

2011–2012

# Thanksgiving Service



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# Women of the ELCA

## 2011–2012 Thankoffering Service

Women of the Lutheran church have been gathering in the setting of Thankoffering services since the early 1900s. It is a tradition grounded in our celebration of community, meeting together as faithful women joyfully giving thanks and praise for what God has given to us. Over 2,000 women celebrated this Thankoffering Service on July 15, 2011, during our Eighth Triennial Gathering in Spokane, Wash.

## Gathering

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, the sower, the seed, the fruit;  
our lifeboat, our treasure, our leaven.

Blessed be God forever.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God of heaven and earth,  
we name before you the sin that enslaves us,  
the sin that wounds us and others,  
the sin that scars our world.

Forgive us and heal us.

Guard us from all evil.

Give to us and the whole creation  
the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

**Amen.**

Come, all who are weary, all who carry heavy burdens.

As tender as parent to child, so gentle is God to us.

As high as heaven is above earth, so vast is God's love for us. As far as  
east is from west, so far God removes our sin,  
renewing our lives in + Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

## Gathering Song

*Gather Us In ELW 532*



## Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

## Prayer of the Day

Let us pray—

Almighty God, source of every blessing,

your generous goodness comes to us anew every day.

By the work of your Spirit lead us to acknowledge your goodness, give  
thanks for your benefits and serve you in willing obedience; through  
your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## Word

### First Reading

Deuteronomy 8: 7–18

### Psalm

Psalm 126

### Second Reading

Philippians 4: 4–9

### Gospel Acclamation

*Heaven is Singing for Joy ELW 664*

### Gospel

Luke 17: 11–19

### Sermon

### Hymn of the Day

*Voices Raised to You ELW 845*



### **Prayers of Intercession**

In thanksgiving for God's eternal grace, let us pray for the church, the world and all those in need.

*A brief silence.*

We give you thanks for the blessings you pour out upon the church. Empower your people in every land, that we may reflect your goodness and grace. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We give you thanks for the nurture and care you provide the creation. Inspire our love for all you have made that we may live wisely on this earth. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We give you thanks for the blessing of peace in our world, in our homes and in our lives. End conflict and strife among us that we may live in dignity and safety. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We give you thanks for the great things you do for those in need. Restore health to the sick and turn sorrow into joy, anxiety into peace, doubt into trust. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We give you thanks for the opportunities to serve you every day. Bless the Women of the ELCA that those who participate may be a blessing to others. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We give you thanks for faithful women who have been your servants and witnesses in times past: for Sarah and Ruth; for Deborah and Esther; for Mary, mother of our Lord and Mary



Magdalene; for Catherine of Siena and Julian of Norwich; for Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman; for those women who have touched our lives and nurtured our faith. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, trusting in your abundant mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

### **Peace**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

### **Meal**

#### **Offering**

*Thankofferings will be used by Women of the ELCA for the total outreach of the women's organization.*

#### **Great Thanksgiving**

#### **Communion**

*Now Behold the Lamb ELW 341*

*In the Singing ELW 466*

*By Your Hand You Feed Your People ELW 469*

#### **Prayer After Communion**

God of abundance, with this bread of life and cup of salvation you have united us with Christ, making us one with all your people. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**



## **Sending**

### **Blessing**

*Response after the blessing:* **Amen.**

### **Sending Song**

*We are Called* ELW 720

### **Dismissal**

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Acknowledgments**

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# Notes for Thankoffering Worship Planners

This service may be used when the Thankofferings for Women of the ELCA are received. It may be used for Sunday worship or for a weekday gathering of Women of the ELCA.

## For Consideration in Planning

One or more people may plan this service, working with your worship committee, music director and other Women of the ELCA participants. You may wish to invite other congregations to celebrate with you. Set a time to meet and discuss the service and consider how to involve young women in the planning and worship.

## Thankoffering Talk

The Thankoffering service is an opportunity for women, with the entire congregation, if desired, to share and celebrate the commitment to ministries of the women's organization.

## Offering

Women of the ELCA Thankofferings support the total outreach of the organization. The Thankoffering service gives you the opportunity to display items, photos and stories representing the people served by your monetary gifts.

## Promote Full Participation

It is appropriate to invite the entire congregation to participate in this service. Encourage everyone to give a monetary gift so we may continue the ministry efforts of women.



## Planning Ahead

Organize your materials four weeks ahead of time. Gather a group of people and delegate some main responsibilities, including:

- *scheduling* worship and music rehearsals
- *writing* an article or bulletin insert for the church's newsletter which includes the history and tradition of Thankofferings
- *viewing* the Women of the ELCA DVD during an adult education hour or during a fellowship time.
- *organizing* the fellowship following the service
- *discussing* with your pastor the possibility for a laywoman, who is able and willing, to be a guest preacher for the service

## Planning for Worship

The texts suggested in this service are optional. A congregation may choose to create a Thankoffering service around a regular Lectionary Sunday's texts, particularly a Sunday with texts that support discipleship or stewardship themes. If you so choose, use the prayer of the day for that Sunday.

## Planning for the day

*One to two weeks prior to the service:*

- Invite several women to give personal testimonies in worship or adult education time about their thankfulness for the ministry of women and outreach of Women of the ELCA.
- Contact all the people who are participating in the service to review with them if everything is in place.
- Recognize that with careful planning the Thankoffering service can provide a powerful worship experience for your congregation and wider community.



# Create Your Own Thankoffering Devotion

As a disciple of stewardship, creating your own Thankoffering devotion can help you and the women in your group become more involved in spiritual growth, expressing how God is active in ministry and providing a tangible expression of God's abundant blessings through the Thankoffering given.

Take some time to make a list of the many ways in which women gather and interact in your congregation. Meet together to discuss the importance of spiritual development and its relationship with participation and giving. Further consider how you will share these devotions with all women (those in your community and those you invite from another congregation to join in fellowship and sharing of ministries).

## **Some elements you may wish to include in your Thankoffering devotion include:**

- a hymn
- a litany
- prayer
- scripture reading
- responsive readings
- silent reflection/meditation

## **Use your devotion:**

- in your Women of the ELCA circle or Bible study group
- for personal or family devotional time
- for a committee or other business meeting
- for retreats
- for informal worship time
- at a cluster/conference or synodical women's gathering



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