That suggestion sparked a project that grew into this present volume. Many of the resources included here first appeared in the quarterly journal *Reformed Worship*, which has also served as a testing ground for the teaching notes as well as several of the approaches recommended in this volume. People subscribe to *Reformed Worship* primarily to find resources for planning worship services that both honor the rich heritage of two millennia of Christian worship practices and respond to contemporary culture. Many of the resources in *Reformed Worship* are in turn indebted to that rich heritage, so the work of compiling this volume led us directly to many published collections. We also relied on contributions from churches that developed their own resources, and we noticed a need to solicit some new resources as well.

But this book is more than a collection of published texts. As we talked with several potential users, it became clear that making good texts available was insufficient. Worship planners and leaders, increasingly drawn from lay leadership in evangelical Protestant contexts, were also looking for basic instruction about various elements of worship and on ways in which texts could function in worship. Specifically, the development of the book’s concept was spurred by the separate comments of a seminary student and a volunteer worship coordinator of a small church; both were looking for a kind of classic reference book that could offer a range of options for each act of worship, along with clear teaching notes about the purpose of each element of worship.

In contrast to comparable recent collections, this volume is not the work of a denominational task force; nor does it bear the imprimatur of a denominational synod or general assembly. As a result, this book conveys no “impositions” or requirements for local or denominational use. It does, however, reflect a collaborative process of development and thus transcends the single-author or single-denomination approach characterizing many other worship resources.

The initial outline, structure, and contents of the book were developed by a working group that met for a full week in May 2002. We offer special thanks to Joyce Borger for preparing a significant survey of published resources for use at those meetings. Members of the group were Marco Avila, church planter, Passaic, New Jersey; Cindy de Jong, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan; David Diephouse, Calvin College; Janet Hill, pastoral musician, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Tom Schwanda, Reformed Bible College, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Debra Rienstra, Calvin College; David Vroege, pastor, Halifax, Nova Scotia; and four staff members of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship: Joyce Borger, Emily Brink, Cindy Holtrop, and John Witvliet. In keeping with the Institute's commitment to student involvement in all projects, three students from Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary were present that week as well: Sarah de Young, Rachel Klompmaker, and Carrie Titcombe.

During the summer of 2002 Cindy de Jong and Rachel Klompmaker processed the work of that group and continued compiling resources from a growing list (see Acknowledgments, p. 773). Then staff members of the Institute formed the main editorial team that began working in the fall of 2002: Emily Brink, Norma de Waal Malefyt, Carrie Titcombe, Howard Vanderwell, and John Witvliet.

In spring 2003, several external reviewers made comments on a draft of the manuscript. We are grateful for insights from Harry Boonstra, Calvin Theological Seminary; Joyce Borger; Robert De Moor, Faith Alive Christian Resources; Brooks Kuykendall, Calvin College; Larry Sibley, Westminster Theological Seminary; Lugene Schemper, Calvin Theological Seminary; and David Vroege. We are also grateful for the review and helpful comments made by members of the *Reformed Worship* Advisory Council and Worship Institute staff: Douglas Brouwer, Wheaton, Illinois; Paul Detterman, Louisville, Kentucky; Sue Imig, Salem, Oregon; George Langbroek, St. Catharines, Ontario; Kathy Smith, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Lisa Stracks, Chicago, Illinois; Mary Sytsma, Wheaton, Illinois; Yvonne Vander Veen, Grand Rapids; and David Vroege. Scott Hoezee supplied additional materials, and Henry Admiraal prepared the Scripture index. Taken together, these people have served a remarkably diverse group of congregations, large and small, old and new, in a variety of roles, such as pastors, youth group leaders, children's ministry specialists, worship committee members, and pastoral musicians.

In the spring, summer, and fall of 2003, several people worked on stylistic and editorial revisions, including Emily Cooper, Paul Faber, Lisa Stracks, and Carrie Titcombe. Particular thanks are due to Emily Cooper of the Institute for her detailed work on copyright permissions.

We dedicate this book to the work of hundreds of faithful pastors, worship planners, musicians, artists, and wordsmiths who work each week, often with remarkable generosity, creativity, and resourcefulness, to prepare and lead God-glorifying worship in congregations everywhere.

Emily R. Brink, editor, *Reformed Worship*  
John D. Witvliet, director, Calvin Institute of  
Christian Worship

# PROLOGUE

# PROLOGUE

## I. THE PRACTICE OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

### Worship's Meaning and Purpose

Each week Christians gather for worship in mud huts and Gothic cathedrals, in prisons and nursing homes, in storefront buildings and village squares, in sprawling megachurches and old country chapels. In these diverse contexts the style of worship varies greatly. Some congregations hear formal sermons read from carefully honed manuscripts; others hear extemporaneous outpourings of emotional fervor. Some sing music accompanied by rock bands, some by pipe organs, some by drum ensembles, some by rusty old pianos, and some by no accompaniment at all. Some dress in their formal Sunday best, others in casual beach clothes.

Yet for all the diversity of cultural expressions and worship styles, there remain several constant norms for Christian worship that transcend cultures and keep us faithful to the gospel of Christ. Especially in an age that constantly focuses on worship style, it is crucial for all leaders to rehearse these transcultural, common criteria for Christian worship and to actively seek to practice them faithfully. Without attention to these basic norms, the best texts, best music, and best forms for worship can easily become distorted and detract from the gospel of Christ that is the basis for Christian life and hope. Though volumes can be written to probe these transcultural norms, even a brief list is helpful for setting the stage for everything that follows in this book.

I. The Practice of Christian Worship.....	15
Worship's Meaning and Purpose.....	15
The Task of Preparing for and Leading Worship.....	18
Words in Worship .....	21
The Order of Worship: Learning from the Wisdom of Christian Practice .....	24
The Holy Spirit and the Task of Preparing and Leading Worship.....	26
II. <i>The Worship Sourcebook</i> : A Contemporary Experiment Based on Classical Models .....	28
Historical Context .....	28
The Nature of This Book .....	29
Distinctive Features of This Book.....	33
Planning "Traditional" as Well as "Contemporary" Worship.....	35
III. Using <i>The Worship Sourcebook</i> .....	36
Organization of Resources in This Book.....	36
Getting the Most Out of This Book .....	37
Using the CD for Bulletins and Projection Systems .....	38

1. **Christian worship should be *biblical*.** The Bible is the source of our knowledge of God and of the world's redemption in Christ. Worship should include prominent readings of Scripture. It should present and depict God's being, character, and actions in ways that are consistent with scriptural teaching. It should obey explicit biblical commands about worship practices, and it should heed scriptural warnings about false and improper worship. Worship should focus its primary attention where the Bible does: on the person and work of Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of all creation and the founder and harbinger of the kingdom of God through the work of the Holy Spirit.
2. **Christian worship should be *dialogic*.** In worship, God speaks and God listens. By the power of the Holy Spirit, God challenges us, comforts us, and awakens us. And by the prompting of the Holy Spirit we listen and then respond with praise, confession, petition, testimony, and dedication. Scripture constantly depicts God as initiating and participating in ongoing relationships with people. A healthy life with God maintains a balance of attentive listening and honest speech. So does healthy worship. This is why our words matter in worship: they are used by God to speak to us, and they carry our praise and prayer to God.
3. **Christian worship should be *covenantal*.** In worship, God's gracious and new covenant with us in Christ is renewed, affirmed, and sealed. The relationship that God welcomes us into is not a contractual relationship of obligations but a promise-based or covenantal relationship of self-giving love. It is more like a marriage than a legal contract. Worship rehearses God's promises to us and allows for us to recommit ourselves to this covenantal relationship. One question to ask of any worship service is whether it has enabled us to speak to God as faithful and committed covenant partners.
4. **Christian worship should be *trinitarian*.** In worship we address the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—one God in three persons, the God of holiness, love, beauty, and power. God is the One who graciously invites our worship and then hears our response. God is the One who perfects and mediates our praise and petitions. God is also the One who helps us comprehend what we hear and prompts us to respond. In worship, then, we are drawn into relationship with God (the Father) through God (the Son) and by God (the Holy Spirit). Worship is an arena in which the triune God is active in drawing us closer, using tangible, physical things like water, bread, and wine; melodies, rhythms, and harmonies; gestures, smiles, and handshakes to nurture and challenge us. In worship we focus our attention on this self-giving God. This God-centered focus also keeps us from the temptation to worship worship itself.

5. **Christian worship should be *communal*.** The gospel of Christ draws us into communal life with other people. Worship is one setting in which we see the church in action and we attempt to demonstrate and deepen the unity, holiness, and witness of the church. Worship is a first-person-plural activity. It is extremely significant in worship that otherwise remarkably different people nevertheless offer praise together, pray together, listen together, and make promises together.
6. **Christian worship should be *hospitable, caring, and welcoming*.** Christian worship must never be self-centered. In worship we pray for the world and offer hospitality to all who live in fear, despair, and loneliness. Public worship sends us out for worshipful lives of service and witness. Worship not only comforts us with the promises of the gospel but also disturbs us (in the best sense) as we realize the significance of fear and brokenness in our world and the world's desperate need for a Savior. Worship stokes the gratitude of our hearts that leads naturally to serving the needs of our broken world.
7. **Christian worship should be *"in but not of" the world*.** Christian worship always reflects the culture out of which it is offered. Patterns of speech, styles of dress, senses of time, rhythms and harmonies of music, and styles of visual symbols vary widely depending on cultural contexts. At the same time, worship must not be enslaved to culture. It must remain prophetic, challenging any dimension of local culture that is at odds with the gospel of Christ.
8. **Christian worship should be *a generous and excellent outpouring of ourselves before God*.** Worship should not be stingy. Like the perfume that anointed Jesus' feet, our worship should be a lavish outpouring of our love and praise to the God who has created and redeemed us. Worship calls for our best offerings. When we practice music, prepare words to speak, set aside gifts of money and time to offer, and ensure that we are rested and ready to give our undivided attention, we are practicing the kind of excellence worthy of our great and gracious God.

These norms, which are more illustrative than exhaustive, point to enduring lessons of Christian wisdom drawn from two thousand years of practice and reflection. And because they are so important, these basic norms must not simply reside in introductions to books of resources. They must function habitually in the working imaginations of worship leaders each week. Each week people who are responsible for worship have the joyful task of imagining how worship can be truly biblical, dialogic, covenantal, trinitarian, hospitable, and excellent.

Also important is that these norms come together. Christians need worship that is simultaneously trinitarian and hospitable, covenantal and “in but not of the world.” All too often we make choices that, for example, either deepen our theological vision at the expense of hospitality or weaken our theological vision in the name of hospitality.

The resources in this book are available to help congregations embody these norms more fully. The norms become working criteria that help us discern which practices will enhance rather than detract from worship in local contexts. The questions to ask about every resource in this book come right from these norms: Will a given resource make worship in our congregation more biblical? More relational? More trinitarian? More hospitable? More God glorifying? More edifying?

### **The Task of Preparing for and Leading Worship**

Perhaps you are a member of a worship committee or a worship planning team. Perhaps your church is without a pastor, and you are the one designated to prepare for Sunday worship. Perhaps you are a pastor or seminary student, looking to improve your skills in the area of worship. Perhaps you are a college student, planning worship for a campus ministry center. Maybe you are getting ready to plan a service for the first time. Maybe you are a veteran with many years of experience. Whatever your situation, this book is intended to help you in the important ministry of planning worship.

There is a lot that this book can't do. For one thing, it can't provide the most important qualifications for the role of worship planner: a love of God, a Spirit-prompted desire to worship, a working knowledge of the Bible and Christian theology, and a love for your congregation or community. For another, it can't explain every facet of the planning process for every kind of church—there are simply too many kinds of churches for that. What it does do is provide a range of texts for your use or adaptation, provide basic teaching about key elements and themes in worship, and suggest new ways of approaching particular aspects of worship. For that to be useful, it is important to be clear about the role of worship leaders and planners.

### *Worship Planners as Priests and Prophets*

As worship planners, we have the important and terrifying task of placing words of prayer, as well as other words, on people's lips. This happens every time we choose a song or write a prayer. As worship planners, we are like priests as we shape the prayers of God's people. Just as Old Testament priests would

represent the people to God, so we help shape the prayers that God's people offer today.

We also have the holy task of being stewards of God's Word. Our choices of which Scripture readings and themes will be featured in worship represent a degree of control over people's spiritual diets, how they feed on the bread of life, the Word of God. As worship planners, we are like prophets as we select which texts and themes from God's Word will be central in public worship. Just as Old Testament prophets declared God's Word, so we also shape how God's written Word is heard in congregations today.

Worship planners are thus called to a task that is part priestly and part prophetic. These roles are formative roles in Christian congregations. They shape people's view of God and the kinds of responses that are appropriate to God. While theologians write the books that shape the theology of the educated Christian, worship leaders plan the services that shape the theology of all God's people.

For these reasons, planning worship is an awesome responsibility. It demands our best attention and efforts. Some make the mistake of thinking that a worship service can be planned in a short phone conversation. Perhaps it can. And it might even be a good service in some sense or in a certain context. The problem is that this approach doesn't do justice to the importance of worship. The question to ask is not "How quickly can we put together this service" but "How can this service faithfully and imaginatively bring this scriptural text alive?" "How can this service invite faithful and meaningful participation of everyone present?" "How can we faithfully and imaginatively serve as prophets and priests for our particular community at worship?"

### *The Worship Planner's List of Virtues*

What makes for a good worship planner? What do you need to be an effective priest and prophet in this way? Do you need a willingness to do the job? A large library of resources? A good sense of organization? As important as these qualifications are, they don't go deep enough—at least not for prophets and priests.

Consider the following list of virtues:

- *compassion* for the congregation's needs and concern about how those needs are addressed in worship
- *discernment* about who is gifted to lead worship and in what way
- *cooperativeness* for working on a team of people involved in planning and leading worship

- *knowledge* of God's Word and of which portions of it are especially important for a congregation to hear at a given time, as well as knowledge of the community and its particular pastoral needs
- *wisdom* to understand the psychological and theological issues involved when there is conflict about worship
- *patience* when the congregation is slow to participate fully in certain acts of worship
- *imagination* to generate ideas about which songs, scripts, prayers, and elements will engage a congregation with the power and meaning of a given scriptural theme
- *discipline* to avoid too much or too little innovation. Planning worship is far different from putting on an art fair or writing poetry. When we plan worship, we are planning something for a community's use. No community can sustain endless innovation. No community can truly pray with words that are entirely unfamiliar or are creative for their own sake. Nor can a community thrive if its worship never changes in response to its environment.

These are the kinds of traits that go beyond the mechanics of worship planning to worship's deeper purpose and meaning. Perhaps this list makes you feel inadequate, but remember that none of us has all these virtues naturally. And no one can live up to all these virtues all of the time. But the good news of New Testament living is that these traits are not only ideals that we strive for; they are also gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to a community of believers for building up the church. The first step in worship planning is to pray that the Spirit will nurture these kinds of virtues in you. And for whichever virtues you lack, look to others in your congregation who may share them. Worship planning happens best in collaboration!

Good resources also play a small but important role. While effective priestly prayer-leadership can arise only out of a life of prayer, even the most effective prayer life cannot prepare us to lead a whole congregation in prayer. We need to learn from others, from worship in other places and times, and—mostly—from Scripture.

This is why we have hymnals and songbooks—collections of sung prayers that help us efficiently draw on the resources of thoughtful Christian worshipers from diverse times and places. Each congregation then adapts hymns and songs for its own use. The choices we make about instrumentation, tempo, volume, and use in worship may make a song or hymn sound very different than it did for the composer or writer.

This is also why we have books of resources for the words we use in worship. Books like this one help us draw on the insights and wisdom of worshipers from

diverse times and places. They challenge us to offer our praise and prayer with a wider perspective than any of us can bring individually. And as we do with music, we adapt these words for our own use. We personalize the language by referring to particular needs and concerns in our congregation. We also bring our own tone of voice and emphasis to the words we use.

The resources of this book, then, are provided to help worship planners and leaders of all kinds to fulfill their priestly and prophetic task more faithfully. They are not a substitute for the virtues needed for this important work. And, like sheet music, they remain simply ink on paper until they are brought to life in worship.

### Words in Worship

“I often think of the set pieces of liturgy as certain words which people have successfully addressed to God without their getting killed.”

—Annie Dillard

Worship is much more than words, of course. And often worship features too many words. We may long for worship that breathes with silence and meditation or for instrumental music that transcends words. Still, worship depends on words. God’s revelation to us is given not only in creation but also in words that communicate all we need to know about God, ourselves, and our salvation. Our communal worship is made possible because we have words to speak to each other, to call each other to worship, to speak common prayers, and to encourage each other in the faith.

Yet the words of our worship often don’t get the attention that our music does. We often devote hundreds of rehearsal hours to music each year, but very few to selecting how we will speak to each other in worship. Language, like music, is an art to be received and cultivated as a gift from God. Liturgical cliché is not a virtue. As art, language can be immeasurably enhanced by creativity, imagination, and forethought—all of which need not preclude the energy and immediacy of extemporaneous prayer.

Perhaps the largest challenge for the language of worship is that one set of words—usually spoken or prepared by a single person—needs to somehow embrace, express, and elicit the worship of a whole group of people. From the perspective of a worshiper, *public* worship always involves using words that come from someone else. One skill for worshipers to hone is the skill of “learning to mean the words that someone else gives us,” whether those are the words of a songwriter or prayer leader. This skill requires a unique mix of humility (submitting ourselves to words given to us by the community of faith), grace (willingness to offer the benefit of the doubt when those words may not have been well chosen), and intention (to actually appropriate those words as our own).

Certainly the ideal is a worship service in which each worshiper in the community is unself-consciously engaged with heart, mind, soul, and will and really means every good word that is spoken or sung. Yet not everyone who sings songs of praise has heart, mind, and will engaged every moment. Not all who speak the Lord's Prayer, for example, are "meaning it" at the moment. And although worshipers' later reports or body language can give us some clues about whether they are meaning it, we never know this with certainty. Some who appear less engaged may actually be deeply engaged. Others who are vigorously participating may be more caught up with the music or beauty of the language than the act of worship itself. The goal for language in worship, as it is for music, is to do everything possible to elicit and express the community's worship in ways that don't unnecessarily get in the way. This is a goal that is never perfectly attainable. But it is also a practice that can be deepened over time. That deepening happens in part through a use of good models. It also is encouraged by reflecting on the goals and criteria of our language. Consider the following three basic goals and criteria for language in worship.

- 1. We need words that are faithful to the content of Scripture and the gospel of Christ.** Part of this goal involves speaking in ways that reflect a balanced diet of biblical themes. We need to speak of God as both a mighty sovereign and a tender encourager. We need to speak of Jesus Christ as both Savior and Lord. We need to reflect a balanced piety that stresses that salvation in Christ is intensely personal but that it also extends to creation and culture. We need to speak of the church, the community of believers, as a community called to embrace truth and to extend hospitality, to witness to the gospel of Christ and to work for justice and peace on earth.

Language about God has been especially contentious in our time. This volume reflects a commitment to focus in on and to draw more intentionally on the wide range of names, metaphors, and images used explicitly in Scripture to shape our language about God. This approach will not satisfy everyone, but we pray that this book will provide a helpful point of departure, especially for congregations having conflicts over language issues.

- 2. We need words that members of the congregation can appropriate as their own.** The language of worship should be both accessible and reverent, both understandable and evocative. The language of worship should enable the participation of all members of the body, young and old, brand-new Christians and lifelong believers alike.

Most churches need to work to enable people to experience worship actively. They also need to work to expand worshipers' participation in corporate prayer. Participation on a deeper level takes time. For example, one

congregation intentionally wanted to kneel for prayers of confession and lift their hands during songs of praise. Another wanted to add a response to the Scripture reading (“The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.”) to allow worshipers to actively respond to the Scripture reading. These patterns of participation cannot be mastered in one service. They must become habits—in the best sense. To accomplish this, every (or nearly every) service must include the same actions.

- 3. We need words that both express our experience and form us for a deeper experience.** A healthy prayer life, both private and public, involves two kinds of prayers. First, some prayers are specific, extemporaneous, personal, and immediate. These prayers arise from the honesty of our own experience—for example, “Lord God, help our congregation in this time of great uncertainty and even fear. . . .” Second, some prayers are communal or “given,” even “imposed” on us. Think of children learning the Lord’s Prayer. They may learn this prayer before they even understand the words, but they grow into it over time, learning to pray it more and more sincerely throughout their entire lives. Think also of an evangelist’s invitation: “Pray this prayer with me.” Or the practice of praying the Psalms. In all these examples, we can be grateful that our prayer life is not limited to what we can generate from our own thoughts, experiences, and emotions but that we are invited to grow into something bigger than ourselves.

One final note about the words we use in worship and the words contained in this book: words in a book are no more useful than musical notes on a page. Their effectiveness depends on how the words are brought to life through speech. The same prayer, read from a manuscript, book, or bulletin, can be either lifeless or life giving. It all depends on how the words are actually spoken.

This is especially true with respect to words appropriate for children. Children are able to participate in worship much more fully than many churches encourage or allow. For that to happen, the language of worship should be appropriately accessible. This does not mean that words spoken to children should be spoken in a condescending or cutesy way. Even if the words are just right, the tone of voice can make them demeaning. Often church leaders speak to children in far more childish ways than their teachers at school do. What children need is not childish talk but childlike talk—talk that is simple without being simplistic. That’s why the designation of some resources in this book as “especially appropriate for children,” is by itself insufficient—the words also need to be spoken warmly and with due respect.

### **The Order of Worship: Learning from the Wisdom of Christian Practice**

Scripture does not mandate a specific order of worship. And having a certain order of worship does not ensure that worship will be authentic, biblical, honest, and alive.

That said, a thoughtful pattern or order of worship is one of the most important things a congregation can have to ensure that the norms of worship (as noted above) are faithfully practiced. A well-thought-out order of worship ensures a balanced diet of worship actions. A regular order of worship protects the congregation from overly zealous or overly creative worship leaders who might impose too much of their own agendas on a worship service. A predictable order of worship gives the congregation something to hang on to, something to expect—especially those people, including children, for whom consistency is an important prerequisite for participation.

Most important, a well-conceived order of worship ensures that the main purposes of worship are carried out. In other words, a thoughtful pattern for worship keeps worship as worship. It protects worship from degenerating into a performance, into entertainment, or into an educational lecture.

For some, an order of worship might feel like a straitjacket, limiting creativity. But consider jazz music. Jazz features spontaneous improvisation. But jazz improvisation works only because the musicians in a jazz combo are following a regular, predictable, repeated chord structure. Without this structure, the music would be chaos. Meaningful spontaneity happens within structure.

Also consider that almost every congregation falls into a predictable order of worship, whether that order is written out or not. Some congregations that protest against written orders of worship and regular structures are, in fact, the most predictable. Even if the order of worship is not printed out, it is best for worship planners and leaders to be aware of their congregation's pattern and why it works the way it does.

It is also important not to confuse structure and style. Congregations in Lagos, Nigeria, and in suburban Kansas City may have different styles of leadership and music because of their cultural differences, but they can have the same structure of worship that arises out of theological reflection.

All of these observations point to the importance of a thoughtful pattern or structure in worship. The following chart outlines a historic pattern of Christian worship. Virtually any element on this chart may be sung as well as spoken. Most often, additional sung responses are added to this list, such as one or more songs of praise after the call to worship, or a doxology after the offering. There may be no single church that uses the exact wording found in this chart, but thousands of churches on many continents use a version of this pattern.

Notice that there's a basic logic or flow to this order. We naturally approach God with worship and adoration. Our sense of God's holiness leads us to repentance. Our hearing an assurance of pardon leads naturally to thanksgiving. And so on.

Also notice how this pattern reflects the dialogic nature of worship—the sense in which worship is a conversation between God and the gathered community. (Arrows indicate directions in which the conversation flows: from God to the people, from the people to God, and among the people.)

Gathering	Call to Worship ↓ Greeting ↓ Prayer of Adoration or Prayer of Invocation ↑ Call to Confession ↓ Prayer of Confession and Lament ↑ ↔ Assurance of Pardon ↓ Passing of the Peace ↓ ↔ Thanksgiving ↑ The Law ↓ Dedication ↑ ↔
Proclamation	Prayer for Illumination ↑ Scripture Reading ↓ Sermon ↓
Response to the Word	Profession of the Church's Faith ↔ ↑ Prayers of the People ↑ Offering ↑
The Lord's Supper	Declaration of God's Promises and Invitation ↓ Prayer of Thanksgiving ↑ Breaking of the Bread ↓ Communion ↓ ↔ Response of Thanksgiving ↑
Sending	Call to Service or Discipleship ↓ Blessing/Benediction ↓

In sum, there is a theological logic to this organization of a worship service. Throughout this book, the explanations for each act of worship highlight its meaning and significance.

All of this is better than a “list approach” to an order of service, in which all the actions of worship (praise, intercession, creeds, testimony) are simply listed without regard for how one flows into another. In services like these, the individual actions of worship may be meaningful in themselves. But the same actions would have much more meaning if their context would support them. For example, imagine that a choir is going to sing an arrangement of “Amazing Grace.” That music may be meaningful by itself, wherever it is sung. But now picture the hymn being sung at the end of a prayer of confession, following a time of silence. The same music becomes much more powerful and effective because of its context and placement in the flow of the worship service.

Notice also that this historic order of worship does not, in itself, dictate which style of leadership, music, art, or drama is used to bring the order or structure to life. This same order, with minor variations, is used in thatched huts in Haiti and in large European cathedrals. It is universal enough to be considered classic, the kind of resource from which every pastor and worship leader can learn a great deal.

### **The Holy Spirit and the Task of Preparing and Leading Worship**

Even with this perspective on the order of worship, books of texts and prayers like this one worry many Christian worshipers and leaders. Prayer books can be—and have been—used by Christians in ways that discourage extemporaneous prayers. They also can be used in ritualistic ways. Texts in books like these may sound false, as if a leader were simply “reading it out of a book” without meaning a word of it. These worries lead some Christians to conclude that “a read prayer is a dead prayer.”

All of these concerns are legitimate, for they represent distortions of worship that we should work against. And such concerns are especially pressing in some congregations, whose worship-by-the-book has been lackluster for one reason or another.

But these concerns are not the whole story. Equally problematic are contexts in which a congregation is subject to the imbalanced agendas of a small group of leaders. Equally noticeable are extemporaneous prayers that promise to be unique and pastorally responsive but turn out to be nearly identical week after week, often featuring less diversity in imagery and in pastoral concern than prayer-book prayers. Further, worries about printed prayers can often lead to non-use of appropriate biblical prayers, such as the Psalms, which are certainly among our richest resources for worship to this day.

Both the use of worship resources and the refusal to use them, then, can lead to temptations, problems, and challenges—each of which is mitigated when leaders actively embrace the norms and practice the virtues described above. Perhaps most worrisome, however, is the charge that books like this one squelch the work of the Holy Spirit. Many worry that too many written and published resources leave no room for the Spirit to work in worship. If everything is scripted, where then can the Spirit work?

Note first that using this book does not necessarily mean that worship will be more scripted. Throughout this book, leaders are encouraged to adapt resources for local use or to offer extemporaneous expressions that are in some way derived from the texts here. Several such resources are more like outlines of extemporaneous prayer than complete scripts.

More fundamentally, however, that view of the Spirit's work needs to be challenged and corrected. Christians confess that the Holy Spirit worked through the authors of Scripture to produce both the highly refined poetry of the Psalms as well as the spontaneous sermons of Peter and Paul. While the Holy Spirit led early Christians to speak in tongues, the Spirit of God also brought order out of chaos at creation. If the Spirit works through both order and spontaneity, why do we sometimes limit our language of the Spirit to refer only to the spontaneous? (For example, we might casually say, "Well, we didn't have time to plan worship this week; I guess we will have to have the Spirit lead today," or, "Let's get away from our planned service so that the Spirit can lead.")

As *Authentic Worship in a Changing Culture* (CRC Publications, 1997) makes clear, "We shouldn't link the Holy Spirit with less planning or less formality. The Holy Spirit can be powerfully present in a very highly structured service and can be absent in a service with little structure. Beyond questions of style and formality, the question always before us is this: Does this act of worship bring praise to God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit? (p. 90). Indeed, the Spirit may well work through the careful preparations of a preacher *as well as* through a gesture or sentence that the preacher hadn't planned on saying. The Spirit may work both through the diligent planning of a worship committee *and* through the spontaneous prayer request or testimony of a worshiper.

How do we know, then, if the Spirit has been active in worship? Ecstasy or solemnity, in itself, doesn't tell us. Neither does spontaneity or carefully scripted planning. The Spirit can use each.

One indicator may be our response to a service. Consider the difference between the following post-service comments: "My, what impressive music today!" versus "Thank you, musician, for helping me pray more deeply today." And "Wasn't that a brilliant sermon?" versus "In this service I encountered the risen Lord." One of the Spirit's main character traits is that of always pointing

toward Christ. The Spirit is a witness and an advocate for the person of Jesus. If we leave a worship service comforted and challenged by our faith-filled encounter with Jesus Christ, we can be grateful for the Spirit's work in our hearts.

Clement of Rome wrote some of the first post-New Testament documents we have on Christian faith and living. His writings include this prayer: "O God Almighty, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: Grant that we may be grounded and settled in your truth by the coming down of the Holy Spirit into our hearts. Reveal to us what we do not yet know. Fill up in us what is wanting. Confirm what we know. And keep us blameless in your service, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen." May God give us grace to pray and to mean words like these as we prepare for worship.

## II. *THE WORSHIP SOURCEBOOK:* A CONTEMPORARY EXPERIMENT BASED ON CLASSICAL MODELS

### **Historical Context**

This book stands in a long tradition of worship books in the Christian church. The biblical Psalms may well have functioned as a prayer book for the people of Israel. Some of the earliest Christians compiled their advice about forms and patterns of worship into church order documents, the first of which, the *Didache*, dates back perhaps into the first century A.D. Over time, especially in the early medieval period, these documents grew very complex, with detailed instructions about every aspect of worship.

In the Reformation period both Martin Luther and John Calvin called for significant changes to recommended or dictated patterns of worship by simplifying the structure and testing every text by theological criteria. Out of the various Reformation traditions, the Anglican and Lutheran traditions retained the most detailed instructions. The Anglican tradition preserved common patterns and texts for worship in the famous *Book of Common Prayer*, while the Lutherans did so in several editions of service books, adapted for use in each town. The Reformed tradition was also a service book tradition, albeit with far simpler liturgy. In addition to the influence of Huldrych Zwingli's liturgy,

Calvin's Genevan liturgies were adapted for use in Scotland and Hungary, while new liturgies that were developed near Heidelberg, Germany, became influential in the Netherlands. Throughout the early decades of the Reformation, pastors did not create new orders of service for worship each week, as so many do today. Worship was, to the surprise of many contemporary readers, "by the book."

Despite this tradition, most evangelical and even many Reformed and Presbyterian congregations in North America have resisted the use of formal service books and set liturgies. This resistance resulted partly from the influence of Puritan critiques of "by the book" worship, which were much more stringent than critiques offered by Reformers. Other influences included the formation of early Methodist, Baptist, Anabaptist, and other "free church" congregations as well as the spread of North American populism, pragmatism, and revivalism. Congregations in many streams of North American Christianity have long resisted being told how to structure worship and have cherished their ability to respond to their own preferences and sense of what is most effective.

As a result, thousands of North American congregations today owe a great deal both to a two-thousand-year history of service books and to the legacy of North American freedom and populism. In recent years amid remarkable changes in the practice of worship, hundreds of those congregations are looking for new ways to appropriate both of these aspects of their identity. Some efforts go by the names "blended worship," "convergence worship," or even "ancient-future" worship. But despite vast and remarkable growth in contemporary music based on popular styles, many of the best-selling books on worship today are, ironically, studies of worship in the early church, prayer books for formal daily prayer, and books about recovery of the sacraments. Recent innovations under the umbrella of terms like "postmodern worship" and "alternative worship" sometimes feature even greater interest in traditional forms and texts than in the "contemporary worship" of the 1980s and 1990s—though in configurations that elude easy categorization.

### **The Nature of This Book**

In light of this history, this book is something of a unique experiment. It is designed to be used by Christians who value free-church, low-church, nonliturgical, evangelical approaches to worship but who also want to learn from and draw on historic patterns of worship. At the same time, the book aims to be useful and instructive to congregations who practice traditional or liturgical worship and who may be looking for ways to adapt it or to rethink its meaning.

The following six rubrics help to explain the nature of this book.

1. **Classical and contemporary.** On the one hand, this book is clearly inspired by classical models. It draws on many texts from historic sources; it features approaches to the various elements of worship that have time-tested value for enhancing participation; and it uses traditional language for the primary elements and main themes in worship. On the other hand, it affirms and enhances the strengths of worship in a more free-church context. It does not mandate one standard service. It provides multiple options so that local leaders are free to adapt and use texts that are pastorally appropriate. It includes examples of fresh new language from sources like the Iona Community in Scotland as well as words of welcome and invitation designed for seekers in contemporary North American culture.
2. **A worship leader's reference book.** This book is designed primarily for people who prepare and lead worship rather than for people in the pew. In this way it is different from the *Book of Common Prayer*, which is designed for all worshipers to follow during the worship service. Further, this book is designed as a reference book rather than as a service book to be used by a minister or leader during the service. In fact, given the number of options under each heading, it could be very difficult to use this book during the service. Most users will likely transfer and adapt the texts in this volume into their own manuscript, set of notes, printed bulletin, or projected resources—perhaps using the CD edition to download texts.
3. **A book for public worship.** This book is more of a liturgical book than a devotional book, though many may find helpful resources for devotional use. It is not designed, then, to look like a collection of “classic Christian prayers.” As David Buttrick once observed, “liturgical language is for people to use, not admire.” The goal here has been to find texts that are imaginative and evocative without calling much attention to themselves; to use words that are accessible on first hearing; and to find language that is both “fresh” and “contemporary” as well as “classic” and “elegant.” Our goal has been to produce a single book that can be used, with appropriate adaptation, to guide the preparations of worship in a wide diversity of congregations. The question to pose about this book is not necessarily “Is this book perfect for us?” but rather “Will this book help to challenge and deepen our worship over time?”
4. **Classic and enduring.** One danger of our time is the production of a vast number of resources, including songs, service outlines, and prayers prepared for temporary or even one-time use. While these certainly can be very helpful, our worship life also needs to be sustained by practices that will last a lifetime. In this context, this book is designed to be more like a “classic”

resource than a merely occasional one. Psalm 95, for example, can function as a beautiful and appropriate call to worship in every culture and in all times. Similarly, we can readily identify a number of scriptural texts that can be inspiring and challenging calls to prayer or assurances of pardon in any age. By compiling a relatively comprehensive set of scriptural resources, we are attempting to provide a useful resource for a generation of leaders.

- 5. Multiple options for pastoral application.** The book presents multiple options for each act of worship—sometimes a rather daunting list of options. These are provided so that the book can function in a wide variety of ministry contexts. Nonetheless, it may be very wise for congregations to limit the range of options they use. By presenting multiple options in each section, we do not mean to imply that every option is equally strong—and certainly not for every congregation. In fact, in studying the options of a given section, you may find some texts weaker than others for your particular context. We encourage you to use only the best resources for your congregation.

Further, there can be significant value in repeating particular prayers or words over time. For example, many congregations regularly use the Apostles' or Nicene Creeds as a response to the sermon or the Lord's Prayer at the end of a congregational prayer. Valuable practices like these can help to make key texts a part of our identity. The repetition is especially important for children! And repetition inevitably entails limitations to the range of options a given congregation will use. So while we present several options for use as statements of faith, for example, it may be wisest to use just a few of them, such as the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, most of the time.

- 6. Ecumenical and evangelical, as well as Reformed and Presbyterian.** This book is designed for use by all biblical, evangelical Christians. Because the volume includes so much Scripture and so many classical resources that transcend time or place, it can be used in many varieties of congregations. Most of the elements of a worship service (Part One) and the themes of the creed and church year (Part Two) are held in common by Christian congregations of various traditions. When Scripture and scriptural themes are at the center of worship, there is much more that unites us than divides us. For this reason, there are remarkable similarities between this book and a variety of other published books of resources, including the *Book of Common Prayer* (Episcopal), the *Methodist Book of Worship* (United Methodist), *Chalice Worship* (Disciples of Christ), and various books used by other evangelical or independent congregations or pastors (such as *Baker's Worship Handbook*).

Still, each Christian tradition speaks with a particular accent. This volume has been prepared by believers from an evangelical and Reformed/Presbyterian branch of Christianity in North America. The Reformed/Presbyterian accent will be very clear at several points. The volume includes texts from confessional documents such as the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Westminster Confession of Faith and Shorter Catechism, as well as more recent documents such as *Our World Belongs to God* (Christian Reformed Church in North America), *Our Song of Hope* (Reformed Church in America), and *A Brief Statement of Faith* (Presbyterian Church, USA). Often these documents are written to highlight distinctives of Reformed/Presbyterian themes. In contrast to many evangelical Christian traditions, confessional accents are strong in the sections on baptism and the Lord's Supper. This book unapologetically presents texts for use for both infant and adult baptism, for example, and assumes the "real, spiritual presence" of Jesus Christ in the sharing of the bread and cup of the Lord's Supper. In contrast to Lutheran tendencies, the volume presents a strong place for the law of God to be read in worship as a natural and fitting response to the gospel, either after the assurance of pardon as a "guide to gratitude" or near the end of worship as an "invitation to discipleship."

This book is also very intentional about being ecumenical *within* the Reformed and Presbyterian traditions. Denominationally approved resources ironically are often developed with little regard for the breadth of practice within the particular denomination's tradition. In contrast, this book intentionally embraces at least part of the spectrum of Reformed and Presbyterian practice. It was prepared primarily by members of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. It includes several synodically approved liturgical texts for use in the Christian Reformed Church and follows guidelines established by the Christian Reformed Church synod for the development of sacramental forms. The volume also draws on approved texts used by the Reformed Church in America and the Presbyterian Church (USA) and especially the Presbyterian *Book of Common Worship*. The volume includes several portions of the Westminster Confession of Faith (Modern English Study Version), perhaps most commonly used today by the Presbyterian Church in America, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. In addition, large parts of this volume can function as a natural supplement to churches whose worship is regulated by one of the Presbyterian Directories of Worship.

Given the increasing diversity of worship practices and theological traditions within Presbyterian and Reformed denominations, no single volume can pretend to be equally serviceable and appropriate for all. Some congregations may be able to draw exclusively on this volume and use almost any text here.

Others will no doubt use other resources and use only a portion of what is presented here. Whatever the case, we hope that this volume will be at least a reference source for a broad range of congregations and that its effect will be to promote the sharing of texts and resources from various traditions.

### **Distinctive Features of This Book**

**Scriptural Texts.** For nearly every element of worship this sourcebook features numerous scriptural texts, many more than in comparable volumes. With this feature we hope to encourage the use of more scriptural language in worship. Scriptural texts are from a variety of Bible versions and are referenced as exact quotations, as slight adaptations (noted as “from” a particular text and version), or as paraphrases or quotations coupled with additional phrasing (noted as “based on” a given text). Some other resources also include references to Scripture texts; an index of Scripture references (p. 833) provides complete information as an aid to worship planning.

**Confessional Statements.** This book also includes many confessional statements as liturgical texts. Though originally written to teach doctrine, some catechisms and confessional statements function well as liturgical texts. Often they contain a simple and accessible beauty that is especially appropriate for worship. One goal for worship is to have it work together with a church’s educational ministries so that the language of catechetical and confessional teaching becomes familiar in congregational confession and prayer. This does not mean the language of worship should be unnecessarily didactic. In worship, doctrinal texts function not first of all to teach but rather to express the congregation’s faith and prayer.

**Congregational Participation.** Many notes and rubrics in this book encourage congregational participation—not only in celebrations of the sacraments or during special seasons such as Advent but also at many points in worship throughout the entire year, as noted by boldfaced type for worshipers to read aloud, usually responsively. This does not imply that every text with boldfaced type can only be used responsively. Leaders may alter boldfacing as they wish to suit the needs and style of their congregation’s participation.

**Classic Texts.** This sourcebook also features a variety of classic texts—some that date back hundreds of years and have stood the test of time. Protestants have not often had easy access to remarkable, evangelical prayers from historical sources. Liturgical churches and students of liturgical history will notice that some of these prayers are presented outside of their traditional liturgical context

(for example, several prayers are from traditional daily prayer services even though this book includes no section on daily prayer). Our goal has been to place prayers in the context of where they will most likely be useful in a variety of evangelical and Reformed/Presbyterian churches.

**Structure.** The outline of the traditional church year has been subsumed under the structure of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. Like the church year, creeds provide a narrative outline of Christ's life on this earth. But they also add important emphases on God's creation, the work of the Spirit, and the life of the church. As a result, these resources are equally useful for a variety of congregations whether they follow the church year or a catechism or another structure that includes the teachings of these creeds. Christ's ascension, for example, is an important biblical event and worship theme regardless of whether a church follows the pattern of the traditional church year.

**Prayers.** One premise of the book is that worship at its best often features a balance of extemporaneous and prepared prayers. In other words, just because this book contains prepared prayers and other texts does not imply that every worship service should feature only prewritten prayers. The goal is not to impose uniformity on worship but rather to provide reliable, trustworthy resources, drawing on the riches of the Christian tradition to help leaders be good stewards of the words they use in worship.

**Resources for Including Children.** Throughout this book many texts are identified as especially appropriate for use with children, though these designations are somewhat arbitrary (many more texts, especially scriptural ones, could be similarly identified). Worship at its best is intergenerational and invites children to be full, conscious, active participants, not just onlookers. The potential for children's participation varies greatly from congregation to congregation, depending on the nature and level of biblical literacy and education programs. Leaders may well need to adapt these texts so that the tone, rhetoric, and content are appropriate for their congregation.

**Resources for Hospitality.** Various texts in this book are designed to extend hospitality to spiritual seekers, guests, and others who do not worship regularly. This language is essentially new to the prayer-book tradition, reflecting the missional context of the church in North America. The presence of these texts emphasizes that hospitality should be a key goal for all worship services. While these resources are more suggestive than exhaustive, we include them in the hope of challenging worship leaders to think about how their words will be heard by people with limited exposure to worship practices.

Several of these features are new to collections of liturgical texts. But we trust that they will become a part of the church's ongoing learning process and growth as practices of worship continue to develop.

### **Planning "Traditional" as Well as "Contemporary" Worship**

This is a book designed for use by both so-called "traditional" and "contemporary" worship leaders and pastors. Any book of words like this will, by nature, *appear* to be most useful for "more traditional" churches that maintain a fairly detailed order of worship, print out the order of service in a bulletin each week, and use a number of spoken responses or litanies by the congregation. We very much hope that this book will be useful for these churches!

At first glance, this book may not seem a likely resource for leaders of "contemporary worship"—for churches whose worship is led by a worship team, without a detailed order of worship, without printed orders of service, and without congregational responses and litanies. But, in fact, it can be very useful!

First, the book provides texts that leaders, whether lay or ordained, can use or adapt at almost any point in a service. In all services, whether contemporary or traditional, leaders need to find words to call people to worship, to offer a prayer of confession, to prepare people for the reading of Scripture, or to introduce the offering. Often we fall into patterns of speech that are, at best, tired or, at worst, distort the meaning of an action of worship. Having a resource that provides multiple options gives us ways of both testing our own language and of deepening it through the use of additional Scripture texts or other resources.

Second, this volume provides suggestions for leaders who specialize in extemporaneous leadership. Some leaders may have every word printed out, others may lead from a prepared outline, and still others may speak entirely extemporaneously. But even if you lead worship extemporaneously, consider preparing to lead in prayer (or other aspects of worship) by writing your prayers out before leaving the script behind. Extemporaneous or spontaneous prayers often leave us to rely on the same phrases and expressions. For example, we might pray, "Be with our missionaries. Be with our friends. Be with our families." Writing a prayer out or adapting another resource forces us to think about our language and to avoid language that becomes monotonous or even meaningless through overuse. Even if you leave your script behind and offer the prayer without notes, a journaling or adaptation exercise will challenge you to use fresh language and consider the balance and vitality of your language.

Third, this sourcebook does not dictate the medium to use in presenting particular resources. In some churches the texts from this book will be printed out in a pastor's or leader's manuscript. In others they will be printed in a

bulletin or worship folder. In yet others they will be projected on a large screen for all to see or read. The method of presentation will vary widely from church to church.

Finally, this book provides a structure that can enrich both traditional and contemporary styles. An increasing number of churches that follow contemporary worship models are rethinking the form or structure of their services, trying to find ways to make the structure more balanced and meaningful. There are few better resources for accomplishing this task than the basic structure used by Christian churches for two thousand years. So even if a church doesn't prepare a printed order of service, there is great value in following the basic pattern presented here (gathering and praise, confession and assurance, proclamation of the Word and response, celebration of the sacraments, and concluding blessing), or—at minimum—making sure that each of these elements has a regular, sensible, and natural place in congregational worship.

In sum, this book is designed not to dictate a certain style of music, leadership, or use of multimedia. The goal has been to provide resources that can guide and instruct worship leaders in any style into the better use of God's gift of language.

### III. USING *THE WORSHIP SOURCEBOOK*

#### **Organization of Resources in This Book**

This book offers resources to help worship planners and leaders serve as godly stewards of the gift of language. It includes recommended texts for all typical elements of a worship service, along with seasonal and topical resources for celebrations that many congregations observe each year. It also includes basic teaching pieces on each element of worship.

**Part One** provides resources for each element of weekly public worship, along with teaching notes about the meaning and purpose of each element. Each section is assigned a number for ease of reference and comparison between Parts One and Two of this book. Within each section, each resource is also numbered. In most sections, three numbers are sufficient for identifying each resource: the

section number, the subsection number, and the resource number within the subsection.

For example, resource 1.2.2, a call to worship, is found in section 1 (Opening of Worship), subsection 2 (Call to Worship), under resource number 2.

In sections 6 and 8 on the sacraments (baptism and Lord's Supper), an additional number is included to allow for referencing an additional layer of subheadings within each section.

For example, resource 8.2.6.2, a prayer for the work of the Holy Spirit, is found in section 8 (Lord's Supper), subsection 2 (Prayer of Thanksgiving), subpart 6 (Prayer for the Work of the Spirit), under resource number 2.

**Part Two** provides resources for common themes taught in ecumenical creeds of the Christian church (such as the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds) and for seasonal celebrations in the traditional Christian year. Sections are labeled alphabetically, and each section includes subdivisions that correspond with the numbered sections of Part One.

For example, resource E.1.2.2, a call to worship for Christmas, is found in E (Christmas), section 1 (Opening of Worship), subsection 2 (Call to Worship), under resource number 2.

### **Getting the Most Out of This Book**

Use these guidelines and refer back to them periodically as an aid to getting the most out of this book.

1. Learn the structure of the book. Part Two makes use of the numbering system introduced in Part One, and the headers on each page indicate where you are within the outline of the book.
2. Compare the structure of Part One to the order of worship in your own congregation. Which elements in Part One does your church already include each week? Think about the elements that are written down in a printed order of worship as well as elements that happen regularly even if they aren't formally noted. Consider marking those sections of the book for easy reference.
3. Review your own "worship template," whether it's explicit or implicit. Based on the contents of Part One, what could you do to enhance or deepen your

own congregation's pattern or order of worship? By comparing your practices with the resources in this volume, you may discover that your congregation has been weak in a given area. Think about ways to adapt your approach so that it can be more balanced. Think of ways to introduce changes with clear explanations of what you are doing and why.

4. Discuss your congregation's level of participation in worship with your pastor or other worship leaders. Think about a new habit—or two or three—that your congregation could acquire over time to make worship more participatory. As you introduce changes, be sure also to explain them to the congregation.
5. Review your own approach to leading worship. Should you be spending more time or effort in preparing to lead some aspects of worship? What kinds of notes or manuscript do you have with you as you lead? Would it help to have more (or perhaps fewer) notes?
6. Over time, review the teaching notes in Part One of this book. Consider taking ten minutes at each worship committee or worship planning meeting to study and discuss a set of teaching notes. Do they confirm or challenge your present practices? Would you want to expand the teaching? Could these notes help your congregation to develop more meaningful practices over time?

### **Using the CD for Bulletins and Projection Systems**

The CD provided with this book allows easy access to any texts you might wish to use in worship, for special programs, or for educational purposes. Open the *Worship Sourcebook* file on the CD (using Adobe Acrobat® Reader®) and use your computer's search function to locate sections by name or number. For example, to search for Calls to Worship, you can search for "1.2" and then choose from among the search results. If you are looking for texts for a particular season of the Christian year, you could, for example, find options for Advent by searching for "D.1.2," and then compare those selections with options from the Christmas (E.1.2) or Epiphany (F.1.2) sections. Once you select a resource, you can cut and paste for use in a printed bulletin or on a projection system.

For easy identification of Scripture and confessional texts in this book, we've included credit lines immediately following those particular texts. We recommend that you include those credits when you cut and paste. You may also wish to identify the sources of other items; we did not place credits next to those items, preferring that they be presented without the distraction of numerous and sometimes lengthy credit lines. To identify sources, look up their respective resource numbers (for example, 3.4.8 or A.1.4.1) in the Acknowledgments

section, which supplies all necessary source lines for resources used in this book. In addition, if you are looking for a prayer from a particular author or collection, you can search and find the author's name or collection title in the Acknowledgments section.

Please note that many of the resources including boldface print (to indicate congregational participation) are presented here in a tight format to save space. When using these resources in bulletins and projection systems, consider adding spaces before and particularly after the boldface lines to make them stand out for use by the participating congregation.

For each resource used we ask that you include the following credit line: "Reprinted by permission from *The Worship Sourcebook*, © 2004, CRC Publications." This notice can appear in small print preferably on the same page on which the resource is reprinted.

To keep records, you'll want to record the text number (for example, 3.4.8 for resource number 8 in section 3.4) on your worship planning documents and write the date used next to the text in this book.

As much as you are able, use this resource book to God's honor and glory!

John D. Witvliet, director, Calvin Institute of  
Christian Worship

PART ONE

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# ELEMENTS OF THE WORSHIP SERVICE

# PART ONE

## ELEMENTS OF THE WORSHIP SERVICE

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The first part of this collection provides basic resources for worship accompanied by brief teaching notes on the meaning and function of each element in worship. The order of these elements will not be the same in every congregation's experience, but the order follows a basic pattern as discussed in the Prologue (p. 24). The nine sections of Part One of this volume are listed in the box on this page.

Part Two of this book is supplemental to Part One. Many texts in Part One can be used for particular themes or occasions treated in Part Two.

It's important to know that the numbering of elements in Part One lays the foundation for the numbering of corresponding elements

1	Opening of Worship.....	45
2	Confession and Assurance.....	81
3	Proclaiming the Word.....	139
4	Prayers of the People .....	173
5	Offering .....	235
6	Baptism.....	249
7	Profession of Faith and Remembrance of Baptism ....	283
8	The Lord's Supper.....	305
9	Closing of Worship.....	351

in Part Two. For example, within each lettered section (A, B, C . . .) of Part Two, the Call to Worship subsection is labeled A.1.2, B.1.2, and so on to show correspondence with the Call to Worship subsection (1.2) in Part One. Each lettered section in Part Two provides resources for many (though not all) elements of worship; resources for elements of worship that do not appear in Part Two can be found in Part One.

SECTION 1

# OPENING OF WORSHIP

---

The opening of an event should set the tone for all that follows—this is just as true for a worship service as for any other event, such as a concert, lecture, workshop, conference, or rally. How an event begins should establish not only its explicit or implicit purpose but also its overall ethos or spirit.

First, the opening actions of a worship service should clearly establish worship’s purpose. They should make clear that in worship a congregation is called to listen to God and to respond in faith and prayer. This suggests three kinds of actions—a clear statement of God’s invitation to worship, an opportunity for the congregation to respond in praise, and some action that reinforces the public, communal nature of worship.

Second, the opening actions of worship—beginning already with prayers of preparation before worship begins—are important for establishing a prayerful, expectant, humble, and joyous spirit. They should communicate that worship

1.1 Preparation for Worship.....	46
1.2 Call to Worship.....	48
1.3 Greeting.....	56
Scriptural Greeting .....	56
Mutual Greeting.....	59
Welcome .....	60
1.4 Opening Responses.....	61
Prayers of Adoration .....	61
Prayers of Invocation .....	68
Additional Resources.....	75

arises best not out of fear or guilt but out of gratitude. This spirit is conveyed not only in the words that are used but also in the spirit in which they are spoken.

Though the same fundamental purpose and spirit of worship should characterize the opening of worship services, not every worship service will begin the same way. There will be many different accents—of joy or sorrow, exuberance or humility, for example—depending on the time of year and the pastoral context. That is why even more resources beyond those that follow here are included in Part Two of this book.

## 1.1 PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

---

*Worship begins best out of a prayerful spirit. The following texts are for pastors, worship leaders, and others to use as they gather for prayer before the worship service. Often at such times leaders pray spontaneously, without the use of any printed or set prayers. Even so, the following texts may be helpful in suggesting an image, phrase, or petition that can enrich spontaneous prayer. (These texts may also be adapted for the congregation to use—perhaps at home prior to worship, or printed in a service folder, bulletin, or video presentation.) Another aid in preparing for worship is to focus on a song or text that will be featured in the worship service, taking the time to reflect deeply on its meaning and significance.*

- 1 Fill our worship with grace, Lord Jesus Christ,  
that every thought, word, and deed may be acceptable to you,  
our Rock and our Redeemer. **Amen.**

—based on Psalm 19:14

- 2 O God,  
by your power may we, with all the saints,  
comprehend the breadth and length and height and depth  
of the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge,  
so that we may be filled with your fullness. **Amen.**

—based on Ephesians 3:18-19

- 3 Almighty God, we pray for your blessing  
on the church in this place.  
Here may the faithful find salvation,  
and the careless be awakened.  
Here may the doubting find faith,  
and the anxious be encouraged.  
Here may the tempted find help,  
and the sorrowful find comfort.  
Here may the weary find rest,  
and the strong be renewed.  
Here may the aged find consolation  
and the young be inspired;  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

- 4 Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hid:  
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you

and worthily magnify your holy name  
through Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

- 5 O God, you pour out the spirit of grace and love.  
Deliver us from cold hearts and wandering thoughts,  
that with steady minds and burning zeal  
we may worship you in spirit and truth. **Amen.**
- 6 O God,  
we joyously come together to worship,  
realizing we need not summon you into our midst,  
for you are here.  
We need not call you into the secret places of our hearts,  
for you are there.  
We need our eyes of faith to be opened,  
that we may see you;  
our ears to be unstopped,  
that we may hear you;  
our minds to be sensitive,  
that we may know you;  
our hearts to be tender,  
that we may receive you.  
Grant each one a blessing, O Lord,  
as each has need,  
in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**
- 7 This is the day that you have made, Lord.  
**Help us to rejoice in it and be glad!**  
Remind us of the privileges we enjoy as your people:  
**to come to you in these moments,**  
**to confess our sins,**  
**to receive forgiveness and give it,**  
**to pray and sing and listen,**  
**to renew our fainting spirits,**  
**to rest in all your promises.**  
Open our eyes to see you, Lord.  
**Open our ears to hear your Word.**  
Visit us through your Holy Spirit,  
**and help us to celebrate our faith. Amen.**
- 8 *A text especially mindful of children*  
Dear God,  
we come to worship you today.  
We come to sing, pray, and listen.  
You always hear us.  
Help us to hear you. **Amen.**

- 9 Dear God, silence all voices within our minds but your own.  
Help us to seek and be able to follow your will.  
May our prayers be joined  
with those of our sisters and brothers in the faith,  
that together we may glorify your name  
and enjoy your fellowship forever.  
In Jesus' name, **Amen.**
- 10 Holy God, we pray your blessing  
on those who lead us in worship this day,  
those who speak and sing and move among us,  
those who direct others in singing and playing,  
those who have prepared this space with beauty.  
We ask that each of them may lead  
with a sense of peace and confidence that comes from your Spirit,  
so that your truth may be proclaimed faithfully  
and we may live up to our calling as the body of Christ.  
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**
- 11 Loving God, for each one who leads us in worship today,  
we pray that they may be so filled with your Spirit  
that they will clearly reflect the glory of Christ in all they say and do.  
We pray that everyone in this place will know you are with us  
and be drawn to bring you all honor and praise. **Amen.**

## 1.2 CALL TO WORSHIP

---

*The following texts are invitations to worship. Most use scriptural language in which God invites us to offer our worship or in which a leader invites all who are present to offer their praise.*

*One function of the invitation is to express welcome and hospitality. We worship in the joyful context of our renewed relationship with God in Christ. These words may be spoken with a gesture of open embrace and a genuine smile to convey the warmth of God's love.*

*Another function of the invitation is to call the community to the unique activity of worship. The primary activity of the worship service is for worshipers to participate in the gift exchange of worship itself, by hearing God's Word, by offering prayers and praise, and by receiving spiritual nourishment offered at the Lord's table. The call to worship establishes the unique purpose of the worship service and reinforces the "vertical dimension" of worship—an encounter between God and the gathered congregation.*

*The scriptural calls to worship may be preceded by introductory words like these, derived from Jesus' letters to the churches in Revelation 2-3:*

Hear the Word of the Lord.

*or*

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

*After any of the brief scriptural statements in this section, consider adding the following:*

Praise the Lord.

**The Lord's name be praised!**

*or*

O magnify the LORD with me.

**Let us exalt God's name together!**

—from Psalm 34:3, NRSV

*or*

We have gathered to praise our gracious God.

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!**

- 1 Our help is in the name of the LORD,  
**who made heaven and earth.**  
—Psalm 124:8, NRSV
- 2 We will give thanks to you, O LORD, with our whole heart;  
we will tell of all your wonderful deeds.  
**We will be glad and exult in you;  
we will sing praise to your name, O Most High.**  
—from Psalm 9:1-2, NRSV
- 3 The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it,  
the world, and those who live in it;  
**for he has founded it on the seas,  
and established it on the rivers.**  
Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?  
And who shall stand in his holy place?  
**Those who have clean hands and pure hearts,  
who do not lift up their souls to what is false,  
and do not swear deceitfully.**  
—Psalm 24:1-4, NRSV
- 4 Lift up your heads, O you gates;  
be lifted up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.  
**Who is this King of glory?**  
The LORD strong and mighty,  
the LORD mighty in battle.  
**Lift up your heads, O you gates;  
lift them up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.**

Who is he, this King of glory?

**The LORD Almighty—  
he is the King of glory.**

—Psalm 24:7-10, NIV

- 5 Let us worship God, our light and our salvation.

**The Lord is the stronghold of our lives.**

We desire to live in God's house  
and to seek God in his holy temple.

**We have come with shouts of joy,  
to sing and to make music to the Lord.**

Let us worship God in spirit and in truth.

**Teach us your ways and make straight our paths  
in this hour of worship and always.**

—based on Psalm 27; John 4:23

- 6 Clap your hands, all you peoples;  
shout to God with loud songs of joy.

**For the LORD, the Most High, is awesome,  
a great king over all the earth.**

God has gone up with a shout,  
the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

**Sing praises to God, sing praises;  
sing praises to our King, sing praises.**

—Psalm 47:1-2, 5-6, NRSV

- 7 Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth;  
sing the glory of his name;  
give to him glorious praise.

**All the earth worships you;  
they sing praises to you,  
sing praises to your name.**

—Psalm 66:1-2, 4, NRSV

- 8 There is none like you, O Lord,  
nor are there any works like yours.

**All the nations you have made shall come  
and bow down before you, O Lord,  
and shall glorify your name.**

**For you are great and do wondrous things,  
you alone are God.**

—from Psalm 86:8-10, NRSV

- 9 I will sing of your steadfast love, O LORD, forever;  
**with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness  
to all generations.**

I declare that your steadfast love is established forever;  
**your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.**

You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one,

I have sworn to my servant David:  
'I will establish your descendants forever,  
and build your throne for all generations.'"

**Praise the Lord!**

—from Psalm 89:1-4, NRSV

- 10** It is good to praise the LORD  
and make music to your name, O Most High,  
**to proclaim your love in the morning  
and your faithfulness at night.**

—Psalm 92:1-2, NIV

- 11** Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD;  
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.  
**Let us come before him with thanksgiving  
and extol him with music and song.**

—Psalm 95:1-2, NIV

- 12** Come, let us bow down in worship,  
**let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;**  
for he is our God  
**and we are the people of his pasture,  
the flock under his care.**

—Psalm 95:6-7, NIV

- 13** Come, bow down and worship,  
kneel to the Lord, our Maker.  
**This is our God, our shepherd,  
we are the flock led with care.**

—Psalm 95:6-7, TP

- 14** Sing to the LORD a new song;  
**sing to the LORD, all the earth.**  
Sing to the LORD, praise his name;  
**proclaim his salvation day after day.**

—Psalm 96:1-2, NIV

- 15** Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.  
**Worship the LORD with gladness;  
come before him with joyful songs.**  
Know that the LORD is God.  
It is he who made us and we are his;  
**we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.**  
Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
and his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and praise his name.  
**For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;  
his faithfulness continues through all generations.**

—Psalm 100, NIV

- 16** Praise the LORD, O my soul;  
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.  
**Praise the LORD, O my soul,**  
**and forget not all his benefits.**  
Praise the LORD, you his angels,  
you mighty ones who do his bidding,  
who obey his word.  
**Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts,**  
**you his servants who do his will.**  
Praise the LORD, all his works  
everywhere in his dominion.  
**Praise the LORD, O my soul.**  
—Psalm 103:1-2, 20-22, NIV
- 17** Our hearts are ready, O Lord,  
our hearts are ready!  
**We will sing and make melody!**  
**We will awaken the dawn!**  
We will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples,  
we will sing praises to you among the nations.  
**For your steadfast love is great above the heavens,**  
**and your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.**  
—based on Psalm 108:1-4
- 18** Hallelujah!  
Servants of God, praise,  
praise the name of the Lord.  
Bless the Lord's name now and always.  
Praise the Lord's name here and in every place  
from east to west.  
—Psalm 113:1-3, TP
- 19** This is the day the LORD has made;  
**let us rejoice and be glad in it.**  
—Psalm 118:24, NIV
- 20** Hallelujah!  
Praise! Praise God in the temple, in the highest heavens!  
**Praise! Praise God's mighty deeds and noble majesty.**  
All that is alive, praise!  
**Praise the Lord.**  
**Hallelujah!**  
—Psalm 150:1-2, 6, TP
- 21** “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,  
and I will give you rest.  
Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me;  
for I am gentle and humble in heart,  
and you will find rest for your souls.”  
—Matthew 11:28-29, NIV

- 22 Great and marvelous are your deeds,  
Lord God Almighty!  
**Just and true are your ways,  
King of the ages.**  
Who will not fear you, O Lord,  
and bring glory to your name?  
**For you alone are holy.  
All nations will come and worship you!**  
—from Revelation 15:3-4, NIV
- 23 Sing a new song to the Lord,  
who has worked wonders,  
whose right hand and holy arm have brought salvation.  
**The Lord has made known salvation;  
has shown justice to the nations;  
has remembered truth and love for the house of Israel.**  
All the ends of the earth have seen  
the salvation of our God.  
**Shout to the Lord, all the earth,  
sing out your joy.**  
Sing psalms to the Lord with the harp,  
with the sound of music.  
**With trumpets and the sound of the horn  
acclaim the King, the Lord.**  
—based on Psalm 98:1-6
- 24 The earth is the Lord's, for he made it:  
**Come, let us adore him.**  
Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness:  
**Come, let us adore him.**  
The mercy of the Lord is everlasting:  
**Come, let us adore him.**  
Lord, open our lips.  
**And our mouths shall proclaim your praise.**
- 25 All who thirst, come to the water.  
Come, all who are weary;  
come, all who yearn for forgiveness.  
The Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ has washed over us,  
and our gracious and holy God beckons and blesses us.  
Drink deeply of these living waters.  
**Glory to you, O Lord, glory to you.**
- 26 Let us worship the eternal God,  
the source of love and life, who creates us.  
**Let us worship Jesus Christ,  
the risen one, who lives among us.**

Let us worship the Spirit,  
the holy fire, who renews us.  
**To the one true God be praise  
in all times and places,  
through the grace of Jesus Christ.**

- 27 God invites us into his healing presence with these words:  
"I am the Lord, who heals you."  
**Diseased, depressed, dysfunctional, defeated,  
we come hungering for health that only God can provide.**  
God calls us to bring open eyes, hearing ears,  
and tender hearts turned toward him, the Great Physician.  
**We bow before him in faith and expectancy!**

—based on Exodus 15:26; Isaiah 6:10

- 28 As we are called into worship today,  
it is sobering to remember  
that when God appeared on earth in the person of Jesus,  
most of the world did not recognize him  
and therefore did not worship him.  
Today we ask for the faith that will open our eyes  
to see Jesus for who he is,  
that we might worship him in truth.  
People of God, behold and see your God!  
**We open our eyes to see his glory.  
We open our ears to hear his wisdom.  
We open our hands to offer him gifts.  
We open our mouths to sing his praise.  
We open our hearts to offer him our love.  
He is Lord!**

- 29 The eternal Father,  
who loved us and set us free from our sins,  
who loves us still with that love that will not let us go,  
and who will love us forever,  
calls us to worship him today as the only true lover of our souls.  
The Lord stoops to receive the love of our poor hearts.  
He calls us to remember the depth of his love for us in Christ.  
God seeks our love!

- 30 The Lord Jesus who calls us to worship him today  
is the same Jesus who refused the temptation  
to worship the evil one.  
Rather than receive the glorious kingdoms of this world,  
he endured the shame of the cross,  
and today is Lord of lords and King of kings.  
Now are gathered in him all the treasures  
of wisdom and knowledge, glory, and power.

With the saints of all ages we say,  
**“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,  
to receive power and wealth and wisdom  
and strength and honor and glory and praise!”**

—based on Colossians 2:3; Revelation 5:12

- 31 People of God, worship the living God today!  
Remember that out of nothing God created the heavens and earth.  
Remember that God raised Jesus  
from the powerlessness of death  
to the power of his right hand.  
Remember that not even the gates of hell  
can stand against God’s purposes.  
Behold your God, who reigns now and forever!
- 32 Let us worship God.  
**“He is our refuge and our fortress,  
our God, in whom we trust.”**  
Let us confess with our mouths, “Jesus is Lord,”  
and believe in our hearts that God raised him from the dead.  
**“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”**  
Let us call upon our true God, believing him in our hearts,  
confessing him with our mouths, worshiping him in spirit and in truth.  
—based on Psalm 91:2; Romans 10:9, 13
- 33 “Our help is in the name of the Lord,  
who made heaven and earth.”  
**What did God do to help us?**  
God chose the people of Israel to make a new beginning.  
**They received God’s covenant and prepared the way  
for Jesus to come as our Savior.**  
Let us worship the God of the covenant, the God of heaven and earth.  
—based on Psalm 124:8
- 34 When Moses gathered the people of Israel, God said,  
**“I am the Lord your God,  
who brought you out of the land of Egypt,  
out of the house of slavery.”**  
As we gather here today,  
let us worship the Lord,  
who continues to be our God  
and who still brings us out of the places of our bondage.  
—based on Exodus 20:1-2
- 35 In Christ, the God of heaven has made his home on earth.  
**Christ dwells among us and is one with us.**  
Highest of all creation, he lives among the least.  
**He journeys with the rejected and welcomes the weary.**

Come now, all who thirst,  
**and drink the water of life.**  
Come now, all who hunger,  
**and be filled with good things.**  
Come now, all who seek,  
**and be warmed by the fire of love.**

- 36** In your wisdom, O God, you call us here to worship you.  
**We gather, alive to the Word of God.**  
You call us to be fully alive with your life abundant,  
ready to listen and respond with heart, soul, strength, and mind.  
**We listen, alive to the Word of God.**  
You call us to be always watchful for your Word of wisdom,  
sometimes startling and unexpected,  
sometimes still and quiet,  
but always dwelling among us.  
**We watch and wait for the Word of God.**

## 1.3 GREETING

---

*The words of greeting establish the lines of communication in worship. God always comes to us before we come to God. So it is fitting for worship to begin with scriptural words that convey God's greeting to us (historically referred to in some traditions as the "salutation"). The following texts provide several scriptural options, beginning with the classic trinitarian greeting.*

*The posture and gestures of both leader and worshipers can be very important in helping the congregation experience these words of greeting as the communication of God's promise. The leader may raise a hand in blessing over the congregation, and the worshipers may extend their hands or bow their heads to receive God's promise.*

*Any of the following greetings may be introduced with a statement like this:*

Our Lord has called us to worship and now greets us.

### Scriptural Greeting

- 1** May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

—2 Corinthians 13:13, NIV

*The congregation may respond with these words:*

**And also with you.**

or

**Amen!**

*For an extended greeting, especially in times of significant pastoral concern, consider adding one of the following texts.*

- 2 See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power,  
and his arm rules for him.  
See, his reward is with him,  
and his recompense accompanies him.  
He tends his flock like a shepherd:  
He gathers the lambs in his arms  
and carries them close to his heart;  
he gently leads those that have young.  
—Isaiah 40:10-11, NIV
- 3 Look at him! GOD, the Master, comes in power,  
ready to go into action.  
He is going to pay back his enemies  
and reward those who have loved him.  
Like a shepherd, he will care for his flock,  
gathering the lambs in his arms,  
hugging them as he carries them,  
leading the nursing ewes to good pasture.  
—Isaiah 40:10-11, TM
- 4 You whom I took from the ends of the earth,  
and called from its farthest corners,  
saying to you, “You are my servant,  
I have chosen you and not cast you off”;  
do not fear, for I am with you,  
do not be afraid, for I am your God;  
I will strengthen you, I will help you,  
I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.  
—Isaiah 41:9-10, NRSV
- 5 I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness,  
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;  
I have given you as a covenant to the people,  
a light to the nations,  
to open the eyes that are blind,  
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,  
from the prison those who sit in darkness.  
I am the LORD, that is my name;  
my glory I give to no other,  
nor my praise to idols.  
—Isaiah 42:6-8, NRSV

- 6 Fear not, for I have redeemed you;  
 I have summoned you by name; you are mine.  
 When you pass through the waters,  
 I will be with you;  
 and when you pass through the rivers,  
 they will not sweep over you.  
 When you walk through the fire,  
 you will not be burned;  
 the flames will not set you ablaze.  
 For I am the LORD, your God,  
 the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.  
 —Isaiah 43:1-3, NIV
- 7 Can a mother forget the baby at her breast  
 and have no compassion on the child she has borne?  
 Though she may forget,  
 I will not forget you!  
 See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands;  
 your walls are ever before me.  
 —Isaiah 49:15-16, NIV
- 8 “For a brief moment I abandoned you,  
 but with deep compassion I will bring you back.  
 In a surge of anger  
 I hid my face from you for a moment,  
 but with everlasting kindness  
 I will have compassion on you,”  
 says the LORD your Redeemer.  
 —Isaiah 54:7-8, NIV
- 9 The LORD your God is with you,  
 he is mighty to save.  
 He will take great delight in you,  
 he will quiet you with his love,  
 he will rejoice over you with singing.  
 —Zephaniah 3:17, NIV

*The following New Testament greetings each highlight slightly different themes.*

- 10 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and  
 the Lord Jesus Christ,  
 who gave himself for our sins to set us free  
 from the present evil age,  
 according to the will of our God and Father,  
 to whom be the glory forever and ever. **Amen.**  
 —Galatians 1:3-5, NRSV

- 11 Grace to you and peace from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
—Philippians 1:2, NRSV
- 12 Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father  
and Christ Jesus our Lord.  
—2 Timothy 1:2, NRSV
- 13 May grace and peace be yours in abundance  
in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.  
—2 Peter 1:2, NRSV
- 14 Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us  
from God the Father and from Jesus Christ,  
the Father's Son, in truth and love.  
—2 John 3, NRSV
- 15 To those who are called,  
who are beloved in God the Father  
and kept safe for Jesus Christ:  
May mercy, peace, and love be yours  
in abundance.  
—Jude 1-2, NRSV
- 16 Grace to you and peace from him who is  
and who was and who is to come,  
and from the seven spirits who are before his throne,  
and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness,  
the firstborn of the dead,  
and the ruler of the kings of the earth.  
—Revelation 1:4-5, NRSV
- 17 *This is one of the simplest of historical greetings, as practiced by Christians in many traditions. It may be used after any of the preceding scriptural greetings.*  
  
The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**  
—based on Ruth 2:4

## Mutual Greeting

*God's words of greeting may be followed by a mutual greeting, in which worshipers extend God's blessing to each other with words such as "Christ's peace be with you." Often called "the passing of the peace," the mutual greeting may also follow the assurance of pardon (see section 2.4) or take place during the celebration of the Lord's Supper (see section 8.2.8). The following words may introduce the mutual greeting.*

As God has greeted us with his peace,  
so let us pass the peace of Christ to each other.

*or*

As God has greeted us, so let us greet each other.

## Welcome

*Public worship is an expression of the church's hospitality. Words of welcome make that hospitality explicit. The welcome may be spoken before the call to worship or as an extension of the greeting or mutual greeting. It may also be printed in a bulletin, projected on a screen, or spoken informally by a worship leader.*

*The words spoken should be in keeping with the welcome that guests experience before and after the worship service. In addition to the words of welcome, you may wish to include specific information about the worship service or the worship materials, and offer instructions for guests on how to find additional information about your church or how to meet people after the service.*

- 18 Welcome in the name of Jesus Christ!  
May each one of us find great joy and spiritual nourishment  
as we worship together today.
- 19 Welcome to worship today!  
We are all here because of God's hospitality.  
We share the privilege of extending that hospitality to each other.
- 20 Whether we are old or young,  
whether we are first-time or longtime worshipers,  
whether we come full of doubts or confidence, joy or sorrow,  
in this place we are all family,  
because of what Jesus did for us on the cross.  
Welcome to all of you today!
- 21 We especially welcome visitors who are here today.  
To all of you who are not regular church attenders,  
we are eager to tell you about the joy we have in knowing Jesus  
and in worshiping together as a community!
- 22 If you are spiritually weary and in search of rest,  
if you are mourning and you long for comfort,  
if you are struggling and you desire victory,  
if you recognize that you are a sinner and need a Savior,  
God welcomes you here in the name of Christ.  
To the stranger in need of fellowship,  
to those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
and to whoever will come,  
this congregation opens wide its doors  
and welcomes all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**23** *For a service including the Lord's Supper*

We welcome to this service those  
who have not professed faith in Christ  
and who may be hearing the gospel for the first time.  
Though you may not be partaking of the sacrament,  
it is our privilege to welcome you here.  
Perhaps what you experience will raise questions for you.  
After the service, we will be eager to talk with you further  
about the joy of our life in Christ  
and the significance of this celebration in our life together.

## 1.4 OPENING RESPONSES

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*The following texts offer the congregation's response to God's words of greeting and promise. Even for leaders who prefer to pray without notes, the following texts can be helpful in suggesting an image, a phrase, or a petition that can enrich and deepen the opening prayer.*

*In many congregations, the first words of praise are sung. It's important for worshipers to sense that these songs or hymns of adoration are prayers—the words of the assembly offered to God. In singing them, worshipers are addressing God just as in spoken or silent prayer.*

*The resources in this section are grouped in three categories: Prayers of Adoration, Prayers of Invocation, and Additional Resources. In most contexts, a worship service might include a single text from only one of these categories, in addition to praise singing. Communities that extend the opening of worship may wish to include several responses, moving from adoration to invocation to a declaration of faith and hope, interspersing songs with some of the texts provided here.*

### **Prayers of Adoration**

*The primary and most common response during the opening of worship is adoration. Many prayers of adoration, originating as far back as the Old Testament, feature not only praise for attributes of God but also praise for particular actions of God, such as creating the world, providing care and guidance for the people, redeeming the world in Christ, and sending the Holy Spirit. Some scriptural prayers of thanks even resemble brief history lessons, tracing the timeline of God's redemptive actions. Naming particular divine attributes and actions helps our prayers become specific and concrete. This practice also helps us avoid a form of idolatry, in which the "God" we might call to mind when we worship is only a vague "higher power." Such a vague notion of God bears little resemblance to the God revealed in Scripture and seen most clearly in the person of Jesus Christ.*

*These prayers may be introduced with a statement like the following:*

We respond to God's invitation with words of praise.

- 1 O LORD, God of Israel,  
there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth beneath,  
keeping covenant and steadfast love for your servants  
who walk before you with all their heart.  
Blessed be the LORD,  
who has given rest to his people Israel  
according to all that he promised;  
not one word has failed of all his good promise,  
which he spoke through his servant Moses.  
**The LORD our God be with us,  
as he was with our ancestors;  
may he not leave us or abandon us,  
but incline our hearts to him,  
to walk in all his ways,  
and to keep his commandments,  
his statutes, and his ordinances,  
which he commanded our ancestors.**

—1 Kings 8:23, 56-58, NRSV

- 2 Praise be to you, O LORD,  
God of our father Israel,  
from everlasting to everlasting.  
**Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power  
and the glory and the majesty and the splendor,**  
for everything in heaven and earth is yours.  
**Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom;  
you are exalted as head over all.**  
Wealth and honor come from you;  
you are the ruler of all things.  
**In your hands are strength and power  
to exalt and give strength to all.**  
Now, our God, we give you thanks,  
and praise your glorious name.

—1 Chronicles 29:10-13, NIV

- 3 O LORD, our Lord,  
how majestic is your name in all the earth!  
You have set your glory  
above the heavens.  
From the lips of children and infants  
you have ordained praise.

—Psalm 8:1-2, NIV

- 4 O God, your constant love reaches to the heavens,  
your faithfulness extends to the skies.  
**Your righteousness towers like the mountains,**  
**your justice is deeper than the sea.**  
All find protection under the shadow of your wings.  
We feast on the abundance you provide.  
**You are the source of all life,**  
**and in your light, we see light.**  
—based on Psalm 36:5-9
- 5 It is good to praise the LORD  
and make music to your name, O Most High,  
**to proclaim your love in the morning**  
**and your faithfulness at night,**  
to the music of the ten-stringed lyre  
and the melody of the harp.  
**For you make me glad by your deeds, O LORD;**  
**I sing for joy at the works of your hands.**  
How great are your works, O LORD,  
how profound your thoughts!  
**You, O LORD, are exalted forever.**  
—from Psalm 92:1-5, 8, NIV
- 6 In the midst of the congregation I will praise you.  
Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous,  
and give thanks to God's holy name!  
**I will extol you, my God and King,**  
**and bless your name forever and ever.**  
**Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;**  
**God's greatness is unsearchable.**  
—from Psalm 22:22; 97:12; 145:1, 3, NRSV
- 7 All glorious God, we give you thanks:  
in your Son, Jesus Christ,  
you have given us every spiritual blessing  
in the heavenly realms.  
You chose us, before the world was made,  
to be your holy people, without fault in your sight.  
You adopted us as your children in Christ.  
You have set us free by his blood;  
you have forgiven our sins.  
You have made known to us your secret purpose,  
to bring heaven and earth into unity in Christ.  
You have given us your Holy Spirit,  
the seal and pledge of our inheritance.  
All praise and glory be yours, O God,  
for the richness of your grace,  
for the splendor of your gifts,  
for the wonder of your love.  
—based on Ephesians 1:3-18

*After these scriptural openings, continue with words of adoration or invocation, as in the following.*

**8 We praise you for creating this world in all beauty,  
for redeeming the world through Christ, our Lord,  
and for sending us the gift of your Spirit  
to encourage, instruct, and sustain us.  
We long for your Spirit to work among us now,  
to inspire our praise, to challenge us with your truth,  
and to equip us for service in your world. Amen.**

**9 Eternal God,  
you are the power behind all things:  
behind the energy of the storm,  
behind the heat of a million suns.  
Eternal God,  
you are the power behind all minds:  
behind the ability to think and reason,  
behind all understanding of the truth.  
Eternal God,  
you are the power behind the cross of Christ:  
behind the weakness, the torture, and the death,  
behind unconquerable love.  
Eternal God,  
we worship and adore you. Amen.**

**10 God of light and truth,  
you are beyond our grasp or conceiving.  
Before the brightness of your presence  
the angels veil their faces.  
With lowly reverence and adoring love  
we acclaim your glory  
and sing your praise,  
for you have shown us your truth and love  
in Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.**

**11 We praise you, we worship you, we adore you.  
You hold the heavens in your hand;  
all stars rejoice in your glory.  
You come in the sunrise and the song of morn  
and bless the splendor of the noonday.  
We praise you, we worship you, we adore you.  
The stars in their courses magnify you;  
day and night tell of your glory.  
Your peace blows over the earth,  
and the breath of your mouth fills all space.  
We praise you, we worship you, we adore you.  
Your voice comes in the thunder of the storm;**

the song of the wind whispers of your majesty.  
You satisfy all things living with your abundance,  
and our hearts bow at your presence.

**We praise you, we worship you, we adore you.**

Accept us, your children, eternal Father,  
and hear our prayer.

Bend over us, eternal Love, and bless us. **Amen.**

- 12 Creator God,  
because you make all that draws forth our praise  
and the forms in which to express it,  
**we praise you.**  
Because you make artists of us all,  
awakening courage to look again at what is taken for granted,  
grace to share these insights with others,  
vision to reveal the future already in being,  
**we praise you.**  
Because you form your Word among us,  
and in your great work embrace all human experience,  
even death itself, inspiring our resurrection song,  
**we praise you.**  
**Yours is the glory. Amen.**
- 13 You are the Sovereign One, O God, and rightly to be blessed.  
Your name shall ever be upon our lips.  
You have heard the poor and saved them from trouble.  
You have enlightened believers; their faces reflect your radiance.  
Aglow with the splendor of your promised redemption,  
we gather to worship you, ruler of nations. **Amen.**
- 14 O God, you summon the day to dawn,  
you teach the morning to waken the earth.  
**For you the valleys shall sing for joy,  
the trees of the field shall clap their hands.**  
For you the kings of the earth shall bow,  
the poor and the persecuted shall shout for joy.  
**Your love and mercy shall last forever,  
fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise.**  
Great is your name.  
**Great is your love. Amen.**
- 15 Mighty God,  
we do not yet see the glory you plan for all humankind,  
but in faith we do see Jesus.  
We thank you for the humility and holiness  
in which he lived and died.  
We praise you that he freed us from our sin,  
that he comforts and strengthens us through our struggles,

and that he gives us courage to follow him.  
For this, we now join with all creation and shout for joy:  
Holy, holy, holy are you, Lord! **Amen.**

- 16** Loving God, we have gathered to meet you.  
We have come to listen to you,  
to seek you, to worship you.  
You are the beginning of all things,  
the life of all things; you knew us before we were born.  
In you we become; in you we live.  
Loving God, you are here and everywhere,  
around us and within us; you know our inmost thoughts.  
In you we hope; in you we live.  
You are the source of serenity,  
giving peace that is beyond our understanding.  
In you we are still; in you we live.  
Loving God, we live in you; we worship you.  
Loving God, you live in us; we worship you. **Amen.**
- 17** We give thanks to you, God our Father,  
for mercy that reaches out,  
for patience that waits our returning,  
for your love that is ever ready  
to welcome sinners.  
**We praise you that in Jesus Christ**  
**you came to us with forgiveness,**  
**and that, by your Holy Spirit,**  
**you move us to repent**  
**and receive your love.**  
Though we are sinners,  
you are faithful and worthy of all praise.  
**We praise you, great God,**  
**in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**
- 18** Our Father,  
you are in heaven, high and lifted up,  
higher than our highest thoughts.  
Holy is your name;  
beside you there is no other!  
You are God, and you alone!  
Receive us into your kingdom—the coming kingdom—  
the kingdom of your anointed Son, Jesus, whose name we bear.  
Receive us, for we come to you in his name—  
we pray in him and with him.  
For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

—based on Matthew 6:9-10, 13

- 19** Let us join our voices to praise the spotless Lamb, Jesus Christ,  
who has redeemed us from sin and death.  
**We, whom he has redeemed,  
will sing praises and shout for joy this hour;**  
because in Christ the Lamb we have redemption through his blood,  
the forgiveness of our sins in accordance with the riches of his grace.  
**Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law  
by becoming a curse for us.**  
Let us praise him by saying:  
**Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,  
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength  
and honor and glory and praise!  
To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb  
we give worship this hour and forever and ever. Amen.**
- 20** You, O God, are mighty forever.  
You cause the wind to blow and the rain to fall.  
You sustain the living, give life to the dead,  
support the falling, loose those who are bound,  
and keep your faith with those who sleep in the dust.  
Who is like you, O God of mighty acts?  
Praise be to you forever. **Amen.**
- 21** God our Father,  
we call on you like little children because we know  
that you love us and care for us like a loving parent.  
Because your Son, Jesus, prayed to you as Father,  
so we pray this way.  
You created us to live with you and to ask for your help and guidance. **Amen.**

*Prayers of adoration especially mindful of children*

- 22** We are very thankful, God,  
that you want us to come and worship you.  
We know you are listening to us  
when we sing  
and when we pray.  
And we know that will bless us  
before we leave.  
Thank you, God. **Amen.**
- 23** Loving God,  
we come to worship you today.  
We come to sing, pray, and listen.  
You always hear us.  
Help us to hear you. **Amen.**

- 24 Dear Lord God,  
we pray to you every day for what we need,  
and you give it to us.  
We will keep on praising your name.  
Jesus, we love you. **Amen.**

### Prayers of Invocation

*The following prayers consist mainly of petitions that God will work powerfully through the Spirit during the worship service. These petitions express longing for God as well as deep dependence and humility. Invocations acknowledge that the power in worship is a gift from God rather than a human accomplishment, and they explicitly confess that we approach God only through Christ.*

*The term invocation implies that the congregation invokes, or “calls upon,” God, but it should never be inferred that we are the ones to invite God into our presence, or that God’s presence with us depends on our invoking the Lord. God is present before we begin! Our prayers of invocation celebrate and acknowledge God’s presence; they don’t produce it.*

- 25 O gracious and holy God,  
give us diligence to seek you,  
wisdom to perceive you,  
and patience to wait for you.  
Grant us, O God,  
a mind to meditate on you,  
eyes to behold you,  
ears to listen for your Word,  
a heart to love you,  
and a life to proclaim you,  
through the power of the Spirit  
of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**
- 26 O most merciful Redeemer, friend, and brother,  
may we know you more clearly,  
love you more dearly,  
and follow you more nearly,  
day by day. **Amen.**
- 27 Eternal God,  
you have called us to be members of one body.  
Join us with those who in all times and places  
have praised your name,  
that, with one heart and mind, we may show the unity of your church,  
and bring honor to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**
- 28 Everlasting God,  
in whom we live and move and have our being:  
You have made us for yourself,

so that our hearts are restless until they rest in you.  
Give us purity of heart and strength of purpose,  
that no selfish passion may hinder us from knowing your will,  
no weakness keep us from doing it;  
that in your light we may see light clearly,  
and in your service find perfect freedom  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

- 29** God of grace,  
you have given us minds to know you,  
hearts to love you, and voices to sing your praise.  
Fill us with your Spirit,  
that we may celebrate your glory  
and worship you in spirit and in truth  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**
- 30** Eternal Light, **shine into our hearts;**  
eternal Goodness, **deliver us from evil;**  
eternal Power, **be our support;**  
eternal Wisdom, **scatter the darkness of our ignorance;**  
eternal Love, **have mercy upon us,**  
that with all our heart and mind and strength  
we may seek your face  
and be brought by your infinite mercy to your holy presence  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**
- 31** God of all glory,  
on this first day you began creation,  
bringing light out of darkness.  
On this first day you began your new creation,  
raising Jesus Christ out of the darkness of death.  
**On this Lord's day grant that we,**  
**the people you create by water and the Spirit,**  
**may be joined with all your works**  
**in praising you for your great glory.**  
Through Jesus Christ,  
in union with the Holy Spirit,  
we praise you now and forever. **Amen.**
- 32** Praise the Lord.  
**The Lord's name be praised.**  
Great God,  
you have been generous  
and marvelously kind.  
**Give us such wonder, love, and gratitude**  
**that we may sing praises to you**

**and joyfully honor your name  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

**33** O God, our guide and guardian,  
you have led us apart from the busy world into the quiet of your house.  
Grant us grace to worship you in spirit and in truth,  
to the comfort of our souls  
and the upbuilding of every good purpose and holy desire.  
Enable us to do more perfectly the work to which you have called us,  
that we may not fear the coming of night,  
when we shall surrender into your hands  
the tasks which you have committed to us.  
So may we worship you not with our lips only at this hour,  
but in word and deed all the days of our lives,  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

**34** O Lord, our God,  
you are always more ready to give your good gifts to us  
than we are to seek them,  
and you are willing to give more than we desire or deserve.  
Help us so to seek that we may truly find,  
so to ask that we may joyfully receive,  
so to knock that the door of your mercy may be opened to us  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

**35** Sing praises to God, O you saints,  
and give thanks to God's holy name!  
**We exalt you, O God, for you have restored us to life!**  
We may cry through the night, but your joy comes with the morning.  
**You hear us, O God, and you are gracious in our distress.**  
You turn our mourning into dancing!  
Our souls cannot be silent!  
**O God, our Savior, we give thanks to you forever! Amen.**

**36** Almighty and loving God,  
you have given us eyes  
to see the light that fills this room;  
give us the inward vision  
to behold you in this place.  
You have made us feel  
the morning wind upon our limbs;  
help us to sense your presence  
as we bow in worship of you. **Amen.**

**37** Lord, open to us the sea of your mercy,  
and water us with full streams  
from the riches of your grace  
and the springs of your kindness.

Make us children of quietness and heirs of peace;  
kindle in us the fire of your love,  
and strengthen our weakness by your power  
as we become close to you and to each other. **Amen.**

- 38** O Lord, our God,  
creator of our land,  
our earth, the trees, the animals and humans,  
all is for your honor.  
**The drums beat it out, and people sing about it,  
and they dance with noisy joy  
that you are the Lord.**  
You also have pulled the other continents out of the sea.  
What a wonderful world you have made out of wet mud  
and what beautiful men and women!  
We thank you for all the beauty of this earth.  
**The grace of your creation is like a cool day between rainy seasons.  
We drink in your creation with our eyes.  
We listen to the birds' jubilee with our ears.**  
How strong and good and sure your earth smells,  
and everything that grows here.  
We drink in your creation and cannot get enough of it.  
**Bless our land and people.  
Prepare us for the service we should render. Amen.**
- 39** Show us the way to fullness of life, Lord Jesus;  
that our hearts might be filled with joy, hope, and peace, we pray;  
that we might respond to opportunities, we pray;  
that we might be strengthened to face challenges, we pray;  
that we might become the persons we are called to be, we pray;  
that we might learn to respect our sisters and brothers, we pray;  
that we might see the needs of others and give help, we pray. **Amen.**
- 40** Jesus Christ, you come to transfigure us  
and renew us in the image of God:  
**shine in our darkness.**  
Jesus Christ, light of our hearts, you know our thirst:  
**lead us to the wellspring of your gospel.**  
Jesus Christ, light of the world, you shine in every human being:  
**enable us to discern your presence in each person.**  
Jesus Christ, friend of the poor:  
**open in us the gates of simplicity so that we can welcome you.**  
Jesus Christ, gentle and humble of heart:  
**renew in us the spirit of childhood.**  
Jesus Christ, you send your church to prepare your path in the world:  
**open for all people the gates of your kingdom. Amen.**

- 41** God of all faithfulness,  
 you have opened the gate of mercy for your people  
 and are always ready to welcome those who turn to you.  
 Look on us in your compassion,  
 that we may gladly respond to your love  
 and faithfully walk in your way  
 through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**
- 42** Loving God,  
 we come to you in worship and thanksgiving.  
 You are greater than we can understand;  
**open our eyes that we may see the wonderful truths**  
**you have shown to us in Jesus.**  
 You are more loving than our hearts can respond to;  
**help us to give ourselves to you in worship**  
**so that we learn what you want us to be.**  
 You are wiser than we can know;  
**still our minds as we worship you**  
**so that we can understand the things you are saying to us.**  
 Loving God, in Jesus  
 you chose to come to the world in humility.  
 You chose the path the world saw as foolish.  
 You used what the world considered weak.  
**We worship and adore you. Amen.**
- 43** Come among us, living Lord,  
 we come to hear your living Word.  
 We meet together in the name of Christ  
 to share your mission and your sacrifice;  
 to receive the power that only you can give,  
 that we might live!  
 Come fill this time of silence. **Amen.**
- 44** O God, our Father,  
 you seek men and women, boys and girls,  
 who will worship you in spirit and in truth;  
 and so we ask you to inspire  
 and bless the worship week by week in this church,  
 in words and music,  
 prayers and hymns,  
 psalms and lessons.  
 Open the hearts and lips of those  
 who worship you today all over the world,  
 that all of us may listen with an alert conscience  
 to the preaching of your Word  
 and come to receive the bread and cup with true repentance and faith.  
 We ask this in the name of him  
 through whom alone our worship is acceptable to you:  
 our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

- 45 Christ, in this hour of worship  
lift us out of the routine of our daily lives  
and set us up on your holy mountain.  
Let our worship come from our hearts,  
that it may be genuine.  
Let our praises for you leap from our mouths,  
that we may be alive with faith and joy.  
Make us fresh again! **Amen.**
- 46 Lord God,  
we have come to worship you  
as sinners in need of your forgiveness.  
**We come tired from our work,  
in need of refreshment and re-creation.**  
We come with worries,  
in need of your guidance.  
**But first, please lift us  
out of our preoccupation  
with our own needs.**  
Allow us to see you with the eyes of faith,  
and to hear with the ears of understanding  
what you say to us.  
**Make us thankful for all the good  
we have received from you.**  
Awaken in us a longing to do what is right.  
**And make us aware of the great company,  
past, present, and to come,  
with whom we join to worship you. Amen.**
- 47 In you, eternal Father,  
and through your Son, Jesus Christ,  
we find the beginning and end of all things.  
In him we find hope, forgiveness,  
and courage for new beginnings.  
**Let then, O God,  
the fresh winds of your Spirit  
sweep into our lives this day,  
so that this act of worship  
and the week to follow  
may become a time of renewal  
and rededication to your service. Amen.**
- 48 Great and loving God,  
we come before you emptied of all that would distract,  
seeking all that would redeem.  
Let these moments not become so routine  
as to be predictable,  
nor so familiar as to be conventional.

Prepare us for the unexpected.  
Open us to the movement of the Holy Spirit  
in praise of our Savior. **Amen.**

**49** God, our Rock, our refuge, our resting place,  
we come to you.  
Out of another busy week of work,  
out of our struggles to be meaningful in our world,  
out of our desire to meet you and know you  
as the center of our being,  
we come to you, O unmovable Rock of our security. **Amen.**

**50** O God,  
the author and foundation of hope,  
enable us to rely with confident expectation on your promises,  
knowing that the trials and hindrances of the present time  
are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed,  
and having our faces steadfastly set toward the light  
that shines more and more to the perfect day,  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

**51** Leader: This is the place, O God, and this is the time!  
All: **Here and now you wait to break into our experience!**  
Voice 1: To change our minds, to change our attitudes,  
Voice 2: to change our ways, to change our lives!  
Voice 3: To help us see the whole of life with your eyes  
Voice 4: and hear your Word for our own time!  
Leader: To help us smell the fragrance of your glory,  
Voice 1: to breathe in the freshness of your Holy Spirit!  
Voice 2: To help us reach out and touch the face of Jesus,  
Voice 3: to feel your healing touch and taste your mercy!  
Voice 4: To discover you in the unexpected,  
All: **to worship you with our whole selves!**  
**Come, Spirit of God, we await your power and your presence! Amen.**

**52** O God, who created us in love,  
**create us anew in love as we worship you.**  
O Jesus Christ, who redeemed this world in love,  
**reclaim our hearts as we worship you.**  
O Holy Spirit, who moves this world toward its God-appointed end,  
**move within us as we worship you. Amen.**

**53** O Lord God, how great you are!  
On the first day of the week we commemorate  
your creation of the world and all that is in it.  
**Lord, send forth your Spirit**  
**and renew the face of the earth.**  
O Lord God, how great you are!

On the first day of the week we commemorate  
the resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior, from the dead.

**Lord, create in us a pure heart  
and renew a steadfast spirit within us.**

O Lord God, how great you are!

On the first day of the week we celebrate in song  
the presence of your Holy Spirit in the church  
and throughout the whole world. **Amen and Amen!**

**54** *A text especially mindful of children*

Dear God,  
we like to sing.  
And we know you like that too.  
We pray that your Holy Spirit  
will help us all to sing well today  
so that you will be honored.  
And help us to remember  
all the Christians around the world  
as we all sing together today.  
It must sound very beautiful to you.  
For Jesus' sake, **Amen.**

**Additional Resources**

*These additional resources, many drawn from Scripture, are faithful responses to God's words of invitation and promise. Many of them express deep longing for God and hope in God despite difficult circumstances. Each of these responses leads naturally into singing that expresses similar or complementary themes.*

- 55** Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;  
let your glory be over all the earth.  
My heart is steadfast, O God,  
my heart is steadfast;  
I will sing and make music.

**Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;  
let your glory be over all the earth.**

—Psalm 57:5, 7, 11, NIV

- 56** O God, you are my God,  
earnestly I seek you;  
my soul thirsts for you,  
my body longs for you,  
in a dry and weary land  
where there is no water.  
I have seen you in the sanctuary  
and beheld your power and your glory.  
Because your love is better than life,

my lips will glorify you.  
**I will praise you as long as I live,  
and in your name I will lift up my hands.**

—Psalm 63:1-4, NIV

- 57 I rejoiced with those who said to me,  
“Let us go to the house of the LORD.”

—Psalm 122:1, NIV

- 58 Let us call to mind the reason for our hope:  
Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed,  
for his compassions never fail.  
They are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.  
I say to myself, “The LORD is my portion;  
therefore I will wait for him.”  
**The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him,  
to the one who seeks him;  
it is good to wait quietly  
for the salvation of the LORD.**

—from Lamentations 3:21-26, NIV

- 59 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
**who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing.**  
For he chose us in him before the creation of the world  
**that we might be holy and blameless before God.**

—from Ephesians 1:3-4

- 60 In holy splendor, we worship the Lord.  
**In God is glory and strength.  
The Lord is mighty. God is with us.**  
In torrents and storms, God’s peace pervades.  
**In rumbling thunder, God’s mighty voice soothes.  
The Lord is majestic. God is with us.**  
The whisper of the Lord snaps silence.  
**The unwavering sound persists.  
The Lord is awesome. God is with us.**  
As flames being fanned, the presence grows.  
**In its shadow the wilderness pleads.  
The Lord is powerful. God is with us.**  
Enthroned, God rules the universe.  
**The peaceful scepter prevails.  
God reigns. God is with us.**  
In whirling winds, nature acknowledges glory.  
**The people in the temple rejoice.  
It is certain. God is with us.**

—based on Psalm 29

- 61** We will bless the Lord at all times,  
**God's praise is always on our lips;**  
**in the Lord our souls shall make their boast.**  
The humble shall hear and be glad.  
Glorify the Lord with us.  
Together let us praise God's name.  
**We sought the Lord and were heard,**  
**from all our terrors set free.**  
Look toward God and be radiant;  
let your faces not be ashamed.  
When the poor cry out, the Lord hears them  
and rescues them from all their distress.  
**Taste and see that the Lord is good.**  
**They are happy who seek refuge in God.**

—based on Psalm 34:1-8

- 62** *A text especially mindful of children*

If today we hear God's voice in our hearts, we must follow it.  
**If today we hear God's voice in our hearts, we must follow it.**  
Come, everyone, let's sing to the Lord.  
Let us tell the world that God has saved us.  
Let us thank him from the bottom of our hearts.  
Let us sing songs of praise to him.  
**If today we hear God's voice in our hearts, we must follow it.**  
Come, let us bow down our heads and pray to God.  
Let us kneel before the God who made us.  
He is our God. We are his people. He loves us.  
**If today we hear God's voice in our hearts, we must follow it.**  
Today if you hear the voice of God in your hearts, follow it.  
Do not grumble or argue the way the people in the desert did  
when everything didn't go the way they expected it to.  
**If today we hear God's voice in our hearts, we must follow it.**

—based on Psalm 95

- 63** **This is the day the Lord has made.**

**Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**  
Again today we come together to worship—  
the God of creation, of salvation,  
of time and eternity;  
the God of all peoples, of all nations,  
of all conditions of people everywhere.  
**Praise the Lord.**  
**All that is within me,**  
**Praise God's holy name.**  
Praise the Lord and remember all his kindnesses:  
in forgiving our sins;  
in curing our diseases;  
in saving us from destruction;

in surrounding us with love.  
**The Lord is full of mercy and compassion.**  
**The Lord is slow to anger**  
**and willing to give us gifts of love.**  
**Praise the Lord!**  
**Oh, all that is within me, praise the Lord.**

—based on Psalm 103:1-8; 118:24

- 64** For rebirth and resilience,  
**blessed be God;**  
 for the spiritually humble,  
**glory to God, hallelujah;**  
 for all who hunger and thirst for justice,  
**praise him and magnify him forever;**  
 for all who are banned for speaking the truth,  
**blessed be God;**  
 for all who triumph over their bitter circumstance  
**glory to God, hallelujah;**  
 for all who risk reputation, livelihood, and life itself  
 for Christ's sake and the gospel;  
**all praise and all glory; this is God's kingdom;**  
**praise him and love him forever.**
- 65** You are the great God—the one who is in heaven.  
 It is you, shield of truth,  
 it is you, tower of truth,  
 it is you, bush of truth,  
 it is you, who sits in the highest,  
**you are the creator of life,**  
**you made the regions above.**  
 The creator who made the heavens also,  
 the maker of the stars and the Pleiades—  
 the shooting stars declare it to us.  
 The trumpet speaks—for us it calls.  
 You are the hunter who hunts for souls;  
 you are the leader who goes before us;  
 you are the great mantle that covers us.  
**You are he whose hands are wounded;**  
**you are he whose feet are wounded;**  
**you are he whose blood is a trickling stream—and why?**  
**You are he whose blood was spilled for us.**  
 For this great price we call,  
 for your own place we call.
- 66** God of the past, who has created and nurtured us,  
**we are here to thank you.**  
 God of the future, who is always ahead of us,  
**we are here to thank you.**

God of the present, who is here in the midst of us,  
**we are here to thank you.**  
God of life, who is beyond us and within us,  
**we rejoice in your glorious love.**

- 67** We come to worship God in our need,  
**bringing with us the needs of the world.**  
We come to God, who comes to us in Jesus,  
**and who knows by experience what human life is like.**  
We come with our faith and with our doubts,  
**we come with our hopes and with our fears.**  
We come as we are because it is God who invites us to come,  
**and God has promised never to turn us away.**

- 68** God, who has called you into fellowship  
with his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, is faithful.  
**He is a faithful Lord, keeping his covenant of love  
to a thousand generations of those who love him  
and keep his commands.**  
His faithfulness reaches to the skies  
and continues throughout all generations on into eternity.  
**We therefore praise the faithfulness  
of our Lord Jesus Christ in this assembly, saying,  
“Great is your faithfulness!  
We will exalt and praise your name,  
for in perfect faithfulness you have done marvelous things.  
Great is your faithfulness to us, O Lord, our God.”**

- 69** Our worship is in the name of the Father,  
**the one eternal God in whom we live  
and move and have our being,**  
and of the Son,  
**our crucified and risen Lord, Jesus Christ,**  
**through whom the love of God  
is made manifest among us,**  
and of the Holy Spirit,  
**the Counselor by whom we become  
the people of God and  
the church of Jesus Christ.**

- 70** *A text especially mindful of children*

Lord God,  
we love you.  
We trust you.  
We believe in you.  
We know that Jesus loves us and died for us.  
We know that you never leave us.  
Today, we celebrate together  
because of everything you have done for us!