

Traditional or Alternative Forms of Worship:  
What Would Luther Say?

Senior Thesis

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May 1, 2007

# **Traditional or Alternative Forms of Worship: What Would Luther Say?**

## **Introduction**

Worship has been a part of human history ever since the dawn of religion. According to *The American Heritage College Dictionary*, worship is first, “the reverent love and devotion accorded a deity, an idol, or a sacred object,” and second, “the ceremonies, prayers, or other religious forms by which this love is expressed.”<sup>1</sup>

Christianity is no exception when it comes to having worship, and is definitely no exception when it comes to problems arising between people and groups of people regarding how worship should be conducted and what should be included in worship. Before we look at these issues regarding worship, we first need to know why we worship God.

God revealed heavenly worship in a vision to John as recorded in Revelation. Here we see the throne of God surrounded with all creatures of heaven and earth singing, praising, and worshipping God. Revelation 4:11 explains why we should worship God, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou has created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”<sup>2</sup> Here we see that God created everything, including us, for His pleasure, so we are to worship Him. Therefore, He should be the center of our worship, instead of ourselves. This means that worship should not be for our amusement.

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<sup>1</sup> *The American Heritage College Dictionary*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., s.v. “worship.” p. 1556.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. 4:11 KJV (King James Version).

One of the best examples of conflict surrounding worship practices happened in the sixteenth century, when Martin Luther challenged the Catholic church with his 95 Theses, and started a transformation within the Christian tradition that changed the way God was viewed and worshipped. The issues raised by Luther were extensive. However, one that was very important was the question of worship and what was essential to it.

The intent of this paper is to examine the Lutheran standard for worship to see if it is still being properly adhered to today within the framework of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA). This will be done in three sections. The first section looks at what Luther said about worship in terms of the essentials and non-essentials in worship, and how to carry out these aspects. In addition to what Luther says, I examined excerpts from various documents included in *The Book of Concord*, which is a collection of documents authoritative for the tradition, published in 1580.

The second section examines contemporary Lutheran tradition (specifically the in ELCA) to see what it currently says about worship and how it relates to what Luther says. The final section includes interviews about worship with pastors in southern Minnesota, and also an analysis of the findings of the churches.

## Section I

When Martin Luther nailed his 95 Thesis, he had issues not only with what the Catholic Church was doing with certain theologies such as the selling of indulgences, but he also had issues with the mass. In *Concerning the Order of Public Worship*, which was published in 1523, Luther writes, “The service now in common use everywhere goes back to genuine Christian beginnings, as does the office of preaching. But as the latter has been perverted by the spiritual tyrants, so the former has been corrupted by the hypocrites.”<sup>3</sup> His aim was to correct this problem, and he goes on to say:

As we do not on that account abolish the office of preaching, but aim to restore it again to its right and proper place, so it is not our intention to do away with the service, but to restore it again to its rightful use.

Three serious abuses have crept into the service. First, God’s Word has been silenced, and only reading and singing remain in the churches. This is the worst abuse. Second, when God’s Word had been silenced such a host of un-Christian fables and lies, in legends, hymns, and sermons were introduced that it is horrible to see. Third, such divine service was performed as a work whereby God’s grace and salvation might be won. As a result, faith disappeared and everyone pressed to enter the priesthood, convents, and monasteries, and to build churches and endow them.<sup>4</sup>

The question now became: How can these abuses be corrected? Luther focused on what was most important to be included in worship: God’s Word being rightly preached and the sacraments being properly administered.<sup>5</sup>

While it is important to understand these topics, it is perhaps better to first understand what the basis of each are. The central basis for these two items comes from

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<sup>3</sup> Martin Luther, *Concerning the Order of Public Worship*, in *Luther’s Works: Liturgy and Hymns*, ed. Ulrich S. Leupold. Volume 53. (Fortress Press, 1965), 11.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>5</sup> Vilmos Vajta, *Luther On Worship* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), 67-71, 85-9.

a revolutionary idea of the time, *sola fide*, or literally translated from Latin as “faith alone.” It is quite often referred to as justification by faith. This means is that we cannot make it into heaven on our own accord through works and deeds, but rather, we are justified for salvation by the faith in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

There are various Lutheran writings on the subject of justification by faith. One writing is found in the *Augsburg Confession*, a book on many theological topics which was written in both German and Latin. It was presented at the Diet of Augsburg. The Roman Emperor Charles V assembled nobilities in Germany in order to restore political and religious unity in the empire. He hoped Lutheran dignitaries could explain the controversy surrounding the Reformation movement. They came together to find a common way that important aspects of faith may be understood and carried out.

Article IV says:

It is also taught among us that we cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God by our own merits, works, or satisfactions, but that we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ’s sake, through faith, when we believe that Christ suffered for us and that for his sake our sin is forgiven and righteousness and eternal life are given to us. For God will regard and reckon this faith as righteousness, as Paul says in Romans 3:21-26 and 4:5.<sup>6</sup>

Essentially, we cannot make it into heaven on our own accord, and the only way we can enter is if we become righteous through faith in Christ. We are granted grace when we accept that Christ died for our sins, and only grace makes us righteous for eternal life.

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<sup>6</sup> *The Augsburg Confession*, in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. and trans. Theodore G. Tappert, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959) 30.

As we can see, justification by faith is central to Luther's theology. It is also important in consideration for worship in Luther's view. According to Vilmos Vajta, who examined Luther's theology for his beliefs on worship, "[we are] continually sanctified by the ongoing work of God...Man's attempt to sanctify himself with works of his own devising is blasphemous and hopeless, for it hinders [us] from accepting that holiness which God imparts through Word and sacraments."<sup>7</sup> The power of justification by faith is only ours when we believe in Christ's presence in the sacrament.

In summary, Luther believed that we are justified by faith. We are human, and will inherently sin. We are unable to redeem ourselves through works alone. Because Christ died for our sins and since we believe in Jesus Christ, then we are unrighteous humans made right and thus fit for the kingdom of heaven.

This line of thinking becomes fundamental for the consideration of the format of Lutheran worship. Luther's primary emphasis was on God's Word being preached and the sacraments being received, without exception. Luther points out in his work, *Concerning the Order of Public Worship* that, "A Christian congregation should never gather together without the preaching of God's Word and prayer, no matter how briefly, as Psalm 102 says, 'When the kings and the people assemble to serve the Lord they shall declare the name and the praise of God.'"<sup>8</sup>

In every service, in addition to the Word being preached, sacraments need to be administered properly. This is because the Word of God is present in the sacraments and commanded by Christ. One of the sacraments is baptism. In *The Smalcald Articles*, which was written by Luther, it says, "Baptism is nothing else than the Word of God in water,

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<sup>7</sup> Vajta, *Luther on Worship*, 130. (brackets mine)

<sup>8</sup> Luther, *Luther's Works*, 11.

commanded by the institution of Christ; or as Paul says, ‘the washing of water with the word.’”<sup>9</sup> Christ even commands us to be baptized in order to be saved, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>10</sup>

The other sacrament is the Sacrament of the Altar, more commonly known as Communion or the Eucharist. Luther, in the *Smalcald Articles*, states, “We hold that the bread and the wine in the Supper are the true body and blood of Christ...We also hold that it is not to be administered in one form only.”<sup>11</sup> Luther provided instruction on how the bread and wine of the Eucharist should be administered:

This is the order Christ seems to have observed, as the words of the Gospel show, where he told them to eat the bread before he had blessed the cup [Mark 14:22-23]. Then is said expressly, “Likewise also the cup after he supped” [Luke 22:20; I Cor. 11:25]...All that matters is that the Words of Institution should be kept in tact and that everything should be done by faith.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to having both the body and the blood of Christ administered in the Eucharist to be considered proper distribution, Luther also says:

Now the words are these: *Take and eat, this is my body, which is given for you. Take and drink of it, all of you, this is the cup of the new and eternal testament in my blood, which is poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.* These words every Christian must have before him in the mass.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *The Smalcald Articles*, in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. and trans. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia, Fortress, 1959) 310.

<sup>10</sup> Matt 28:19 KJV.

<sup>11</sup> *Smalcald Articles*, 311.

<sup>12</sup> Martin Luther, *An Order of Mass and Communion*, in *Luther's Works: Liturgy and Hymns*, ed. Ulrich S. Leupold. Volume 53. (Fortress Press, 1965), 30-1.

<sup>13</sup> Martin Luther, *Treatise on the New Testament, that is, the Holy Mass*, in *Luther's Works: Word and Sacrament I*, ed. E. Theodore Bachmann. Volume 35 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960) 82.

We are familiar with other parts of worship that are not the preaching of God's Word and administering of the sacraments. Everything else is considered "adiaphora," or things that are not necessary, but enhance the worship experience. The *Formula of Concord* says adiaphora are, "those ceremonies or church usages which are neither commanded nor forbidden in the Word of God but have been introduced into the church in the interest of good order and the general welfare."<sup>14</sup>

Adiaphora is not a new concept to the Christian community. In the New Testament Paul writes in his first letter to the Corinthians a response to the issue of whether or not Christians are allowed to eat food that is offered unto idols. He essentially sums up his answer in 1 Corinthians 8:8, which says, "But meat commandeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse."<sup>15</sup> Fundamentally it is saying that it does not matter if you eat it or not. However, Paul also has a warning in the next verse, which says, "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak."<sup>16</sup> What he is saying here is it does not matter either way, but do not let that freedom become the cause of another's failure. Centuries later, during a turbulent time in Germany, Luther also outlined what was necessary and unnecessary in worship.

After the Diet of Worms where Luther was declared a heretic and an outlaw, he went into hiding, leaving Philipp Melanchthon to be the leader of the reformation.

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<sup>14</sup> *The Formula of Concord*, in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. and trans. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959) 492.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Corinthians 8:8 KJV.

<sup>16</sup> 1 Corinthians 8:9 KJV.



Melanchthon was unable to continue Luther's peaceful reform when Andreas Carlstadt and Gabriel Zwilling joined the reform movement. Their interpretation of reform turned Wittenberg into chaos. Citing Old Testament scripture, Carlstadt condemned chants, organs, and statues as contrary to God's command. Zwilling called for a complete change in the church. Churches were closed, monks were cast out, altars, statues, and paintings were destroyed. In an effort to stop the anarchy, Luther returned to Wittenberg and preached the seven *Invocavit Sermons*.

Luther addressed the concept of adiaphora in the fourth of his *Invocavit Sermons* that the use or non-use of statues is unimportant.<sup>17</sup> They should not be used if they are worshiped, but otherwise they are neither necessary nor unnecessary, important nor unimportant. However, Luther also did say to leave them in place for the sake of not just peace, but for those who need to see and use the statues and such for the strengthening of faith. It is best exemplified when he says:

...there are still people who have not the wrong opinion of them, but to whom they may be useful. Although they are few, yet we cannot and should not condemn anything which is still useful to the devotions of any man. But you should have taught that images are nothing, God cares nothing for them, and that He is not served, nor pleased when we make an image for Him...<sup>18</sup>

The statues are to be symbols, and as such, are to be reminders and not worshiped. Luther's point was that they are fine, but it is precisely when a statue is worshipped that it becomes an idol, and thus a false god.

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<sup>17</sup> Martin Luther, *The Fourth Sermon*, in *Works of Martin Luther*, Volume 2, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1943) 407-8.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 408.

Another aspect of adiaphora is, interestingly enough, music. Three different parties emerged, and each looks at adiaphora differently.<sup>19</sup> The radical party, headed by Carlstadt, thought that music must be taken out of the service because it is an adiaphora. The enthusiast party, headed by Muntzer, had a similar view as the radicals in taking out the traditional music and they made the focus of worship be the sermon. Even though they took the traditional music out of the service, they did include “contemporary folk liturgies and popular songs for the congregation.”<sup>20</sup>

The confessional party followed Luther, and they were “most interested in the mind, learning, emotions controlled by conviction, and the response of the heart, chose to follow quite a different musical direction than the outwardly and excessively emotional enthusiasts.”<sup>21</sup> This is where the biggest split comes, because although “Luther and other contributors to the *Book of Concord* insisted that music was adiaphora, they were just as insistent that music was, nonetheless, not a matter of indifference, but a matter that required both theological and musical judgment, especially because the rubrics were not laid out for us in the Holy Scriptures.”<sup>22</sup> Here we see that Luther always recognized that music is adiaphora, however he also understood that music is important because people take an interest in music, and when it is paired with the Word, it is that much more powerful. This is where the theological judgment comes into play.

Having identified what was important to Luther in terms of worship, we can now look at the ways he changed the mass. The German Mass, *Deutsche Messe und ordnung*

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<sup>19</sup> Daniel Reuning, “Confessional Music,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, (October, 1980), 213.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 213.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 213.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 214.

*Gottis dientis* (German Mass and Order of Divine Service), in published in 1526, provided an outline of how the mass should be conducted, with the expectation that the congregation would actively participate in the worship. Luther explains why the *Deutsche Messe und ordnung Gottis dientis* was written:

	But it is necessary to have such an Order for the sake of those who are to become Christians, or are to grow stronger; just as a Christian has need of baptism, the word and the sacrament not as a Christian (for, as such, he has them already), but as a sinner. But, above all, the Order is for the simple and for the young folk who must daily be exercised in the Scripture and God's Word, to the end that they may become
conversant with	Scripture and expert in its use, ready and skillful in giving
an answer for	their faith, and able in time to teach others and aid in the
advancement	of the kingdom of Christ. For the sake of such, we must
read, sing, preach,	write, and compose; and if it could in any wise help
or promote their	interests, I would have all the bells pealing,
and all the organs playing,	and everything making a noise that could. <sup>23</sup>

In the final version of the *Deutsche Messe* as it was performed in the pre-Reformation Wittenberg, the congregation understood the Word that was read and what was being preached because it was in the vernacular, and they sang hymns in the vernacular German language. Daniel Reuning, in an article that appeared in the Concordia Theological Quarterly writes:

Luther wanted to show not only a continuity with the mass of the past, but also a continuity with the mass of the present, to show that Christianity is for the whole world. The use of languages in worship other than the vernacular was for Luther a way to help people see beyond their immediate culture and be reminded of their missionary responsibilities.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Martin Luther, "The German Mass and Order of the Divine Service", in "The Organization of the Lutheran Communities, 1526-9", in *Documents of the Continental Reformation*, ed. B.J. Kidd (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911) 194-5.

<sup>24</sup> Reuning, *Confessional Music*, 3.

A central aspect of the *Deutsche Messe* is sensitivity to people. The use of vernacular language made the mass more “accessible” in a sense, while the *Deutsche Messe* was intended to be an example of how mass could be carried out. This is where freedom of worship comes into play, and through that, comes the notion of sensitivity to the people. In fact, Luther wrote in the preface to the *Deutsche Messe*:

In the first place, I would kindly and for God’s sake request all those who see this order of service or desire to follow it: Do not make it a rigid law to bind or entangle anyone’s conscience, but use it in Christian liberty as long, when, where, and how you find it to be practical and useful.<sup>25</sup>

Another change that Luther performed in the mass is the shift of theological emphasis from the mass as a sacrifice to God to a sacrifice of thanksgiving. In the introduction to *Treatise on the New Testament, that is, the Holy Mass*, which was written by Luther, it states that this document “penetrates to the heart of Christian worship and boldly replaces the traditional notion of the mass as a sacrifice with the scriptural teaching of the Lord’s Supper as a testament.”<sup>26</sup> The mass as a sacrifice had Christ being sacrificed every Sunday, while this new idea changed the emphasis to a sacrifice of thanksgiving. Luther directs us, “...we must let the mass be a sacrament and testament...Otherwise we should lose the gospel, Christ, the comfort [of the sacrament], and every grace of God.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Luther, *Luther’s Works*, 61.

<sup>26</sup> E. Theodore Bachmann, introduction to *Treatise on the New Testament, that is, the Holy Mass*, in *Luther’s Works: Word and Sacrament I*, Volume 35 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960) 77.

<sup>27</sup> Luther, *Treatise on the New Testament, that is, the Holy Mass*, 97.

What this highlights is that Luther did not overhaul the mass, but rather “tweaked” it to include his criteria, namely the Word, sacrament, availability to the people through vernacular language, and the shift from peoples’ sacrifice to God to a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

By looking at the music itself and the directions for performing it, one can see the degree to which Luther changed the Mass. The main value of this change is with the use of the German language and the encouragement it gave to congregational song. This can be shown through the “German Chorale.” It is known by that name not because of the German music, but because the composition relied on congregational participation. Luther understood the benefit resulting from hearing the Word of God and then uniting as a congregation to offer thanksgiving in song.

As we can see, Luther stressed three fundamental aspects that need to be included in worship: God’s Word being preached, proper administration of sacraments, and congregational involvement in worship through the vernacular language.

## Section II

In section I have tried to determine what aspects of worship distinguish Luther’s effect on the worship service. These ultimately are that the Word is rightly preached, the sacraments are rightly administered, and the service is in the vernacular language. In this next section I plan to look at contemporary interpretations of Lutheran liturgy,

specifically within the framework of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to see where they reflect Luther and to see where they deviate from Luther.

While it is important to understand what worship is and why we worship, it is also important to know where our Lutheran worship came from. When Martin Luther changed the format of the worship service, he was the first to have such a widespread impact on the Christian masses. However, he was not the last. The search for change continues nearly 500 years later.

One of the best examples of examining worship service format, and most pertinent to this study, is what is known as “Renewing Worship,” a process that was conducted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Its purpose was not so much a changing of the service, but rather to produce a guide for what is acceptable worship within the Lutheran tradition. This purpose excellently reflects Luther’s belief and actions in regards to the mass and his creation of the *Deutsche Messe*. It began in November of 2000 when the Church Council started a process that yielded recommendations given to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA.<sup>28</sup>

The process of Renewing Worship had five assumptions that shaped it: central things, Lutheran identity, widespread participation, new technologies, and liturgical review.<sup>29</sup>

The first item, central things, includes “the gospel being proclaimed, baptism celebrated and remembered, and the meal of communion are central to the gathering of

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<sup>28</sup> Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, “Recommendations: Renewing Worship,” ELCA, 2002, 11.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 11.

God's people and to a shared sense of identity in a time of increasing variety."<sup>30</sup> Here we see a direct and positive affirmation of Luther's fundamental aspects of worship.

The second item is Lutheran identity, described as, "Renewing Worship honors both the instinct for the freedom and the value of worshiping in ways that are consistent with our church's teaching."<sup>31</sup> Essentially they are acknowledging the fact that there is an urge which causes us to want to worship in new and different ways. As Lutherans, we have embraced that concept and have been given freedom in worship, which we can do that as long as it does not conflict with the church's core values and teachings. Again, they are positively following Luther's teachings of justification by faith, preaching of the Word, and properly administering the bread and wine in the Eucharist.

The third item, widespread participation, is also important. The thinking behind this aspect is "because participation is essential to Christian worship, participation is essential to worship renewal...all members of every worshipping assembly have a stake in the outcome of churchwide renewal efforts, and thereby deserve opportunity to share in the work."<sup>32</sup> Luther also understood participation as important, as shown through his implementation of chorales and hymns for the congregation.

The next item, new technologies, is a new one historically speaking, and I am sure that Luther would just be flabbergasted with the media tools that we can use nowadays. The ELCA had this to say about new technologies, "Just as these new technologies are

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 11.

reshaping ministry in local contexts, they have reshaped the manner and pace by which worship resources are developed.”<sup>33</sup>

The last one, liturgical review, is a very important one because it keeps Lutheran values in the foreground when considering the format for a service, while at the same time, allowing for the freedom we have as Lutherans.

These five assumptions stated above came about through different phases of the Renewing Worship project: a churchwide consultative process; working groups; provisional resources; regional and synodical conferences; and proposals for a new family of worship resources and for worship renewal.<sup>34</sup>

The first phase, which is the only phase pertinent to this study, a church wide consultative process “included more than one hundred participants (including some from full-communion partner churches) which represented a variety of perspectives gathered in a series of meetings over the course of a year.”<sup>35</sup> This phase produced a document as well, called, *Principles for Worship*, which provides “guidance in the development of provisional worship materials.”<sup>36</sup> *Principles for Worship* focused on four important dimensions of the church’s worship, which include: language, music, preaching, and worship space.<sup>37</sup>

Overall, *Principles for Worship* is:

offered to the church with the hope that it will be useful to congregations, worship committees and worship leaders, pastors and other rostered

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 13-4.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>37</sup> Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, “Principles for Worship: Preface and Introduction,” ELCA, 2005, 2-4.



professionals, colleges and seminaries, churchwide leaders, ecumenical partners, and all who have an interest in the church's worship.<sup>38</sup>

The language section talks about the usefulness as well as the drawbacks of human language. The biggest point is "several principles on scripture and the language of worship ground the language of praise and proclamation in the Bible."<sup>39</sup> It also concludes by saying that the church's use of language is used "in ways that reflect the unity of the church and the wide embrace of God's love, yet remain attentive to the needs of the local assembly."<sup>40</sup>

The second aspect, music and the Christian assembly, suggests how to properly use this important aspect:

Employing the resources of voices, instruments, languages, scripture, culture, and the church's witness in song through the ages, the assembly tells the story of what God has done and continues to do. The song that carries the church's prayer and lament, praise and thanksgiving to God also teaches, admonishes, inspires, and strengthens the church as it sings.<sup>41</sup>

Overall, in this section of *Principles for Worship*, music is a powerful tool for congregations, and "through a rich diversity of song and other musical forms, music in worship engages the whole church and the whole person, empowering the assembly to carry out God's mission of mercy and justice in the world."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 3.

Preaching and the Christian assembly are described as “a primary form that is essential to the church’s life and an integrated part of the whole of worship.”<sup>43</sup> It explains preaching as “the word of God that announces law and gospel and forms people for mission, a discussion of the ministry of preaching, principles on the relationship of preaching to its context, and an exploration of the use of various communication tools in preaching.”<sup>44</sup>

The last aspect addressed is worship space and the Christian assembly. This section came about because the place for worship is sometimes taken for granted. While this might not seem like it would have a lot to say, the principles here “consider the centrality of the worshipping assembly as the foundation for building, renewing, and equipping worship spaces that enrich participation, proclaim the gospel, witness to justice, and serve the mission of God.”<sup>45</sup> Essentially it is saying that the space that is used for worship enriches the experience, so it should be chosen with consideration.

Renewing Worship has caused the ELCA to publish new materials to be utilized by congregations to diversify worship, yet still stay within the Lutheran values and ideals. The biggest example is the new hymnal, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW)*.

A product of Renewing Worship is the *ELW*. Congregations are adopting its use throughout the country. I compared the new *ELW* to the old *Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW)* focusing on the guidelines given for worship, the order of worship, and the inclusion of Luther’s hymns. In the introduction of the *LBW*, I found there were defined guidelines:

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 4.

The services of the *Lutheran Book of Worship* embody the tradition of worship which received its characteristic shape during the early centuries of the Church's existence and was reaffirmed during the Reformation era. As such, they are an emblem of continuity with the whole Church and of particular unity with Lutherans throughout the world. At the same time, the services are adoptable to various circumstances and situations. Freedom and flexibility in worship is a Lutheran inheritance, and there is room for ample variety in ceremony, music, and liturgical form...Every service, whether elaborate or spare, sung or said, should be within the framework of the common rite of the church, so that the integrity of the rite is always respected and maintained.<sup>46</sup>

In comparing the old *LBW* to the new *ELW* there is a great deal more individual flexibility for congregations:

*Evangelical Lutheran Worship* continues to emphasize that 'freedom and flexibility in worship is a Lutheran inheritance, and there is room for ample variety in ceremony, music, and liturgical form' (*Lutheran Book of Worship*, Introduction). And, through its design and through a variety of interpretive materials herein, it seeks to make more transparent the principle of fostering unity without imposing uniformity.<sup>47</sup>

Here we see that the *LBW* expects congregations to follow the order of the service, whereas the *ELW* is providing suggested guidelines for congregations, and is saying that there is flexibility in worship, just as Luther modeled for us in the *Deutsche Messe*.

The order of the service has remained the same in both the hymnals. The main headings include Gathering, Word, Meal, and Sending. Under each of these main topics are components of the worship service that are the same in each hymnal.

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<sup>46</sup> *Lutheran Book of Worship*, (Minneapolis, Augsburg Publishing House, 1978), 8.

<sup>47</sup> *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, (Minneapolis, Augsburg Fortress, 2006), 8.

In comparing the hymns by Luther which are included in each hymnal, the quantity and hymn titles have remained the same. The 19 hymns represent only a fraction of all of Luther's musical works.

The hymns included in the new *ELW* are like "updates" to the hymns in the old *LBW*. For example, this is done through the alteration of a phrase in a popular hymn, "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty." In the last line of the third verse, the *LBW* has, "if by His love He befriend you."<sup>48</sup> This is a point of theological contention because as Lutherans we do not believe that God might befriend you with His love, we believe that God does befriend you with His love. This line was changed in the new *ELW* to, "infinite Love here befriends you."<sup>49</sup>

The Apostles' Creed has also slightly changed from, "He descended into Hell"<sup>50</sup> in the old *LBW* to, "he descended to the dead"<sup>51</sup> in the new *ELW*.

The process of Renewing Worship has caused the ELCA to look at all aspects of the service to see what is most important in the Lutheran tradition and identity, and thus should be included in worship. For example, there is a document called, "The Use of Scripture in the Language of Prayer and Worship." In it, it looks at how language is used in worship, and from there, using the Lutheran perspective, we can know how to use language. The first and most direct way that we use language is through the reading of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Another use of language in the church is in the adaptation and formulation of texts that serve as dialogue, prayer, and song.

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<sup>48</sup> *Lutheran Book of Worship*, hymn #543.

<sup>49</sup> *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, hymn #859.

<sup>50</sup> *Lutheran Book of Worship*, 106.

<sup>51</sup> *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, 105.

Other materials that address all sorts of items are provided by the ELCA as well. They include such things as support for the new ELW on the Augsburg Fortress ELW website, hymn accompaniments, lectionary charts, *With the Whole Church*, which is a study guide for Renewing Worship, a Spanish edition of *With the Whole Church*, and even PowerPoint files for *With the Whole Church*. While these examples only show a few of the materials, the ELCA has put forth a lot of effort in light of Renewing Worship to making sure that proper materials follow Lutheran ideals are made available to congregations. In this way, the ELCA has done a good job of acknowledging, accepting, and addressing the issue of worship. The question remains as to whether or not it is enough.

### Section III

One aspect of Luther's vision of a better church was freedom in worship. He wrote in the introduction of the *Deutsche Masse* that this format was to be used as a guideline for proper worship, and was not to be construed in any way to be the only way to worship. Luther encouraged freedom in worship as long as what was vital to worship was included: the Word, the sacraments properly administered (offering both the bread and wine to the congregation), and the service is in the vernacular. It was pretty simple.

In this day and age of extensive diversity and variety of the types of worship that are being used in churches, we need to be conscious of a possible side effect of that freedom. I suspected this Lutheran vision of freedom in worship has possibly allowed certain liturgies and lyrics in songs and hymns to creep into worship that do not belong in Lutheran worship.

When I was investigating what the ELCA provides for resources and materials, it appeared to me to be rather sterile. There was no review of how useful it is, or how often it is ordered or its popularity. It only had a brief summary of what it is and what purpose it serves. For example, services to be used during Lent. Perhaps the listed materials were purposely vague, so pastors can choose what is best for their congregation. Since we value freedom in worship, then these certainly are not the only materials used. Then the question became, "What materials are being used in ELCA congregations today?" Further than that, how useful are they, what type of services do they cater to, and above all, do they follow Luther's vision?

If churches are performing alternative worship services, then they need to follow the Lutheran ideals and values deemed important by Luther. If they are performing

alternative worship services that do not follow the Lutheran ideal, then they need to review what form of worship they using. The issue here becomes not just a question of what is wrong, but where it went wrong. It could be a problem with who chooses the resources (if a pastor does not choose it himself or herself, then they need at least double check to see if it is sound), the resources themselves, or even the mission of the church itself. For example, if a church wants to really embrace the alternative forms of worship, and even use different types of language (for instance “dumbing it down” so individuals can grasp what is going on in worship better), they still need to keep the Lutheran ideals and values in mind when planning the worship services.

With all this faceless data, I wanted to get an authentic perspective of how congregations use alternative and traditional worship forms. How to gather this information became my next concern.

After examining the ways I could get authentic information, I decided a qualitative study was more appropriate than a quantitative one, because my goal was to personally interact with the people who are preparing and leading worship services. I thought I probably would not be able obtain the same kind of information from compiling statistics from a survey, for example. Van Manen adeptly summarized why phenomenology would be the best framework for my study:

. . . phenomenology differs from other disciplines in that it does not aim to explicate meanings specific to particular cultures (ethnography), certain social groups (sociology), to historical periods (history), to mental types (psychology), or to individual personal history (biography). Rather, phenomenology attempts to explicate the meanings as we live them in our everyday existence, our lifeworld.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Max Van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy*, (Albany, New York, 1990) , 11.

In order to obtain this information, I decided to interview pastors serving ELCA congregations in southern Minnesota. I interviewed pastors and asked them a variety of questions to get a feel for the congregations' climate regarding alternative and traditional worship forms, what resources they were using. From their answers I hoped to see if the worship services were adhering to Lutheran theology. My questions were as follows:

- 1) What are the demographics of the congregation in terms of age of both the actual church and the average age of members, ethnicity, and number of overall members that belong to that church?
- 2) What forms of worship services are offered, and at what times are they offered?
- 3) How is the format being used chosen?
- 4) What resources do you find helpful in planning the services?
- 5) What are the typical statistics of attendance at each of the offered services?
- 6) What is the climate of the congregation regarding traditional and alternative forms of worship?
- 7) What was the ethnicity base of the founding members of this church?

Church 1, in a small city setting, is 115 years old, with Swedish roots. Its 900 primarily Caucasian members, have an average age of about 60. Pastor A is the presiding pastor here. Pastor A explained, "Church 1 has always prided itself in being traditional." There are two traditional / blended worship services each Sunday, except for one service once a month. That is an alternative service. The traditional services have a greater attendance. Each Thursday Church 1 has a "Body and Soul" alternative service that



approximately 30 people attend. Pastor A uses synod resources, *LBW*, *WOV*, *Prince of Peace*, [sundaysandseasons.com](http://sundaysandseasons.com), and the Worship and Music Committee Members to help design worship services. The climate of the congregation regarding traditional and alternative forms of worship is mixed. At the present time, they are exploring the option of using plasma screens. Younger members are more open to the idea.

Church 2, in a small town setting, is 100 years old, with Norwegian roots. Its 382 primarily Caucasian members, have an average age of about 40. Pastor K is the presiding pastor here. Pastor K commented, “The youth are the ones who have been calling for a contemporary service. The congregation will take what you throw at them. It just has to be of quality.” There is one traditional service each Sunday, attended by about 100 people. Pastor K also uses synod resources, *Prince of Peace*, [sundaysandseasons.com](http://sundaysandseasons.com), *Taize*’, *Holden Evening Prayer*, the organist, and other musicians to help design worship services. The climate of the congregation regarding traditional and alternative forms of worship is open to opportunities.

Church 3, in a small city setting, is 47 years old, with Norwegian roots. Its 2800 primarily Caucasian members, have an average age of about 45. Pastor T is the presiding pastor here. There are three worship services each Sunday, providing a mixture of different types of worship experiences. They have traditional service which includes liturgy, *LBW*, *ELW*, and *ELCA* resources; a nontraditional / contemporary service; and blended-traditional liturgy with contemporary music. Sunday evening they have a “Praise and Proclamation” Service which uses praise songs and proclaiming. There is no liturgy at this service. “It has grown from a handful to a sizeable group!” commented Pastor T.

Pastor T uses synod resources, [sundaysandseasons.com](http://sundaysandseasons.com), “Creative Communications” Logos Productions, and the music leader to help design worship services. The climate of the congregation regarding traditional and alternative forms of worship is mixed. “It needs substance, no matter the service. The congregation is open to variety.”

Church 4, in a small city setting, is 115 years old, with Swedish roots. Its 1600 primarily Caucasian members, have an average age of about 50. Pastor Q is the presiding pastor here. Usually there are two traditional and an alternative worship services each Sunday. The traditional services usually have greater attendance than the alternative, which has only been offered for about the past 18 months. Pastor Q uses synod resources, *ELW*, *Dakota Road*, materials outside of Lutheranism if it fits, people in the congregation, and music staff to help design worship services. “The congregation is very open to different forms of worship, but there is concern that it be done with Lutheran sensitivity,” explained Pastor Q.

Church 5, in a small city setting, is 34 years old, with Norwegian and German roots. Its membership of 1200 is primarily Caucasian, with some African American members. Pastor M is the pastor here. Usually there is one traditional and an alternative worship service each Sunday. The youth have a Wednesday night service. Pastor M explained their focus for worship service forms, “We’re trying to pull in the ‘unchurched,’ so we are careful about using ‘churchy words’ that people that have not grown up in the church would understand.” This church has a service that uses the liturgical hymnal style of the *LBW*, *ELW*, and *WOV*. The other type of service does not follow a liturgical setting and uses no hymnal. Everything is printed in a bulletin or

projected. Dramas are also used. “The contemporary service pulls in more. It can be three to one. We’re running out of room,” summarized Pastor M.

Church 6, in a small city setting, is 150 years old, with Swedish roots. Its 1142 primarily Caucasian members are described by Pastor E as, “On average, an older age.” They only offer traditional services on Sundays, but on such occasions as Wednesday services in Advent or Lent they use resources like Marty Haugen who makes settings in the Lutheran tradition with a contemporary feel. This summer they will be experimenting with more contemporary services on Sunday nights. A few people have asked about alternative worship, but not many. Pastor E explained, “During the summer we have a Polka Service which is outdoors. It has more ‘campy’ music.” Pastor E and his associate pastors use synod resources, *Holden Evening Prayer*, *ELW*, and their Worship and Music Committee Members to help design worship services.

The pastors I interviewed listed several resources they use when they are planning worship services. The resources materials ranged from ELCA produced materials, to generic Christian materials.

Dakota Road Music [www.dakotaroad.com](http://www.dakotaroad.com) is Christian music, with a contemporary feel. Most of the songs I reviewed focused on social issues, such as race and poverty, but also had songs categorized by season, liturgy, and Biblical passages. I downloaded several songs to examine the lyrics. The ones I viewed were Christain-based. This company based out of Beresford, South Dakota, provides lyrics, recording, songbooks, and the ability to download sheet music.

Creative Communications for the Parish [www.creativecommunications.com](http://www.creativecommunications.com), based out of Fenton, MN, offers books, devotionals, Bible studies, bulletins, themed

services on CD-Roms , such as “God Shed His Grace on Thee—A Service for a National Holiday, Vacation Bible School kits, Bible stories on DVD, and DVDs for Bible study discussions. Upon entering the website, you choose between Catholic and generic Protestant materials. Nothing was particularly outstanding or offending.

Logos Productions, based in Inver Grove Heights, MN, offers nondenominational materials such as: daily devotionals, free children sermons, materials for Sunday School, adult Bible studies, confirmation, sermon preparation, worship resources including print and CD Rom, online worship planners, “Contemporary Companion Hymnal for Blended Worship” produced by Oregon Catholic Press. The materials were very generic, but obviously Christian.

OneLicense.net, Chicago, IL, administers copyright permissions for music publisher, such as GIA ( all music by Taize), Marty Haugen, and David Haas. For a subscription fee congregations may print texts in bulletins. Marty Haugen’s services and songs are used in several of the churches for special services, such as during Lent.

Christian Copyright Licensing International, [www.ccli.com](http://www.ccli.com), is based from Portland, OR. A subscription fee of \$179.00 per year provides church copyright licenses, church video licenses, Christian music downloads, and movies “for sermon and teaching illustrations.” This site provides varied multimedia materials. Again, the materials were obviously Christian, but generic.

Worshipmusic Prince of Peace Lyrics, [www.lyricsdownload.com/worshipmusic-prince-of-peace-lyrics](http://www.lyricsdownload.com/worshipmusic-prince-of-peace-lyrics), provides lyrics and downloads of gospel music. I question the quality of this website if is being used for planning worship. The Gospel is thinly veiled in the lyrics I viewed. It’s probably all right for downloading “Praise Ringtones,” which

is one of the options.

If music is to be used from these sites listed above, it must be carefully examined to make sure the lyrics are based on the Bible, with the emphasis and focus on God, and not feel-good music that focuses on oneself.

Augsburg Fortress Press in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is the publishing company of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The website, [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org), has links to the ELCA Distribution Service Resources, ELCA Official Resources, ELCA Strategic Directions, Electronic Resources, Lutheran Videos, etc. Congregations can purchase every imaginable media. Several pastors specifically named authors or services that they use, such as Holden Evening Prayer by Marty Haugen. Marty Haugen's materials are available through Augsburg Fortress.

Several pastors use a subscription service of Augsburg Fortress, Sundays and Seasons Online Worship Planner, [www.sundaysandseasons.com](http://www.sundaysandseasons.com). The website offers several options. For example, pastors can plan services by first choosing a hymnal: *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, *Lutheran Book of Worship*, *Lutheran Book of Worship, Occasional Services*, *With One Voice*, *This Far by Faith*, or *Libro de Liturgia y Cantico*.; then choose a setting; communion or no communion, etc. Every service element then is listed, with options, such as the Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness has two options to choose from.

Sundays and Seasons Online Worship Planner also provides permission downloads of copyrighted hymns found in:

*ELW Evangelical Lutheran Worship*

*LBW Lutheran Book of Worship*

*WOV With One Voice*

*TFF This Far by Faith*

*LLC Libro de Liturgia y Cántico*

*RWSB Renewing Worship Songbook*

*ASG As Sunshine to a Garden*

*BOL Bread of Life*

*DATH Dancing at the Harvest*

*GS2 Global Songs 2*

*LS LifeSongs*

*OBS O Blessed Spring*

*W&P Worship & Praise*

*HFW Hymns for Worship*

Each download provides an arrangement, the lyrics, and the copyright license coverage summary of how to request permission to use the music. I plugged in “A Mighty Fortress” and received several options, each a bit distinctive, including a short recording: Bach, *HFW* 7; Isometric *LBW* 229, *LS* 81, *TFF* 113 *ELW* 504; Rhythmic *LBW* 228, *ELW* 503; Alternate Translation *ELW* 505; and Hedge *HFW* 4 (No recording was available to hear what Hedge means.)

The interviews revealed some similarities and differences when comparing the churches in my study. The churches were in rural areas, small towns, and small cities. The congregational roots were similar, Swedish, Norwegian, and German. The ages of the churches ranged from 34 to 150 years old. The current ethnicity is primarily

Caucasian, with a sprinkling of minorities. The congregations ranged from 382 to 2800 members.

The climate of the congregations regarding alternative worship forms seemed to be similar in a couple of ways. In each church, except for one very small congregation, traditional and alternative services are being offered. Some of the members are more supportive of the alternative than traditional, and vice-versa. Members attend the service they prefer. Factors influencing their choices include the day and time the service is offered and the type of liturgy and music. Personal preference dictates which service one attends.

The smallest congregation I had contact with, coming in with 382 members, has one service per week, which is a traditional service, taking direction from the new *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (or *ELW*). They also use other resources like *sundaysandseasons.com*, *Prince of Peace*, and for special services, *Holden Evening Prayer* and *Taize* are used. Even though they have traditional services weekly, more contemporary items can be used as well. The youth are the ones in the church that are asking for more contemporary aspects to be included, and the attitude of the church seems to be they are open to new ideas. It can be inferred that the youth are the ones that are calling for more variety in worship, and this is something that is not exclusive to this particular congregation.

According to the churches in my study, it appears that churches with an older average age tend to have more traditional services, while churches with a younger average age tend to have more alternative services. For example, in three of the churches interviewed the average age of the congregational members was between 50 and 60, the

trend was to have 2 or fewer alternative services per month. In one of them, they do not even offer an alternative service. The closest they come is an outdoor polka service in the summer, in addition to using Advent and Lent Wednesday service settings that have a more contemporary feel. In another of the churches they had one alternative service per month, and the attendance tended to be lower at that service as well. The third church in this example also had a similar problem. They are trying to be more open to having an alternative service almost every week, but the attendance is significantly lower than the two traditional services offered weekly.

With regards to other churches that had a younger average age, they tended to offer more contemporary services. They also tended to branch out more and implement other resources than the traditional *Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW)*, the new *Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW)*, or *With One Voice (WOV)*, which all of the churches use as a resource.

For example, two of the churches have an average member age of thirties to early forties, and they offer much more than just a traditional service. One of the churches uses [sundaysandseasons.com](http://sundaysandseasons.com) and *Creative Communications* as additional resources, and they offer the most diverse array of services. They offer traditional, alternative, prayer and praise, and blended worship services.

The prayer and praise services are typically held Sunday nights instead of Sunday mornings. They include praise songs and proclamation, with no liturgy music and preaching. As a point of interest, it is a newer development for the congregation, and it has grown relatively quickly from a handful of people to a sizable number of people.



The blended worship service was not exclusive to this church, but it was the only church that had a blended worship service to such an extent. The liturgies, prayers and such are taken from settings in the *LBW* or *ELW*, and the music is typically all from elsewhere, whether it be [sundaysandseasons.com](http://sundaysandseasons.com), *Prince of Peace*, or other resources.

This particular church seems to be doing a good job of keeping freedom of worship in check in terms of not letting unsound liturgies or music enter the Lutheran service. The fact they are aware of this aspect in some way becomes very evident when I was asking about the climate of the congregation regarding traditional and alternative forms of worship. Pastor T summarized, “The congregation is pretty mixed about it, however, they are very open to a variety of forms. But either way, it needs substance, no matter the service.”

One of the pastors stated his church uses [sundaysandseasons.com](http://sundaysandseasons.com) and *Creative Communications* as additional resources. They have a CCLI license which gives them opportunities to purchase and download all kinds of music and dramas, often of which come from other Christian traditions than Lutheran. In that particular church they have two services a week, one traditional and one alternative, and in the alternative service they do not follow a liturgical setting, they use no hymnal as what is being done is printed in the bulletin or is projected onto a giant screen at the front of the sanctuary. As stated earlier by Pastor M explaining their focus for worship service forms, “We’re trying to pull in the ‘unchurched,’ so we are careful about using ‘churchy words’ that people that have not grown up in the church would understand.”

While this might send up a red flag to us that something is wrong if you are using “churchy words,” Timothy H. Maschke, in *Gathered Guests*, says, “Good liturgical

worship done well will attract the unchurched and will provide an opportunity for the unchurched to hear God's gracious will for them and to experience the gathered guests of God."<sup>53</sup>

This act of not using "churchy words" can also be viewed as a twenty-first century way of putting the service into the vernacular language of the people. If someone does not know what certain things are in the service because they do not understand the words, then they will be clueless to what is being preached. It is tempting to say they are "dumbing it down" for people. However, this provides the opportunity for people to know of Jesus Christ. In doing so, one must be careful about the content, as it can easily become unsatisfactory. It cannot be taken to the extent where you start to blot out the tradition and heritage of Lutheranism, and possibly to an extent the tradition and heritage of Christianity. The content of the service must not eclipse the Word and sacraments. Worship leaders need to be quite careful when choosing alternative services, especially when a church is striving to be a welcoming church that pulls in "unchurched people" by not using "churchy words."

Churches have options of varying the materials and types of services offered, however, the integrity of what Luther would include in a Lutheran service needs to be maintained. In order to see how types of services vary, I attended worship services of a church in my study to compare the traditional service called a Worship Service and Holy Communion and the alternative service called a Service of Worship and Praise. I discovered similarities and differences between the types of services.

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<sup>53</sup> Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 28.

Both kinds of services had a similar framework containing: The Gathering, The Word, The Meal, and The Sending. The first and second lessons, Gospel, and message were in The Word section. The bulletin for both services had the first and second lessons and Gospel written out, and lyrics were printed, with the proper usage license cited from CCLI (Christian Copyright Licensing International). In both services, communion was distributed during The Meal portion of the service. In both services, the sacraments were properly administered, in that the Words of Institution are said, and both the body and blood are present.

However, within this framework there were several differences. The kinds of music, where the music was placed in the services, and themes of the music were obviously different. Another difference was subtle. The traditional service always used the word, hymn. The alternative service always used the word, song.

Beginning with the first page of the bulletins, there were differences. The first page of the bulletin of the traditional service is worth examining closely because it suggests a Lutheran service, beginning with the welcome: “At Grace Lutheran all are invited to come to Holy Communion with repentant hearts, believing that Christ will forgive our sins and guide our lives.”<sup>54</sup> The next section of the bulletin is the Introduction. This section briefly summarizes the Gospel reading for the day. The last section is the Prayer of the Day, which also focuses on the Gospel. A visitor to the church can easily tell, from this first page, that there will be communion and the Gospel will be examined.

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<sup>54</sup> Fourth Sunday of Easter bulletin, 29 April, 2007, Grace Lutheran Church.

The hymns in these services reflect the Gospel of the day and are threaded throughout the service. The Gospels for the Second through Fifth Sundays of Easter focus on the risen Christ, Jesus feeding the followers, the commissioning of Peter, Jesus the Good Shepherd, and Jesus' love commandment. The hymns for each of these Sundays focused on Easter and also the Gospel readings. The Good Shepherd Sunday had three Good Shepherd hymns.

In The Meal section, the traditional service bulletin included bolded subsections for the Words of Institution, The Distribution, Post Communion Prayers and The Blessing. Following the closing hymn, the Sending was specifically labeled.

The Service of Worship and Praise had multiple songs printed in the bulletin, with the license cited from CCLI. The praise songs did not echo the Gospel lesson, as in the Worship Service and Holy Communion. It appears that the lyrics are veering from the Gospel toward congregational "feel good" entertainment. The Meal portion of the service had a "Communion Litany," which included the words of institution, however it was not identified that way. Multiple songs were sung during communion, there was a blessing, another song, and the dismissal, which was identical to the Worship Service and Holy Communion.

## Conclusion

Finally, what would Luther say about the changes he set in motion over 400 years ago? The ELCA churches in the study, regardless of size, age, heritage, or location, are providing opportunities for worship that I believe Luther would say are true to his guidelines: God's Word is being preached, the sacraments are being properly administered, and the congregations are involved in song in the vernacular language. Individuals are responding to various worship forms that touch their hearts and souls.

The Renewing Worship project has provided the opportunity for the ELCA body to create and evaluate resources that guide congregations as they plan worship in both traditional and alternative forms, while maintaining flexibility and freedom. Luther gave us this model that the ELCA has kept in tact and the churches in my study have kept in tact.

It is rather amazing to realize that our Lutheran heritage so closely connects us to Luther, nearly 500 years after he reformed the mass. We still have a close connection to the congregations and the worship services of his time. We are still singing hymns composed by Luther. We are singing in our vernacular. We are preaching the Word. We are appropriately administering the sacraments. We have freedom in choosing which type of service is most personally meaningful to us, as long as the Word and sacraments are included properly. Organs, trumpets, choirs, bells, dance, drama, polka bands, praise bands, and plasma screens. What would Luther say?!

## Annotated Bibliography

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This book provided background information on how Luther's compositions were influenced by existing chants and melodies.

*Apology to the Augsburg Confession*, in Theodore G. Tappert ed., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959.

A document in the book where we Lutherans get our basis for our beliefs for our faith. Helpful to understand the Lutheran standards for worship.

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A statement adopted by the ELCA Fifth Biennial Churchwide Assembly in August 1997. It talks about the means of grace, Holy Baptism, Holy Communion, among other things. It helped me understand what the ELCA thinks.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, *Recommendations: Renewing Worship*. ELCA, 2005.

This document gives background information on what the ELCA says should be included in worship and how it got there.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, *Principles for Worship*. ELCA, 2002.

This document looks at what is important in worship and why according to the ELCA.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, *Using “Evangelical Lutheran Worship” in a Contemporary Setting*. ELCA, 2006.

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*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, (Augsburg Fortress, 2006).

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Lambert, James F., *Luther’s Hymns*. Philadelphia: General Council Publication House, 1917.

This book provided the German hymns and chants with an English translation. It also provided background historical figures and events that influenced the composition of information, hymns, and chants, including “A Mighty Fortress is Our God”.

*Lutheran Book of Worship*, Augsburg Publishing House, 1978.

It was important for me to look at this hymnal in comparison with the new *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*.

*Luther’s Works: Liturgy and Hymns*. ed. Ulrich S. Leupold. Volume 53. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965.

One volume of many compilations of Luther’s works, and this one pertains to liturgy and hymns. Helpful because it gives direction to what Luther thinks about worship.

*Luther’s Works: Word and Sacrament I*. ed. E. Theodore Bachmann, Volume 35. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960.

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*Luther's Works: Church and Ministry II.* ed. Conrad Bergendoff, Volume 40.  
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Reuning, Daniel, "Confessional Music," *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, (October, 1980).

This piece talks about the three "schools" for music in worship at the time of the Reformation, as well as talks more specifically about what worship does. This helped me understand how we Lutherans adopted music in worship the way we have done so.

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A document in the book where we Lutherans get our basis for our beliefs for our faith. Helpful to understand the Lutheran standards for worship.

Vajta, Vilmos, *Luther on Worship*. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958.

A work that discusses Luther's thoughts on worship. Helpful to get an idea for Luther's principles of worship.



*Works of Martin Luther*. Volume 2. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1943.

I looked at this book to get some background and text about Luther's "Invocavit Sermons".

## **Interviews**

Pastor K. Strum, interviewed by the author, Calvary Lutheran Church, Rapidan, MN., 27 March, 2007.

Pastor Peterson, interviewed by the author, Christ the King Lutheran Church, Mankato, MN., 27 March, 2007.

Pastor Natwick, interviewed by the author, Trinity Lutheran Church, St. Peter, MN., 28 March, 2007.

Pastor Ahlquist, interviewed by the author, Messiah Lutheran Church, North Mankato, MN., 27 March, 2007.

Pastor Holmstrom, interviewed by the author, First Lutheran Church, St. Peter, MN., 28 March, 2007.

Pastor Erickson, interviewed by the author, Grace Lutheran Church, Mankato, MN., 28 March, 2007.

All interviews are essential and helpful in the pursuit of the current worship practices of the ELCA in southern Minnesota.

## **Service Planning Resources Congregations Cited**

Creative Communications. [www.creativecommunications.com](http://www.creativecommunications.com) (May 10, 2007).

Dakota Road Music. [www.dakotaroad.com](http://www.dakotaroad.com) (May 10, 2007).

Worshipmusic Prince of Peace Lyrics, [www.lyricsdownload.com/worshipmusic-prince-of-peace-lyrics](http://www.lyricsdownload.com/worshipmusic-prince-of-peace-lyrics) (May 10, 2007).

Christian Copyright Licensing International, [www.ccli.com](http://www.ccli.com) (May 10, 2007).

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Augsburg Fortress Press.

[www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org) (May 10, 2007).

I looked at all of these online resources because they are resources that pastors use for worship planning.

Dakota Road Music [www.dakotaroad.com](http://www.dakotaroad.com) is Christian music, with a contemporary feel. Most of the songs I reviewed focused on social issues, such as race and poverty, but also had songs categorized by season, liturgy, and Biblical passages. I downloaded several songs to examine the lyrics. The ones I viewed were Christain-based. This company based out of Beresford, South Dakota, provides lyrics, recording, songbooks, and the ability to download sheet music.

Creative Communications for the Parish [www.creativecommunications.com](http://www.creativecommunications.com), based out of Fenton, MN, offers books, devotionals, Bible studies, bulletins, themed services on CD-Roms , such as “God Shed His Grace on Thee—A Service for a National Holiday, Vacation Bible School kits, Bible stories on DVD, and DVDs for Bible study discussions. Upon entering the website, you choose between Catholic and generic Protestant materials. Nothing was particularly outstanding or offending.

Logos Productions, based in Inver Grove Heights, MN, offers nondenominational materials such as: daily devotionals, free children sermons, materials for Sunday School, adult Bible studies, confirmation, sermon preparation, worship resources including print and CD Rom, online worship planners, “Contemporary Companion Hymnal for Blended Worship” produced by Oregon Catholic Press. The materials were very generic, but obviously Christian.

OneLicense.net, Chicago, IL, administers copyright permissions for music publisher, such as GIA ( all music by Taize), Marty Haugen, and David Haas. For a subscription fee congregations may print texts in bulletins. Marty Haugen’s services and songs are used in several of the churches for special services, such as during Lent.

Christian Copyright Licensing International, [www.ccli.com](http://www.ccli.com), is based from Portland, OR. A subscription fee of \$179.00 per year provides church copyright licenses, church video licenses, Christian music downloads, and movies “for sermon and teaching illustrations.” This site provides varied multimedia materials. Again, the materials were obviously Christian, but generic.

Worshipmusic Prince of Peace Lyrics, [www.lyricsdownload.com/worshipmusic-prince-of-peace-lyrics](http://www.lyricsdownload.com/worshipmusic-prince-of-peace-lyrics), provides lyrics and downloads of gospel music. I question the quality of this website if it is being used for planning worship. The Gospel is thinly veiled in the lyrics I viewed. It’s probably all right for downloading “Praise Ringtones,” which is one of the options.

If music is to be used from these sites listed above, it must be carefully examined to make sure the lyrics are based on the Bible, with the emphasis and focus on God, and not feel-good music that focuses on oneself.

Augsburg Fortress Press in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is the publishing company of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The website, [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org), has links to the ELCA Distribution Service Resources, ELCA Official Resources, ELCA Strategic Directions, Electronic Resources, Lutheran Videos, etc. Congregations can purchase every imaginable media. Several pastors specifically named authors or services that they use, such as Holden Evening Prayer by Marty Haugen. Marty Haugen’s materials are available through Augsburg Fortress.

Several pastors use a subscription service of Augsburg Fortress, Sundays and Seasons Online Worship Planner, [www.sundaysandseasons.com](http://www.sundaysandseasons.com). The website offers several options. For example, pastors can plan services by first choosing a hymnal: