

# LCA Worship Guidelines

## Summary of recent decisions and suggestions about the divine service from the Commission on Worship, Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA)

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### Introduction

Since the mid-1990s, the Commission on Worship (CoW) has published a number of resources relating to the divine service (the service with holy communion), eg the disk *Approved Worship Services of the LCA*, various Commission on Worship statements, the *LCA Worship Resources* CD-ROM. These resources contain some suggested interpretations, changes, alternatives, and best practices in addition to what appeared earlier in the *Lutheran Hymnal with Supplement*. This summary collects together these guidelines and makes them available to the church.

### References

- ‘All Together’ songbooks (AT) (Openbook Publishers). Index in LWR Appendix
- *Approved Worship Services of the Lutheran Church of Australia* (disk, Openbook Publishers; coil-bound print-out, LCA National Office)
- CoW statements (on LCA website and in LWR Appendix)
- English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC), international ecumenical texts (in *Praying Together*, The Canterbury Press Norwich 1988)
- Good News Bible: Today’s English Version (TEV)
- *Guitar Chords for Hymns and Songs from the LHS* (LCA National Office)
- *LCA Music Resources*, 3 vols (revision of Music Packages) (LCA National Office)
- *LCA Worship Resources*, CD-ROM (LWR) (LCA National Office)
- *Lutheran Hymnal* (LH) (Openbook Publishers)
- *Lutheran Hymnal with Supplement* (LHS), melody line edition (+ harmony editions of *Lutheran Hymnal* and the *Supplement*) (Openbook Publishers)
- *Mega Drama*, 6 vols (Openbook Publishers)
- New International Version of the Bible (NIV) (being revised in inclusive language form as *Today’s NIV*)
- New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (NRSV)
- Revised Common Lectionary (RCL)
- *Sing the Feast*, 3 musical settings of the divine service (Openbook Publishers)
- *Together in Song: Australian Hymn Book II* (TIS) (HarperCollins Religious, available from Openbook Publishers)

### Abbreviations

- AT: ‘All Together’ songbooks
- CoW: Commission on Worship (including its departments)
- ELLC: English Language Liturgical Consultation
- GCC: The General Church Council of the LCA

- LCA: Lutheran Church of Australia
- LH: *Lutheran Hymnal*
- LHS: *Lutheran Hymnal with Supplement*
- LWR: *LCA Worship Resources*
- RCL: Revised Common Lectionary
- TIS: *Together in Song: Australian Hymn Book II*

## A. THE SERVICE AS A WHOLE

**There is essentially only one divine service** (the holy communion service, the eucharist, the historic ecumenical framework of the mass) – all forms we have are variations of it. *See Approved Worship Services*: Introduction; Holy communion: the divine service, outline of the service.

**The service is a ritual dialogue/interaction** in which God comes to, speaks to, and acts for his people, and they respond. *See CoW statement 24* ‘A Lutheran approach to the theology of worship’, esp part 3 The nature of Christian worship.

**The main LCA-produced forms of the divine service** are the following. (Note the recommended slight revisions in *Approved Worship Services*; the ELLC Nicene Creed is recommended for use in all forms of the service.)

- The service with communion (LHS p 6) (‘men with whom he is pleased’ changed to ‘those with whom he is pleased’;)
- The service – alternative form (LHS p 58) (new forms of seasonal prefaces)
- Sing the feast, settings 1, 2, 3
- Modern liturgy (revised ‘Worship Today’)
- Service with communion, simplified spoken form
- Variations of the above orders with hymn/song alternatives to parts of the service

*See Approved Worship Services*; LWR ‘General notes and resources’.

**The recommended ‘foundation’ form**, on which variations are built, is the Service – alternative form (LHS p 58). The Sing the feast services, the Simplified spoken form, and relevant parts of the Modern liturgy are from this service. The Alternative form incorporates those ELLC texts adopted by the LCA, and its other parts are the recommended texts for new variations or musical settings. *See Approved Worship Services* Part A; CoW statement 28 ‘Parts of the service for musical settings’.

**Parts of the different forms of the service may be interchanged** where appropriate, eg a form of confession and absolution from one form may be used in another form. *See Approved Worship Services* Introduction; CoW statement 30 ‘Guidelines for preparing the service with holy communion’.

**The LCA-approved ELLC forms** of parts of the service are:

- Lord’s Prayer (but retaining the traditional ‘Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil’)
- Lord, have mercy
- Glory to God in the highest
- Nicene Creed (with the addition of 2 explanatory footnotes)

- Lift up your hearts
- Holy, holy, holy
- Lamb of God, alternative version
- Glory to the Father, slightly modified as 'Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.'
- Song of Simeon

(The ELLC Te Deum, Song of Zechariah, and Song of Mary have also been approved, but not the Apostles' Creed – in which, however, it is recommended that the original 'catholic' be used)

*See Approved Worship Services* Alternative form and appendix; the recommendations on the creeds were made by GCC in 1993.

**The structure of the divine service** and the functions of its parts are briefly indicated in the suggested 'Headings for the liturgy' prepared by the CoW. *See* LWR 'General notes and resources'.

**Some parts of the service may vary**, as in LWR. A brief summary is given below.

## **B. PARTS OF THE SERVICE**

For details, *see* LWR 'General notes and resources', seasonal documents, and Sunday documents.

**'In the name'** is seen sacramentally as a performative declaration to the congregation. It may be preceded by a scriptural sentence. Another performative declaration may sometimes be used instead of 'In the name'.

**Various forms of the confession and absolution** are provided in the different forms of the service, and these may be interchanged. The introduction may vary. The questions 'Do you ...' could sometimes be omitted on festive occasions. The absolution is a performative declaration.

**The introit** may be omitted, since the traditional ones don't fit with the RCL readings and the RCL psalm is intended as a response to the first reading. Or, the opening hymn may be used at that point, or a scriptural sentence (with or without the 'Glory to the Father'). If an introit is still desired, appropriate verses from the psalm may be used.

**The 'Lord, have mercy'** may be varied in many ways, spoken or sung. It is generally seen as addressed to Christ.

**'Glory to God in the highest'** could sometimes be replaced by a suitable hymn or another canticle or even omitted, eg in Lent. It is adoration (addressed to God) rather than praise (about God, addressed to one another), and has a cosmic dimension (we join with the angels); preferably replacements will have the same characteristics.

**The prayer of the day (collect)** was provided in 2 forms for each day in *Collects and Readings*: traditional and alternative. In LWR, generally 4 collects are provided: traditional; modernised/simplified traditional; alternative revised; and new (simpler, more concrete, related more closely to the RCL readings – they differ between years A, B, C for 2–7 Epiphany and for Propers 7–26). Any of these collects may be used,

and/or the collect for a minor festival that falls on or near the day. The collect has traditionally been seen as a part for the pastor to say rather than the whole congregation, although many congregations now have a well-established practice of saying the collect together. *See* CoW statement 36 'The collect (prayer of the day)' as well as LWR 'General notes and resources'

**The readings** may be read from a lectionary book or the Bible. The recommended versions of the Bible are the New Revised Standard Version, the New International Version (inclusive language edition), or the Good News Bible (TEV) (Australian inclusive revised edition, 1994); these use inclusive language in reference to humans. LWR provides suggestions for beginnings of readings in some cases, eg 'Jesus said:'. Note the preferred introductory wording: the reading is 'written in' (the written word is proclaimed aloud to be heard), not 'found in' or some other variation; and we have the 'first reading' and the 'second reading' – some are not from the Old Testament or from the New Testament letters respectively; and the words 'lesson' (meaning 'reading') and 'epistle' are archaic.

**The psalm** in the RCL is appointed as a response to the first reading. It may be spoken but where possible is better sung in some form, eg responsorially with antiphon. Practice is that it is not followed by the 'Glory to the Father' because its context before a New Testament reading has the same function. *See* LWR Sunday documents psalm antiphons; *LCA Music Resources* musical settings for each Sunday; TIS psalms

**Alleluia verses** (or verses without alleluias in Lent) are provided in LWR and *LCA Music Resources* as a short bridge between second reading and gospel, and link the traditional 3-fold alleluias thematically with the readings.

**A gospel procession** (either simple or elaborate) may be used on special occasions as a visual and dramatic way of expressing God's coming into the midst of his people with his gospel.

**A response after the gospel** may be a selected hymn verse or a short prayer, as in LWR Sunday documents.

**The Nicene Creed** form recommended is the ELLC version with 2 explanatory footnotes. **The Athanasian Creed** may be used occasionally instead, especially on Trinity Sunday and at Christmas (particularly the second part, about the incarnation). We recommend the inclusive-language version in the 2000 Kolb and Wengert translation of the Book of Concord, and a selection of parts, in dialogue form. *See* LWR Folder c, 'The Athanasian Creed in worship'

**The offertory** (offering responses) may vary, eg different verses, prayers, hymn verses. Various dedications, commissionings etc may be held at this point.

**The prayer of the church** is not meant to be a prayer of an individual or even a prayer just for the congregation, but 'outreach' for all people, including the church catholic, the world, and those in need. A roster of topics may be prepared. Intercessions may be read by a layperson. A congregational response may be said after each paragraph, eg 'Lord, in your mercy : hear our prayer.' *See* LWR; CoW statement 31 'The prayer of the church'

**The seasonal prefaces** provide a further means of reinforcing the seasonal emphases and relating them to the communion for the day. Note the Pentecost preface is not intended for the Sundays after Pentecost. A new/revised set of prefaces prepared by the CoW – including one for the Sundays after Pentecost – are in *Approved Worship Services* (Alternative form and Sing the feast services) and may be used in all forms of the divine service. They may be spoken, but have now also been set to music. *See LCA Music Resources*

**An invitation to communion**, eg ‘Come, everything is ready’, may be said after the Lamb of God, and may include a seasonal scriptural verse.

**The blessing** may be preceded by a scriptural verse, and a seasonal blessing may be said before the regular blessing. The blessing is a performative declaration. A sentence of **dismissal** (including ‘Go in peace’) may be said after the blessing.

### C. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**The RCL readings**, adopted by the LCA Convention 1997 (*see* CoW statement 10 ‘The lectionary as used by the LCA’), are available in the booklet *Revised Common Lectionary for the LCA* or via email from the LCA National Office, and are included in LWR. The current year’s readings are listed in the *LCA Yearbook* and *The Australian Christian Diary* (Openbook). A scriptural index is in LWR Appendix.

**The Sundays after Pentecost** in the RCL have Propers that vary from year to year; the Second Sunday after Pentecost varies from Proper 3 to Proper 8, calculated so that the last Sunday of the church year is always Proper 29. *See* the current LCA Yearbook and Diary.

#### **The LCA-recommended sources of hymns and songs:**

- *Lutheran Hymnal with Supplement* (LHS) – authorised
- ‘All Together’ songbooks (AT) – approved for judicious use
- *Together in Song* (TIS) – approved for judicious use (2000 Convention urged congregations to consider use)
- Additional hymns and songs provided/recommended by CoW (eg as in LWR and in new songbooks that appear)

Over 200 hymns from LH, put in modern and inclusive language, are in LWR, and many are also in TIS. Guitar chords for most LHS hymns/songs are in *Guitar Chords for Hymns and Songs from LHS*.

#### **Some musical settings available:**

- The service with communion, LHS p 6
- The service – alternative form, LHS p 58
- Sing the feast, settings 1, 2, 3
- Modern liturgy (revised ‘Worship Today’)
- Communion settings, TIS nos 756–767
- Various additional settings of parts *see LCA Music Resources*
- Various hymn and song paraphrases of parts *see* LWR ‘General notes and

resources' and seasonal documents

**Visual arts guidelines and suggestions** *see* LWR 'General notes and resources'; CoW statements 14 'Public worship and its environment', 15 'The purpose of the visual arts in worship'

**Drama in worship:**

- Guidelines *see* CoW statement 5 'Guidelines for the use of the dramatic arts within the liturgy of the church'
- Scripts for the church year *see* *Mega Drama* vols 1–6

**Blessings of specific people and groups** may be given in the service. *See* LWR 'General notes and resources'; CoW statement 38 'The blessing of people in the divine service'

**Language in worship:**

- General guidelines *see* CoW statements 13 'Principles for the language of the liturgy', 6 'Guidelines for modern English in hymns', 12 'Principles for the words of hymns'
- Inclusive language needed *see* LWR 'General notes and resources' under 'Inclusive language', based on communication with the President's Committee on Gender Issues, 2001; LCA policy from the early 1990s

**Guidelines for involving children in worship** *see* LWR 'General notes and resources' under 'Involving children'; CoW statement 25 'Children in corporate worship'