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# Recommendations: Reception of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*

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## Background

The 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America affirmed the outcomes of the five-year Renewing Worship project and anticipated the 2006 publication of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* [CA05.03.05, partially quoted in the action below].

*Evangelical Lutheran Worship* was released on October 3, 2006, as the primary resource in an unfolding family of new worship resources that will be available in print and in electronic form. Early sales have been brisk. Nearly 600,000 volumes of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* were ordered in 2006; the fifth printing is now available.

Introductory efforts will culminate in “Worship Jubilee 2007,” a churchwide worship event designed to feature the flexibility of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and further the ongoing work of worship renewal throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

## Recommendation for Assembly Action

1. To remember with joy that one of the six primary purposes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is to “worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service” (ELCA constitutional provision 4.02.d.);
2. To applaud the 1997 statement of this church, *The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament*, for the way that statement has contributed to the development of worship resources and continues to provide guidance for the ministry of Word and sacrament;
3. To recall with gratitude the action of the Church Council in 2000 that authorized the “ELCA Next Generation of Worship Resources,” the churchwide effort that came to be known as Renewing Worship;
4. To acknowledge the subsequent action of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly regarding the ways in which the Renewing Worship effort:
  - a. reinforced the importance of widespread participation in the ongoing work of worship renewal;
  - b. affirmed a collaborative approach to the development of worship resources, drawing on the wisdom of individuals, congregations, pastors, musicians, synodical bishops, teaching theologians, and other leaders, institutions and agencies;
  - c. demonstrated this church’s commitment to thorough liturgical and theological review of materials intended for use in worshipping assemblies; and
  - d. encouraged and allowed for the completion of the new primary book of worship, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*;
5. To express gratitude for:
  - a. those who have provided leadership and oversight for the various facets of the development of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*;
  - b. the widespread participation in introductory events; and
  - c. the many individuals and synodical teams who have provided leadership in introducing *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*;
6. To convey appreciation—through the national bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada—to the pastors, bishops, and many individuals and congregations throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada who contributed to the development and introduction of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*;
7. To receive with thanksgiving *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and celebrate the ways in which it:
  - a. bears the rich tradition of Christian worship practiced among Lutherans and, at the same time, seeks to renew that tradition in response to a generation of change in the Church and in the world;
  - b. reflects a body of prayer and song that are worthy to hold in common, consistent with the commitment to the treasury of Christian worship affirmed in the Lutheran confessions;
  - c. is grounded in Lutheran convictions about the centrality of the means of grace;
  - d. continues to emphasize that freedom and flexibility in worship is a Lutheran inheritance; the book, therefore, is designed to make more transparent the principle of fostering unity without imposing uniformity;
  - e. represents the gifts of the breadth of the Church of Christ, and prizes the words and songs Lutherans hold in common with other Christians, while at the same time extending the particular accents of the Lutheran heritage as gifts to the whole Church; and
  - f. reflects the understanding that worship is fundamentally about what God does, bringing to expression how God nourishes the people of the Church for mission and accompanies them as

- they bear the creative and redeeming Word of God, Jesus Christ, to the whole world; and
8. To commit the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the ongoing work of renewing worship, understanding that:
- a. worship takes place in particular assemblies within particular contexts, yet every assembly gathered by the Holy Spirit for worship is connected to the whole Church;
  - b. each Christian assembly worships in the midst of an ever-changing world; and
  - c. worship is renewed in order to be both responsible and responsive to the world that the Church is called to serve.