



## NE MN Synod Journey Worship

# “Hear”

### 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 Gathering, we encourage you to use this resource with your congregation. How does our hearing God’s Word impact our daily lives and change both us and our encounters with God?

There are four parts to every worship service: Gather, Hear the Word, Celebrate and Sent. This worship resource focuses on “Hearing the Word”. Using this resource, participants will briefly encounter the five Biblical stories central to the Synod Journey and ELCA Youth Gathering and the theme “*This Changes Everything*”.

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, Fall 2017-2018**

## **INTRODUCTION OF “THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING”: HEAR THE WORD:**

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

### **Leader:**

We gather as God’s people to hear God’s Word and its life-changing effect. We ponder its uncomfortable and confusing nature while simultaneously holding onto its promise of hope, grace, and love.

After being introduced to the Synod Journey and ELCA Youth Gathering this spring and summer, youth and adults from the NE MN Synod are now actively immersed in preparations to travel to Houston this June.

*(Take time to introduce each of your Journey youth)*

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 Journey. Our worship service last spring celebrated our gathering as God’s people. Today’s worship service *(or this excerpt taken from the Synod Journey Worship resources)* introduces us to the five Biblical stories central to the Synod Journey and ELCA Youth Gathering and the theme “*This Changes Everything*”. It also gives us an opportunity to encounter the Story Kit being used by congregations across our Synod to engage and help make sense of the Scripture passages encountered during the Synod Journey and ELCA Youth Gathering. Inside this kit are a cloth, candle, letter tiles, flip flop, scripture book, question mark, and water bottle. You will see how we will use these items throughout today’s service. Additionally, you will see that these texts challenge our expectations of identity, love, surrender, struggle, and, ultimately, Jesus, to show us that God truly changes everything.

## **LETTER TILES:**

*(Make large letter tiles to represent the letters in your Story Kits. You may choose to have your youth all come up and hold the letter tiles or you may choose to stick them onto chairs that you move around or post them onto boxes that can be shuffled. Begin with the letters scrambled up front.)*

### **Leader:**

We gather together as God’s people, intentionally seeking a word from God, believing that God’s word has the power to change us.

## GATHERING SONG: “Listen God is Calling” ELW 513

*(After the first two verses, you may choose to include a time of reflection, encouraging participants to silently or aloud consider how they hear the Word of God. Does it make them confused or clear, sad or happy, worried or calm, angry or encouraged...?)*

*(After the second two verses, you may choose to reflect: What is your prayer that God may change the way you hear God’s Word? Do you pray for understanding, a message of hope, a feeling of Jesus’ love, a sense of faith...?)*

ALTERNATIVE SONG SUGGESTIONS: “Ancient Words” or “Open Your Ears, O Faithful People” ELW #519

## CALL TO WORSHIP:

**Story 1: Moses and the Burning Bush**

**Theme: God’s Call Changes Everything**

**Leader:** God’s Call Changes Everything

*(Shuffle your letters to pull out the letters for CALL. Have the word CALL clearly in the center of your space.)*

**Leader:** In our first Journey text, we encounter Moses. When Moses led his flock to Horeb, the mountain of God - literally translated as the “wasteland” - the angel of the Lord appeared to him as a burning bush. Moses hid his face in fear, yet the Lord told Moses to take off his sandals, for he was standing on “holy ground.” God then promised to deliver the Israelites from their misery, sending Moses to Pharaoh to bring God’s people out of Egypt. Furthermore, in order for Moses to confront Pharaoh, God told him to reference his Lord as the great I AM.

**Leader:** God’s call changes everything. Although answers from God often lead to more mysteries, God calls us to trust and have faith. God also calls us into community with each other as believers. We are not always willing or able to understand what God says to us. Yet, we are reminded - sometimes through signs such as a burning bush - that God’s call, love, grace, and hope change everything.

(Bring the Story Kit Candle forward and light it)

**Leader:** We enter “holy ground” today. This candle, from our Story Kit, is lit to remind us that God is here with us.

(Bring the Story Kit flip flop forward)

**Leader:** We lay a “flip flop” on our altar space to remind us of God’s words to Moses “take off your shoes, for you are standing on holy ground”. God comes to us and calls us to listen, to find our identity, our call, in God.

## ALTERNATIVE CALL TO WORSHIP (Moses)

Organized chaos throughout the sanctuary; have music playing, people talking loudly, the pastor trying to preach, etc.

**Leader:** How do we figure out who or what to listen to in life? How easy was that activity? Share with those around you the feeling of trying to balance work, school, household duties, etc. and how easy/hard it is to listen to God.

Light the candle and remember God's presence with you. Remember that this presence is what makes the very ground you stand on - at work, at school, while doing household chores - holy ground. As the flip flop is laid on the altar, take off your shoes and pause a moment to listen for God's call.

## SONG SUGGESTION "Here I Am, Lord" ELW #574

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Story 2: The Woman at the Well

Theme: God's Love Changes Everything

L: God's love changes everything.  
*(shuffle your letters to spell the word LOVE).*

L: In the story of the woman at the well, Jesus crossed a boundary: he, a Jew, asked a Samaritan woman for a drink. Jesus' mission was not constrained by cultural, gender, or ethical boundaries; rather, he offered the same "living water" to all willing to drink from Jesus' well. In other words, he offered eternal life to those who believed in him - even if they came from "enemy territory." The woman at the well is surprised that Jesus knows all about her and still offers God's abundant love.

(Bring the Story Kit Water Bottle forward)

L: We use this water bottle to represent Christ's "living water" that saves, heals, and renews. We remember our baptisms and the gift of forgiveness. God knows all of you, may you continue to be surprised by his abundant love.

L: Gracious Lord,

**C: We know that we often forget to drink your living water. We fail to be changed by your Son's love, and we fail to learn from his mission on Earth. Help us to remember how your love, grace, and hope through the cross change everything for us. We are sinners, but by the compassion of Jesus on the cross, we are changed and made clean again. Forgive us for our self-centeredness and help us to cross boundaries and spread your love.**

## **ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

**L:** Through Jesus' death on the cross, your sins are eternally forgiven. As we hear stories that tell of your promise of our salvation, may we remember to live as forgiven people, and follow Christ's call to embody this forgiveness unto others - even those different than us. Jesus is hope. Jesus is love. Jesus is grace. Jesus is our redeeming life. Amen.

## **ALTERNATIVE CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS (Woman at the Well) (for non-traditional worship)**

Pass around strips of cloth and a washable marker

Have each congregation member write a negative word, regret, or perceived shortcoming on the cloth with the washable marker - remind them that only they will see that word or phrase

Pass around Sharpie/permanent markers

Have each member cover up the negative phrase with a positive phrase, or simply the words, "listen," "love," "forgiven," etc.

Provide basins/buckets of water (the water bottle) throughout sanctuary, and direct parishioners to rub out the washable marker

**Leader:** Just as the strip of cloth contained negative and positive phrases, God's Word both challenges and uplifts us. We come up short of reciprocating this love to all whom we meet. Our self-centeredness and fear of difference hinder us from building a community of love. But, in the end, God's unconditional love reminds us that we are forgiven of our sins. Through our faith, we are all given "living water" that saves, heals, and renews us. So long as we believe in God, we will never thirst for salvation. This changes everything.

**SONG SUGGESTIONS** "Create in Me a Clean Heart", "Overflow", "Living Water", "Mercy is Falling", "You're the Source", "Baptized in Water"(ELW), "Waterlife" (ELW)

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**L:** Let us pray,

**C:** **We have been gathered here today to hear stories of your hope and love, but you speak to us every day. Allow us to hear your saving and redeeming Word both now and always, so that we might witness your ever-present grace and love that has 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.**

## **CHILDREN'S TIME**

\* This is a great opportunity to introduce your youth if you have not done so above. You can also introduce the Journey Story Kits if you choose briefly sharing the main point of each story as a way to further teach the congregation about what will take place during the Journey. You may choose to make small Story kits (paper cut out letters, flicker candle, picture of a flip flop, Bible, and question mark, a small square of fabric and a cup) for the children to bring home and use with their families. You could also give them a candle to bring home to remind them of God's presence with them always.

**THE TILES:** Placing of the Letter Tiles

Each session will pull letters from the tiles to spell a focus word for that story.

**THE CANDLE:** Lighting of the Candle

The candle will be lit as a reminder of God's presence.

**THE FLIP FLOP:** Sharing Holy Ground Moments

Participants will pass around the flip flop sharing their recent "holy ground" experiences.

**"THE WORD" SCRIPTURE BOOK:** Encountering Scripture

Participants will take turns reading scripture from the Word and reflecting upon the story read.

**THE QUESTION MARK:** Lifting up Questions

Participants will pass around the question mark and share a question they have after encountering the Biblical text.

**THE WATER BOTTLE:** Blessings

Participants will pass around the water bottle and share a blessing with one another related to the story.

**SINGING INTO SCRIPTURE** "Change My Heart O God" ELW 801 or  
"Lord Let My Heart Be Good Soil" ELW

**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.)*

## SCRIPTURE READING:

### Story 3: Philip and the Eunuch

Theme: God's Grace Changes Everything!

**Leader:** God's Grace Changes Everything.

*(Shuffle your letters to spell the word "Grace")*

*(Bring forward the Story Kit Scripture book, or bring forward a large Bible)*

**Leader:** A reading from ACTS 8: 26-40

<sup>26</sup>Then 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.) <sup>27</sup>So 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 <sup>28</sup>and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. <sup>29</sup>Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." <sup>30</sup>So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" <sup>31</sup>He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. <sup>32</sup>Now 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. <sup>33</sup>In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth." <sup>34</sup>The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" <sup>35</sup>Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. <sup>36</sup>As 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?" <sup>38</sup>He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. <sup>39</sup>When 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. <sup>40</sup>But 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.

**Leader:** In this story, Philip and the Eunuch are brought together to ponder the word of God found in scripture. Philip asks "Do you understand what you are reading?" and the Eunuch responds "How can I, unless someone guides me?" We are brought together to ponder the word of God found in scripture, to share our understanding and hear God speaking anew. The Eunuch hears the good news of God's grace through Philip's understanding of scripture and seeing no limitations to the work of the Spirit, rushes to the water to be baptized by Philip.

## SERMON

*(Reflections on being changed through considering God's Word as a community. )*

**SONG SUGGESTION: “Blest Be the Tie that Binds” ELW#656 or “I Love to Tell the Story” ELW#661**

## **INTRODUCTION TO CREED/STATEMENT OF FAITH**

### **Leader:**

On any given day, I have a million things on my agenda.  
The demands of my life make it difficult for me to listen to anything, especially God.  
I struggle, feeling enclosed, spending most of my focus on myself and those directly in my line of communication.  
God reaches out to me.  
Even when I feel overwhelmed, God guides me, drawing me into community.  
Even when I feel self-absorbed, God opens me up to those around me.  
Gathered together, through the voices of those around me, I am changed  
God conveys his message of love, grace, and hope.

### **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**

## **OFFERING**

## 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.**

## INTRODUCTION TO PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Story 4: Healed in the Crowd

Theme: Jesus Changes Everything

**Leader:** Jesus Changes Everything.

*(Shuffle the letters to spell the word JESUS)*

*(Bring forward the Story Kit White Cloth)*

**Leader:** One day as Jesus was traveling through the crowds, a woman who had been hemorrhaging for years and was thought to be beyond a cure, reached out and touched the hem of Jesus' cloak, hoping to be healed. Despite the large crowd of people pushing in upon him, Jesus recognizes that the woman has touched the cloth of his robe. Despite the many demands upon him, he stops and calls out her. "Your faith has made you well". While we gather as all God's people to bring our prayers before God, remember Jesus knows you amidst the crowd. Jesus has time for you amidst all the voices that cry out to him. Reach out to Christ, bring your prayers and have faith that Jesus desires to make to you whole:

*(Alternative prayer option: Pass around the white cloth and have people envision touching Jesus' robe as they share a prayer concern for themselves or others.)*

## TRADITIONAL 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 amidst the busyness and chaos of life. Just as Jesus healed a hemorrhaging woman in a large crowd, so God picks us out and heals our wounds - visible and invisible. Just as Jesus takes time for relationships with those whom he heals, so does God invite us into an eternal relationship with him. Continue to hear our prayers, O God, trusting in your mercy. In your name we pray, **Amen.**

**SONG**      “Healer of Our Every Ill” ELW#612

## **SHARING OF PEACE**

**Leader:** The peace of the Lord be with you

**All:** And also with you

## **INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNION**

**Story 5:** The Road to Emmaus

**Theme:** God’s Hope Changes Everything

**Leader:** God’s Hope Changes Everything

*(Shuffle the letters to spell the word HOPE)*

*(Bring forward the Story Kit Question Mark)*

**L:** After Christ’s resurrection, before Christ has revealed himself, Cleopas and another disciple are traveling to Emmaus. As they journey they share their questions and fears. Jesus joins them on the road but they do not recognize him. After Jesus listens to them, he points out their lack of faith. Do they not believe what the scriptures have promised? Jesus has risen from the dead. It is only when they gather around the table and share in the breaking of the bread that their eyes are opened and they see Jesus and celebrate the good news of his resurrection.

Communion can raise many questions for believers. It is difficult to feel the presence of God through simple bread and wine. But, as Jesus showed, this is no ordinary bread and wine; Communion reveals a true presence of God in, with, and through the elements. God meets us at the table with our doubts and questions, but uses his body and blood to display his sacrifice on our behalf. In our struggles, God’s hope changes everything.

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

**L:** In God's word we find the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples:

**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**

### COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION SONG

"All Earth is Hopeful" ELW 266 or "Trading My Sorrows" or "Open the Eyes of My Heart Lord"

### 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. Fill us with a new and living hope. 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

*(Shuffle the letters to spell the words "CHANGE US")*

May the Lord God, who changes us with his calling, his love, his grace, his hope, and his Son, give you his living water. May God fill us up (*dip your hands in the water and make the vertical axis of the cross*) and send us into the world to be agents of change (*dip your hands in the water bottle and make the horizontal axis of the cross*). In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, **Amen**.

**SENDING SONG** “Go My Children, with my Blessing” ELW#543 or “On Our Way Rejoicing” ELW#537 or “Every Move I Make I Make In You” or “Build Your Kingdom Here”

**DISMISSAL**

L: Go in peace - 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).