

UPDATE ~ SUMMER, 2003



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*.

PUBLISHED RESOURCES

To date, four volumes of trial-use resources have been published:

1. *Congregational Song: Proposals for Renewal*

This volume focuses on approaches to the renewal of the church's long heritage of congregational song. Included are traditional hymns having revised texts; texts paired to new tunes; restored texts and tunes.

2. *Principles for Worship*

During 2001, over one hundred people, including several ELCIC representatives, took part in a series of consultations that led to the formulation of principles which address four dimensions of the church's worship: language, music, preaching and worship space. The *Principles* have provided a framework for each of the subsequent published resources.

3. *Holy Baptism and Related Rites*

This volume provides a variety of rites whose focus is to place baptism at the very centre of our life together. One of the chief goals toward which the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship worked in preparing the liturgy of *Lutheran Book of Worship* (LBW, 1978) was this one: "To restore to Holy Baptism the liturgical rank and dignity implied by Lutheran theology." (LBW Introduction, p.8). A quarter-century later, many signs suggest that this goal has been widely embraced.

RENEWING WORSHIP is concerned not only with the revision and development of the church's liturgical forms, but above all with the renewal of the church through the gifts of God in the means of grace, the centre of the church's life of worship. Many congregations are experiencing new life through a renewed understanding of baptism as a gift for the lifelong journey of both individual and community, and through practices and patterns that place baptism at the heart of worship, teaching and learning, and mission. As congregations embrace a rich and gracious theology and practice of baptism, seekers are led to the welcoming waters of baptism, the newly initiated are led to discipleship, the disciples are led to a fuller participation in the body of Christ, the body of Christ extends itself into the world, and all the baptized rediscover the treasures of returning to baptism again and again.

4. *Life Passages: Marriage, Healing, Funerals*

This volume gives liturgical expression to the rites of passage that are part of the Christian journey. Once the life of faith is begun in the waters of baptism, no subsequent passage is made alone. The incarnate God is the one in whom "we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28) and in whom all our life passages are made.

Each of the first four volumes of trial-use resources can be ordered from Augsburg Fortress. Rites are also available for download for publication in guides-to-worship. Individuals, study groups, church leaders and others are invited to use and to evaluate these resources; to see how they work in the life of our communities; to reflect on the material; and to offer comments and suggestions to the Renewing Worship team either at <www.renewingworship.org> or by returning the forms in the published volumes.

NEW HYMN RESOURCES COMING SOON

The long-awaited *New Hymns and Songs* will be released this summer. This is a collection of texts and tunes not found in either *Lutheran Book of Worship* or *With One Voice*. Many are new compositions. Some have been familiar in other denominations and/or cultures. We are introducing a number of these hymns at the 2003 ELCIC National Convention. Truly, we are learning to Sing to the Lord a New Song!

A companion piece to *New Hymns and Songs*, entitled *The Renewing Worship Songbook*, is being published in an inexpensive format for congregational use. Many of the songs are not covered by blanket copyright licenses and cannot be published on the Web. The printed *Songbook* will allow for widespread provisional use. The *Renewing Worship Songbook* includes the complete contents of *New Hymns and Songs* arranged for assembly singing. Full accompaniments are included in *New Hymns and Songs*. Copies of *Songbook* will be priced at US \$7.50 each or US \$4.50 for 50 or more copies.

PARTICIPATION IN RENEWING WORSHIP

There are many opportunities to participate in ELCIC + RENEWING WORSHIP at many levels. Two ELCIC pastors are members of the editorial teams; over 30 ELCIC pastors and lay people are members of the development panels. Congregations, communities and individuals are encouraged to try out and to review the new resources. Returning evaluations and comments is an invaluable part of RENEWING WORSHIP. Feedback is critical to the process. Additionally, we have made calls for submissions of new hymns and for new settings of the liturgy. We received many ELCIC submissions. We are grateful for the terrific interest. Submissions of new hymns are still being encouraged. They will be given consideration for inclusion in the final, published resources. Next year, in connection with the synod conventions, we are planning to offer sessions that will help to introduce RENEWING WORSHIP materials.

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> 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> 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.

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