

Living Liturgy Writing Tool

When we gather for worship, prayer, and praise, it can look like a lot of different things. Some of us worship out in the countryside, and some of us are right in the middle of downtown. Some of our sanctuaries can hold hundreds but are often filled with a few dozen faithful members, and some of our sanctuaries are cozy and bursting at the gills with new people on Sunday morning. It’s tempting to compare the look and shape of our worshipping communities, but this often leads only to despair and distraction.

What **does** help in planning worship, is finding and/or creating liturgy that comes from the heart and speaks of God’s desire to be in relationship with God’s creation in your particular time and place—in other words, seek to address your context and community of which your worshipping community is a part.

Please use the steps below to create a liturgy that fits your specific congregation and community. God isn’t just Immanuel just at Christmas—God is Immanuel (God with us) all the time, incarnate, and humbly coming into our particular places and spaces to make God’s Word known, whether you’re a big church or a little church, a rural or an urban church. The first step to making a living liturgy for your worshipping community is as follows:

1. Invite your worship and music committee or team into this liturgy creating process.
2. Share these instructions before you gather, and use this liturgy-creating process together to ask good questions and create specific parts of your congregation’s liturgy, like in Advent or Lent, or beyond.

Confession and Forgiveness

Prayer of Confession

ELW Option A	Suggestions	Your congregation’s liturgy
Most Merciful God	Lord of all mercy and healing, Merciful Lord, God of grace	
We confess	We believe, we know	
That we are captive to sin	To be bound, stuck, consumed	
And cannot free ourselves	Can’t get out, can’t be untangled, can’t be liberated. Parched dry.	
We have sinned against you		

In thought, word, and deed	In our words, minds, and actions.	
By what we have done	Behavior	
And by what we have left undone.	Discarded, left behind, trash, threw away	
We have not loved you		
With our whole heart;	Holistic, wholeness that you have created us to be	
We have not loved		
Our neighbors as ourselves.	Withheld care, ignored the stranger and the outcast.	
For the sake		
Of your Son, Jesus Christ,		
Have mercy on us.		
Forgive us, renew us, and lead us	Heal us, restore us, bring us into new life in you,	
So that we may delight in your will	Joyfully walk with you and in your footsteps	
And walk in your ways,	Follow your example, model	
To the glory of your holy name	So that all may know your great, unmatched love in word and deed.	
Amen.	May it be so. Praise the Lord, Hallelujah. True. Not “truly surely or so be it”	

Declaration of Forgiveness

ELW Option A	Suggestions	Your congregation's liturgy
In the mercy of almighty God	In the grace of our Lord, In the provision of God Almighty	

Jesus Christ was given to die for us,	Jesus Christ was given over to death for us, the cross of Christ made us at one with God, Christ gave of himself for our atonement with God.	
And for his sake		
God forgives us all our sins.		
As a called and ordained minister	As a called witness to the Gospel, as a called disciple of Christ	
Of the church of Christ,		
And by his authority,		
I therefore declare to you	I therefore proclaim to you, I now share with you boldly the declaration of,	
The entire forgiveness of all your sins,		
In the name of the Father,	In whose name we pray and learn and lead, and live.	
And of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit	Fountain, Offspring, Wellspring (Ruth Duck) Source, Word, Spirit (Ruth Duck and Patricia Wilson-Kastner) Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer (Luther) Beloved, Lover, Love (<i>inspired by Augustine</i>)	
Amen.	May it be so, Praise the Lord, Hallelujah, Thanks be to God Amen, And all the people said Amen.	

Passing of the Peace

ELW Option A	Suggestions	Your congregation's liturgy
<p>The peace of Christ Be with you always</p>		
<p>And also with you</p>		
<p>Please share a sign of peace to each other</p>	<p>Please share a gesture of peace with one another, share the peace!</p>	
<p><i>Gesture of peace</i></p>	<p><i>High-five, make two halves of a heart that comes together, make a turkey pound/high-five, link thumbs and butterfly fingers up toward the sky together</i></p>	
<p>Peace be with you!</p>	<p>God's peace to you, peace be with you</p>	