



NE MN Synod Journey Worship “Celebrate”

THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESOURCE:

This Worship Service may serve as a tool for engaging your congregation in the Synod Journey to the ELCA Youth Gathering. Whether or not you have youth participating in The Synod Journey to the ELCA Youth Gathering, we encourage you to use this resource with your congregation.

This worship resource can be used in its entirety or as pieces to be inserted into your worship or other gatherings.

We strongly encourage congregations to have youth lead this worship experience. While liturgies, prayers, etc. have been provided, we invite you to engage your youth in writing and developing their own worship pieces around this theme. Use the “Parts of Worship Overview” resource and this Worship service as a model to create your own worship service.

This worship service provides you with an opportunity to introduce youth to the congregation. Print names in your bulletin. Have youth introduce themselves before leading their portion of the service. Help your congregation recognize that we are all on this Journey together.

NE MN Synod Journey Worship, Spring 2018

INTRODUCTION OF “THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING” - CELEBRATE

(Invite one of your youth to read this introduction before beginning worship.)

Leader:

We GATHER as God's people, HEAR God's Word and CELEBATE its life-changing effect. We ponder its uncomfortable and confusing nature while simultaneously giving thanks for its promise of hope, grace, and love.

Youth and adults from the NE MN Synod are preparing their hearts, minds, and bodies to travel to Houston this June. As supporting congregations, we continue to explore and experience how God's call, love, grace, hope, and the gift of Jesus, change us and all of creation.

Once again, you are invited to join the gathering. Our worship service last spring recognized our call to GATHER as God's people, and our worship earlier this winter introduced us to the Story Kit that we use to HEAR God's word in Scripture passages. Today's worship service *(or this excerpt taken from the Journey Worship resources)* will CELEBRATE our proclamation of faith in Jesus Chris and our belief that “This Changes Everything”.

GATHERING SONG:

(During the song, gather an intergenerational group to process in the candle and other Story Kit Items. Place these items at the front.)

Song Suggestions:

“Make a Difference” by Rachel Kurtz

“Bind Us Together” from the ELW

“Every Move I Make” by David Ruis

“Shake Another Hand”

(You may choose to include a time of reflection mid-song, encouraging participants to silently or aloud consider: How do you celebrate God at work in your life?)

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Welcome to worship!

Congregation: Praise God!

L: Give thanks for this day.

C: We are thankful for all of your creation.

L: We come eager to praise your name.

C: You make us glad to follow you.

L: Change our hearts so that we might mindfully celebrate your work in our lives.

C: Thanks be to God!

ALTERNATIVE CALL TO WORSHIP

(A more modern “pump up” for worship - perhaps play a recording of Kool and the Gang’s “Celebration”)

Decorate the sanctuary; provide streamers, balloons, and other party accessories and allow time for each person or family to hang up a decoration on the pews, chairs, walls, etc. You might also decorate with the Story Kit items - create paper tiles, question marks, etc. to easily attach to the walls with blue tape. Additionally, the youth leaders might wear flip flops to further emphasize the kits.

Leader: As you help decorate for our celebration, discuss with those around you what it means to celebrate God at work in our lives.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

L: Our stories for the Synod Journey include numerous celebrations of God’s life-changing powers. Moses celebrated the “holy ground” on which he stood and God’s call to join in the work of the great I AM. Jesus celebrated diversity at the well when interacting with a Samaritan woman and the woman celebrated the gifts of God’s forgiveness and love. Philip and the Eunuch celebrated God’s word, bringing them together to experience the gift of God’s grace. On the Road to Emmaus, the disciples celebrated God’s presence with them in their questions and God’s willingness to stay with them and renew their hope. Through the story of the woman in the crowd, we celebrate Jesus and God’s willingness to hear and heal us. We are gathered to continue the celebration of God’s work in our lives.

L: Gracious Lord,

C: Although we celebrate you this day, we often neglect to extend this celebration into our everyday. We fail to live as your children, turning away from your message of love, hope, and grace. We do not take time to see you at work in our lives and fail to give you thanks for all there is to celebrate each day. Help us to remember the eternal celebration that takes place when we trust in you. Forgive us for our sins, and help us to proclaim your name each day of our lives.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

L: Hear the good news and celebrate! Through Jesus' death on the cross, your sins are forgiven. This Changes Everything!

P: **Thanks be to God!**

ALTERNATIVE CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS (for non-traditional worship)

Pass around paper and pens/pencils

L: We often fail to celebrate God's gift of one another and give thanks for the people in our lives. We forget to thank others for their care and friendship. Today, we are going to write thank you notes to those who we might not thank enough. You can write one to people supporting the Synod Journey, to a fellow church member, or someone in your life who deserves your thanks. You can even write one to God!

(Allow time for writing, maybe 3-5 minutes)

L: We thank God for forgiving our sins. Often we forget about the people who care about us, we forget about the One who cares about us most of all. We acknowledge that we turn away from you, God. Help us to celebrate your many gifts that truly change everything.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: Let us pray,

C: We have been gathered here today to hear and celebrate stories of your hope and love, but you speak to us every day. Allow us to celebrate your saving and redeeming Word both now and always, so that we might witness your ever-present grace and love that have the power to change everything. We pray this through the One who changed everything for us and for all creation, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE SONG SUGGESTIONS:

"The Well" by Casting Crowns

"Come Thou Fount" ELW

"Mercy is Falling"

"Trading My Sorrows" Israel Houghton and New Breed

CHILDREN'S TIME

L: Have you ever had/been to a birthday party? What was it like? How long after the birthday party did you still think about it?

L: Your birthday party only comes by once a year. But believing in God is like a party every day. Maybe we aren't eating cake every day, or running around wild with our friends. But God's love is like cake for our hearts and God's hope allows us to run around telling people about God's love. We celebrate God at work in our lives every day.

SINGING INTO SCRIPTURE SONG SUGGESTIONS:

"I Have This Hope" by 10th Avenue North

"Open the Eyes of My Heart Lord" Michael W. Smith

THEME SCRIPTURE VERSE: Ephesians 2:8

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God."

REFLECTION QUESTION: This Changes Everything! What does this mean?

(Each Journey Worship service will include this verse and reflection question. We encourage youth and adults from within your congregation to share brief faith talks in response to the theme and question.)

GOSPEL READINGS:

(These readings share the story of Jesus' calling and gathering of the disciples. They were gathered as disciples, gathered to follow, gathered to gather others. This changed everything!)

ACTS 8: 26-40 "In our surrender, God's grace changes everything."

²⁶Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) ²⁷So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

²⁹Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." ³⁰So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you

are reading?” ³¹He replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. ³²Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: “Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. ³³In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.” ³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” ³⁵Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” ³⁸He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

SERMON

(Philip and the Eunuch are brought to a deeper understanding of God’s word and grace through their shared experience. Share reflections on being changed through considering God’s Word as a community. The Eunuch states “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” and celebrates that nothing can prevent us from receiving God’s grace.)

SONG

“Grace be Enough” by Maia Dalager available at Synod Journey Resource website

“Your Grace is Enough” by Matt Maher

“This Changes Everything” Gathering Theme Song by James Kocain

INTRODUCTION TO CREED/STATEMENT OF FAITH

Leader:

The Creed allows us to take time to remember what we believe as God’s people and confess it communally. The Creed tells us that we are created with all that exists, and that we are redeemed by Jesus Christ. It also says that we need the Holy Spirit to call us through the Gospel and keep us holy as believers of the faith. This changes everything.

Congregation:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING**

ALTERNATIVE CONFESSION OF FAITH:

Sing "We Believe" by Newsboys or "I Believe I Do Believe" by Dakota Road

OFFERING SONG SUGGESTIONS:

"Overflow" (Camp song)

"Sanctuary" (Camp song)

"Amazing Grace" ELW

OFFERING PRAYER

L: Let us pray,

C: May our time, talents, and possessions be a collective offering to you from your people. Help us to use these gifts to change the hearts of both ourselves and those around us, so that we all might be gathered to serve the community made possible by your radical grace. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, all of God's creation. Hear us, O God, **Your mercy is great.**

Gracious God, we pray for the church and its ministry, may it be a welcoming and loving place for all. We are forever changed because of your love, may the church be a reflection of that love within our communities. Hear us, O God, **Your mercy is great.**

For peace, and justice in the world, the nations, and those in authority, may we know peace and an end to injustice. Thank you for all who work to end violence and hatred. Hear us, O God, **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for the well-being of all creation. Thank you for this earth and the many creatures, big and small, who call it home. We are grateful for its beauty and abundant resources. Empower us to be loving stewards of your creation. Hear us, O God, **Your mercy is great.**

Together we pray for all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit. May we all find comfort in your love, O gracious God. Thank you for all those who work to strengthen others, may they also find strength. Today we lift up.... Hear us, O God, **Your mercy is great.**

For all who came before us and who are now at rest, we pray. With thankful hearts we praise you, O God, for their lives and all the ways in which they have shaped us. May we be a living memory of their love. Hear us, O God, **Your mercy is great.**

God hears our prayers and celebrates our eternal life with him. We pray that we, too, hold on to the promise of everlasting life while trusting in your healing power here on Earth. Continue to hear our prayers, O God, as we believe in your mercy. In your name we pray, **Amen.**

INTRODUCTION TO THE SHARING OF THE PEACE

L: The passing of the peace is an act of reconciliation that prepares us to receive the Eucharist together as different members of the same community. We are changed by Christ's peace and now we have the opportunity to extend that peace to others. As Lutherans, we believe that Eucharist and scripture truly change us and those around us.

SHARING OF PEACE

Leader: The peace of the Lord be with you

All: And also with you

INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNION

L: Communion connects the believers of Jesus Christ. The bread and wine, though simple, convey a real presence of God, and this presence is shared with all those who Commune. Through the Lord's Supper, we acknowledge Christ's sacrifice that made possible the forgiveness of our sins.

Even though Christ's betrayal is a story filled with sadness, Communion also reminds us of His resurrection. The official celebration of this, Easter, is one of the most joyful days of the church year. Yet, we can celebrate Christ's resurrection each time we take part in Communion. This is certainly a reason to celebrate our faith!

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

INTRODUCTION TO THE LORD'S PRAYER

L: Today, many people are gathered around the world praying the Lord's Prayer together as the body of Christ. Take note of the inclusive language used throughout the Lord's Prayer, "OUR Father in Heaven", "Give US our daily bread." Regardless of heritage, these words reveal God's unconditional love that changes everything.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

L: Jesus gathered his disciples together and taught them to pray:

**C: Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen**

INVITE TO COMMUNION

(You may choose to invite participants to take a different route back to their seats or even return to a different seat following communion, recognizing that this gift changes us, our perspectives and our paths.)

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION SONG

COMMUNION BLESSING

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the gifts of his body and blood strengthen, keep and unite us, now and forever. **Amen**

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Holy One, we give you thanks for gathering us around your table and giving us your endless love. Let that love overflow more and more into our lives. As changed people, may we be empowered by your Spirit to love our neighbor and the earth that you created, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

BLESSING/BENEDICTION

May God's Word inspire you to celebrate your faith. Remember the community made through common profession of God's life-changing love, grace, and hope. Hold fast to God's promises, and share your joy with others. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, **Amen**.

SENDING SONG

"No Matter" by Lost and Found

"Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel" (Camp song)

DISMISSAL

L: Go in peace - to invite, to be invited, to change, and to be changed!

C: **Thanks be to God.**

This worship liturgy was developed for congregational use by the Northeastern Minnesota Synod Journey Worship Team. Primary writing credit is given to Team Leader Shivon Miller (Minister of Congregational Life, Trinity Lutheran Church, Duluth, MN) and team member Jackson Churchill (college student, Luther College, Decorah, IA)