



NE MN Synod Journey Worship

Spring 2017

“Gather”

THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESOURCE:

This Worship Service is a celebration of being gathered as God’s people. It may serve as a congregational introduction to the NE MN Synod Journey to the ELCA Youth Gathering and a tool for gathering youth and adults to register for this experience.

Whether or not you have youth participating in The NE MN Synod Journey to the Gathering, we encourage you to use this resource with your congregation. How does our being gathered together as God’s people for worship or other experiences change us and our encounter with God?

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 “Elements of Worship Overview” resource and this worship liturgy template as a model to create your own worship service. Alternative choices are indicated by the hashed box outline throughout this template.

NE MN Synod Journey Worship: “Gather”

INTRODUCTION

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

Leader:

We gather as God’s people to explore and experience God’s call on our lives, God’s love for us, God’s gift of grace and enduring hope, and to encounter the living Christ. We gather and God works, changing everything.

In the summer of 2018, youth and adult leaders from across the country are invited to gather in Houston, Texas for the ELCA Youth Gathering under the theme, “This Changes Everything.” Youth and adults from the NE MN Synod are now being gathered to join “The Synod Journey”, a faith formation experience preceding and including the ELCA Youth Gathering. *(Youth and adults from this congregation are prayerfully discerning how they will participate in this Gathering, this Journey.)* We gather to explore and experience how God’s call, love, grace, hope, and the gift of Jesus, change us and all of creation.

You are invited to join the gathering. Our worship service today *(or this excerpt taken from the Journey Worship resources)*, celebrates that we are gathered as God’s people, that God continues to gather in new ways, and that in our gathering we are changed through God’s call, love, grace, and hope all found in Jesus.

GATHERING SONG “Gather Us In” ELW #532

(After the first two verses, you may choose to include a time of reflection, encouraging participants to silently or aloud consider how they enter being “gathered” today? Do they come lost and forsaken, feeling blind or lame, rich or haughty? Strong or proud?

After the second two verses, you may choose to reflect: What is your prayer that God may change in you as you are “gathered”? Do you come hoping for a new sense of call, a new awareness that you are held and loved, compassion, nourishment...?)

ALTERNATIVE GATHERING SONG “Shake Another Hand”

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: You have called and gathered us together as your people.

C: **Change our sense of self that we may find our true identity in knowing ourselves as “children of God”.**

L: You love us with an unwavering, relentless love.

C: **Change our concept of love, to know and share love as shown on the cross.**

L: You are the giver of grace.

C: **Change us, help us surrender, receive, and live into the freedom you give.**

L: You deliver hope.

C: **Change our hopelessness into anticipation and expectation.**

L: You are God, known and experienced in Jesus.

C: **In Jesus’ name we gather to be changed.**

ALTERNATIVE CALL TO WORSHIP

Encourage people to notice the people gathered around them in worship today. Invite them to move amidst your gathering space and share with someone:

- a “gathering” they are looking forward to in the near future
- a time that they experienced God’s call, love, grace, or hope through a “gathered” community

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

L: Gracious Lord,

C: **We know that we often forget our identity is to be found first and foremost in being children of God. We fail to be changed through Your call on our lives. We fail to remember how your love, grace, and hope through the cross changes 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 unbelief and help us to live as people gathered through the cross.**

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

L: Through Jesus’ death on the cross, your sins are eternally forgiven. As we gather together today and each day to follow, may we remember to live as forgiven people, and follow Christ’s call to embody this forgiveness unto others. Jesus is hope. Jesus is love. Jesus is grace. Jesus is our redeeming life. Amen.

ALTERNATIVE CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Pass around mirrors. Each person should put their thumbs on an ink pad and then hold the mirror leaving their thumb prints on the mirror as they look at themselves and confess their sins and failures.

Say: We often see ourselves through our sins and failures. We see other's sins and failures.

As you collect the mirrors with thumb prints, pass around wet wipes for people to wash off their thumbs.

Say: Through God's love and grace in Christ Jesus we are forgiven, changed.

Pass around new mirrors with the words "Child of God" written across them. Invite everyone to take a moment to see themselves in the mirror, in which their "identity" is marked by seeing themselves as a forgiven and loved child of God.

Say: May you see yourself as a forgiven and loved child of God.

Pass the mirrors around again, have them tilt the mirror to see others in the room, through the words "child of God".

Say: May you see others as forgiven and loved sisters and brothers in Christ. This changes everything.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: Let us pray,

C: We have gathered here today to worship you, but you gather us into your body everyday of our lives. Allow us to feel your presence 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

Option One:

Get a large piece, easy puzzle. Give each child a puzzle piece, ask some of them to tell what they see on their piece. Have them assemble, or if time is limited, lay their pieces out for the whole group to see. How does gathering all the pieces together change what we see? When we gather together it changes how we see and understand God and God's creation. Sometimes when we can't see God in our own lives we gather together and experience God through others.

Option Two:

Invite only one child forward. Tell them they are the only child for children's time today. Tell them they will have to sit alone, answer your questions, maybe sing a song alone, pray alone, etc. Ask them how they feel about being the only one? Ask a child not invited up what they are thinking? Call everyone up. God desires to gather us all together. Being gathered is a gift. God gives us community as a gift. We are changed when we gather together. We support each other: sitting together so we know we aren't alone, singing praise together, exploring our faith together, holding one another in prayer, helping one another confess our faith, etc. Today we celebrate being gathered together for different experiences in God's presence. *(Invite youth planning to register for the Synod Journey/Gathering forward and introduce them to the children and congregation as a whole. Ask them what they like about "gathering" together and how they experience God when they are gathered.)*

SINGING INTO SCRIPTURE "Change My Heart Oh God" ELW#801**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 Synod 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.

This worship includes a song written by Maia Dalager, a member of the NE MN Synod Journey Worship Team. This is her creative response to the theme and question. We encourage you to share the lyrics, by playing the recording, reading the lyrics, or singing it as a congregation.

Take time to reflect: Which of Maia's lyrics stood out for you? What is the "this" that has changed everything for Maia? What has "this" changed for her? Can you relate to any of what she says? Which lyrics will you carry with you this week?)

SONG “Grace. Be Enough” Written by Maia Dalager

Do do...

Grace. Grace sets us free.

Grace. Free to be.

Grace. Be enough.

Grace. Sets us free. Free to be. Be enough.

Do do...

It's late at night and I'm on my phone again.

Shows me an endless stream of crisis and mayhem.

Then Grace comes along and says, "Hold on. Just go to bed.

Tomorrow's comin' and I'll help you start again."

Grace....

Do do...

Free to stand taller

Free to fall farther

Free to cry harder

Free to love bolder

Free to break a heart

Free to hold a hand

Free to live the struggle

Free to barely make it through the day...

Free to learn to dance the pain away...

Free to be the light in shades of grey...

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!)

MATTHEW 4:18-23

¹⁸As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. ¹⁹And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” ²⁰Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. ²²Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

²³Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

JOHN 1:43-50

³The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." ⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." ⁴⁶Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." ⁴⁷When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" ⁴⁸Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." ⁴⁹Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

SERMON (*Reflections on being gathered and changed*)

SONG "Canticle of Turning" ELW#723

INTROUCTION TO CREED/STATEMENT OF FAITH

Leader:

On any given day I am a mix; a mix of belief and doubt.

There are days my voice and convictions are strong and I speak with passion of the God who loves me.

Others days, I cannot find my voice to speak even a half-hearted whisper of faith. I stand empty.

For this we are gathered.

When my mind swirls with doubts and fears, I stand in community and the voices of faith around me carry me, hold me in my silence until I am filled with the words again.

And when my voice is strong I will speak the words around you that you may know the God that loves you even empty and silent.

In this we are changed and therefore confess together:

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 SONG “Jesus, We Are Gathered” ELW #529

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.**

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 a community. We are changed by Christ's peace and now we have the opportunity to extend that peace to others.

SHARING OF PEACE

Leader: The peace of the Lord be with you

All: And also with you

INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNION

L: Jesus was always gathering people together. He challenged and changed people's understandings of who was invited to the table, who one's neighbor may be. All people, from all walks of life, were invited to gather as one body. Old ways of gathering were given new meaning in the presence of Christ. In Jesus' living example, their understanding of God was changed. We gather around the table. We kneel next to our brothers and sisters from all walks of life, in churches around the globe, at unexpected tables, extending into a celestial banquet with the saints that have gone before us. God gathers far and wide. We hear God's words: Do this to remember me. Our gathering, our remembering, our being fed and forgiven, changes everything.

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." We are praying this as a community for our community, and this 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

“Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound” - ELW #779

“Come, All You People” - ELW #819

“All Are Welcome” by Dakota Road

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

Gathered as God’s people, you have heard the Good News “for by grace you have been saved through faith”. This is a gift! Go as God’s sent people, living your life in celebration of all that God has done and is doing, changed by God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

SENDING SONG

“With High Delight Let Us Unite” ELW 368

Or “The Church Song” by Jay Beech

DISMISSAL

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

C: **Thanks be to God.**