

## CONVENTION UPDATE ~ 2005



Welcome to ELCIC + RENEWING WORSHIP! The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada is a participant in RENEWING WORSHIP, a multi-year, five-phase process, undertaken by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, designed to renew the worship of the church and to produce the generation of worship resources to succeed the *Lutheran Book of Worship*.

### RENEWING WORSHIP

Renewing Worship is a 5-year church-wide project that has seen a great deal of individual and congregational participation. In the ELCIC and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), thousands of people have been involved: submitting original work, serving on development panels and editorial teams, attending events, testing provisional materials, visiting [www.renewingworship.org](http://www.renewingworship.org) and providing feedback.

Renewing Worship will result in a new family of resources that..

- will support worship in all ELCIC congregations regardless of size, location, style of music, ethnic background. Variety and flexibility are a priority.
- will be available in different formats (print, CD's, web delivery).
- will continue to unfold over time, in response to changing mission needs.
- will have at its centre a new primary book of worship intended to replace *Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW)*.

### A NEW BOOK OF WORSHIP

Content decisions are subject to a carefully framed liturgical review process in the ELCA. The ELCIC has been a partner in this review process. The ELCIC's Program Committee for Worship (PCW) will report on the process to National Church Council (NCC) and make a recommendation as to new worship resources.

- Publication is anticipated in October, 2006.
- A new "book" will be available in both print and electronic form.
- A new book will provide a "core" rather than a comprehensive collection of hymns and liturgical material. Material included will be selected because of its benefits to the whole church. The surrounding family of resources will provide many ways to supplement a new book of worship.
- A new book of worship will reflect what we hold in common.

### SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*Why publish a hard-copy book in this "electronic" age?*

- A new book provides a tangible sign of what we hold in common, fostering a sense of shared identity.
- A new book will provide a reminder of our unity in the midst of worship

diversity.

- A new book will provide all worshipers access to the core of texts and music that shapes and nourishes faith in individuals and communities. Access should not be limited to worship planners as everyone has a stake in how worship comes to expression.
- While some congregations produce weekly worship folders that include much, if not all of the service, it is still true that most ELCIC congregations rely on a book or books for use in worship, including the singing of hymns.

*How will most congregations afford this investment in a new primary book of worship?*

Most congregations have a history of purchasing primary worship materials in ways that do not burden their regular budget. Memorial gifts, local fund raising projects, and special offerings are among the ways to invest in materials that will serve the mission of the church for the next generation.

*Who decided we need a new book?*

In November 2000 the ELCA Church Council affirmed a recommendation to undertake a comprehensive and cohesive approach to developing and delivering primary worship resources in response to the mission needs of a changing church. ELCA Church Council action set in motion the 5-year project known as *Renewing Worship* and, in the context of that project, it was decided to work toward the publication of a new book. The LBW was already 22 years old. It is now 27 years old and will be almost 30 by the time congregations adopt the new materials! By contrast, our last book —the *Service Book and Hymnal*— lasted only about 20 years (1958-1978) before the *LBW* came along!

In March, 2001, NCC endorsed full participation by the ELCIC in the project. The ELCIC was graciously invited and welcomed into the process by the ELCA.

*What will happen at the 2005 National Convention regarding Renewing Worship?*

On Friday morning, July 22, there will be a *Renewing Worship* breakfast —a chance for all to hear details of the process and to ask questions prior to the plenary time. During the plenary session, the assembly will hear a report with recommendations that reflect an underlying premise of *Renewing Worship*, namely, that worship renewal is about more than new worship resources.

*Will the convention vote on the contents of the new book, that is, approve the new book?*

No. Decisions about proposed contents have been shaped by the participation of individuals and congregations throughout the last five years. Input is still welcome and may be sent to [renewingworship@elca.org](mailto:renewingworship@elca.org). There is no “vote” on the specific contents of a new book of worship. Rather, the ELCIC has an authorized process in place that seeks to maximize the likelihood that primary worship resources will benefit the whole church. The ELCIC National Convention in July is one of many venues (along with the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in August) for input to the process, and to the future development of worship resources.

*What if my favourite hymn is not in the new book?*

Remember that this is a core volume rather than a comprehensive collection. There will be more hymns and songs, in total, than in *LBW*. Hymns contained in the initial draft proposal come from *LBW* (53%), *With One Voice* (20%), *Renewing Worship Songbook* (21%) and from other sources (6%). The *Renewing Worship Songbook* was made available to convention delegates at the ELCIC's five 2004 synod conventions and to participants in the 2004 ELCIC National Worship Conference. *With One Voice* had been previously made available to all delegates to the 1995 national convention. In any event, the absence of a particular hymn need not be a cause for concern because all of our “favourites” will most likely be available in some form within the family of resources.

*What of our multicultural reality?*

Many of the new hymns and songs reflect a sensitivity to the multicultural reality which is ours within the global Christian community. To obtain a list of hymns, visit [www.renewingworship.org](http://www.renewingworship.org). It is available as part of the very helpful November, 2004, *Report to the ELCA Church Council*. This document provides an extremely comprehensive overview of the Renewing Worship project and process.

*Can we still recommend changes to the proposed list of hymns?*

Yes, recommendations may still be sent to [renewingworship@elca.org](mailto:renewingworship@elca.org). It is important to know that the proposed collection of hymns was developed carefully, with the needs of the whole church (both ELCA and ELCIC) in mind and with the help of thousands of people who have been involved in the Renewing Worship process. Several Canadian contributions are reflected in the proposed collection.

*What settings of the liturgy will be included?*

Worship renewal does not abandon what is old for the sake of something new, but recognizes the best of a treasured tradition, bringing it to rich expression, while being faithful in the midst of change. A new book is likely to include some settings that have served us very well for a generation and continue to be important to many congregations of the ELCIC. A new book will also include settings that are new to us. Assessment of responses to provisional settings that were tested is still underway. Active consideration of additional material will ensure inclusion of liturgical settings that are of the highest quality.

*What new items are contemplated for inclusion?*

Since the publication of *Lutheran Book of Worship* in 1978 there has been a significant voice for the inclusion of the liturgies for Lent and Holy Week: Ash Wednesday, Sunday of the Passion (Palm Sunday), Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Vigil of Easter. These are included in the draft proposal.

*What about Luther's Catechism?*

It is contemplated that Luther's *Small Catechism* will be included.

*Will material from the Renewing Worship provisional resources appear in more lasting resources?*

More lasting resources, like a new book of worship, are developed in light of feedback from provisional materials. Many materials published as part of the Renewing Worship process will be revised prior to any final publication as a result of widespread feedback.

## HELPFUL WEBSITES

We invite the people of the ELCIC to explore our participation in RENEWING WORSHIP.

The ELCIC's *Lift Up Your Hearts* worship and spirituality web site [www.worship.ca](http://www.worship.ca) offers an area dedicated to ELCIC + RENEWING WORSHIP, the Canadian dimension of the RENEWING WORSHIP project.

The ELCA's RENEWING WORSHIP website [www.renewingworship.org](http://www.renewingworship.org) is the principal project web site. It provides a comprehensive overview, downloadable trial-use resources, together with detailed and current progress reports on all aspects of RENEWING WORSHIP.

## ELCIC + RENEWING WORSHIP COORDINATORS

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