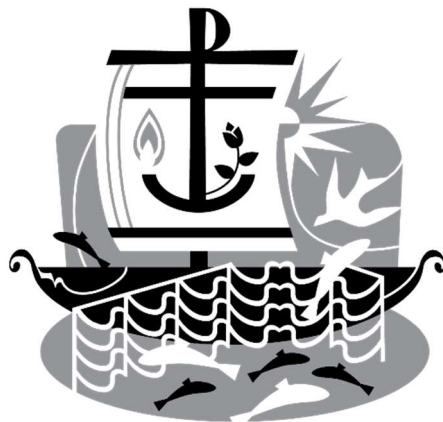


# Resources

## *Christian Worship Foundations*

WELS National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts  
Carthage College, July 30-Aug 2, 2024  
*Pastor Jon Zabell*



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# I. BIBLE STUDY STARTERS

What follows are ideas for helping pastors and other church leaders create their own Bible studies to teach fellow believers the theology and practice of Christian worship. The format of the study itself may vary. Some options include: Sunday morning Bible class, membership class, online book club, personal study. Those planning to teach may prepare by studying the suggested Scripture readings and the referenced *Foundations* chapter(s). If teachers are looking for more help with writing questions for their study, they may use Northwestern Publishing House's *Whole Bible Project* to help them unpack the Scripture readings, and the questions below can help them unpack their *Foundations* reading. Bible study leaders can decide whether students will be asked to purchase and read *Foundations* as a part of each study, or whether the teacher will summarize the content of the book and perhaps cite applicable quotes for students.

## Bible Study Series #1: The Purpose of Public Worship

### Week 1: Things to love about Christian worship

For study

- *Foundations*, chapter 1
- Psalm 84
- Ephesians 5:17-20
- Colossians 2:16-17

For discussion

- What compels believers to gather with fellow believers to call on the name of the Lord?
- To what extent do Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions help us know what to do and say in public worship?
- What makes gospel proclamation in a church service different from what happens in a Bible class?

### Week 2: Things to learn about Christian worship

For study

- *Foundations*, chapter 1
- Psalm 145
- Colossians 3:12-17

For discussion

- Explain what's missing in this statement: *The purpose of Christian worship is to make a joyful noise to the Lord.*
- Why is it beneficial to review the objective of Christian worship?

## Bible Study Series #2: The Story of Christian Worship

### Week 1: From Eden to Moses

For study

- *Foundations*, chapter 2
- Genesis 2:15-25, 3:1-24
- Exodus 25

For discussion

- How did public worship change after the fall into sin?
- What timeless lessons do we learn from the Lord's ancient worship regulations?

### Week 2: New Testament Times

For study

- *Foundations*, chapter 2
- Luke 4:16-21
- Luke 4:22-30
- Ephesians 1:15-22

For discussion

- Why were the people of Jesus' hometown unwilling to accept that he was the promised Messiah?
- How have the synagogue gatherings of Jesus' day continued to influence the gatherings of New Testament believers?
- Summarize some of the threats to public gospel proclamation through the centuries. What threats do you see in today's world?
- How can the story of worship through the ages help us deal with the challenges still facing the church today?

### Week 3: Worship in the WELS

For study

- *Foundations*, chapter 3
- Psalm 122

For discussion

- How would you characterize public worship practices in the earliest years of our synod's history?
- Why were so many eager to ditch 1917's *Book of Hymns* for *The Lutheran Hymnal* of 1941?
- What circumstances led to the formation of our own church body's Commission on Liturgy, Hymnody, and Worship in 1965?
- In 1983 we decided to produce our own hymnal. Why?
- What led to the expansion of *Christian Worship* resources in the decades after its 1993 publication?
- What lessons from our synod's past can help us as we look to the future?

## Bible Study Series #3: Worship's Calendar

### Week 1: The Festival Half of the Church Year

For study

- *Foundations*, chapter 4
- Genesis 1:14
- Leviticus 23
- Colossians 2:6-23

For discussion

- What purposes did the Lord's Old Testament worship calendar serve?
- Why did early Christians choose to continue using a worship calendar? How did they adapt their new calendar to reflect the appearance of the Savior?
- Share something you love about each season from Advent through Easter.

### Week 2: The Season after Pentecost

For study

- *Foundations*, chapter 4
- 2 Timothy 4:1-8

For discussion

- How is the season after Pentecost the same as the other seasons of the church year? How is it different?
- How and why did the hymnal committee change the way readings are appointed for the Sundays after Pentecost?
- What happened to the season we in WELS used to call the season of End Time? Why the change?
- Trace the development of the lectionary from the days of the Old Testament synagogue to the lectionary we find in *Christian Worship* 21.
- What are some benefits to observing the seasons of the church year and making use of the appointed set of readings each week?

## Bible Study Series #4: Art in Worship

### Week 1: Worship Space

For study

- *Foundations*, chapter 15
- Genesis 8:15-22
- Genesis 12:1-9
- 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

For discussion

- What are some reasons why the altar deserves to be the main focal point in a church? How can a careful use of design and space achieve this goal?
- How did Roman architecture influence the shape of our worship spaces?
- When it comes to adorning the chancel, why might a Lutheran consider a crucifix a better symbol than an empty cross?

### Week 2: Worship Symbols

For study

- *Foundations*, chapter 16
- Revelation 1:9-20

For discussion

- How would you describe the difference between a sign and a symbol? How can each be valuable in the communication of God's Word?
- Name some of the symbols the Lord presents to us in the Old and New Testaments, and discuss their impact on us.
- What symbols in your own church stand out for you? Do you have questions about what any of them mean?

### Week 3: Worship Music

For study

- *Foundations*, chapter 17
- Psalm 92

For discussion

- What's the difference between music designed for utilitarian purposes and music designed for aesthetic purposes? Can you think of examples of each? Which purpose aligns better in worship? Why?
- How can music help to teach the Scriptures?
- What do you think makes a good hymn good? Compare your answer with the principles that guided the hymnody committee of *Christian Worship 21*.
- How can planners and worshipers benefit from using the *Hymn of the Day* each week in worship?

## Bible Study Series #5: Worship Creativity

### Week 1: Worship Creativity is a Matter of Christian Freedom

For study

- *Foundations*, chapter 18
- 1 Corinthians 10:23-33
- Revelation 5

For discussion

- How important is it for us to be creative in the way we plan and carry out worship?  
What challenges can we expect to encounter?
- How can Martin Luther's encouragement and example help us avoid both a legalistic approach and an *anything goes* approach?
- How can a gospel-centered approach to creativity temper one's own sinful pride?

### Week 2: Worship Creativity is a Matter of Christian Love

For study

- *Foundations*, chapter 18
- Galatians 5:13-26
- Colossians 3:12-17

For discussion

- How can the careful curation of fellow believers benefit one's own creative approach to worship?
- Explain: It is helpful to consider our own congregation's worship practices in light of what's going on in the rest of our church body.
- In what ways can creative worship serve as a teaching tool for God's people?

## Bible Study Series #6: Worship and Outreach

### Week 1: A Timely Approach to Worship and Outreach

For study

- *Foundations*, chapter 19
- Matthew 28:16-20
- 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

For discussion

- How important is it that we plan our worship with an outreach mindset?
- How might you answer someone who suggests that Lutheran liturgical worship presents a barrier to outreach?
- What cultural attitudes in the 2020's suggest we should move beyond the idea that seeker-friendly services will attract unchurched people to the gospel?
- What are some thoughts to keep in mind when considering the use of screens in worship?
- How might you answer someone who suggests that the best way to connect with people of today is to offer a worship style that feels most comfortable to them?

### Week 2: A Lutheran Approach to Worship and Outreach

For study

- 1 Peter 2:4-10
- *Foundations*, chapter 19

For discussion

- Explain how each of the following can help leverage what Lutheran worship has to offer to the unchurched people of today: *stability, authenticity, mystery*.
- Why are worship and outreach inseparably connected?
- As we strive to connect with unchurched people in worship, why will we pay careful attention also to those who are already members of our church?



## II. NEW HYMNAL INTRODUCTION / APPRECIATION

Reference: *Foundations*, chapter 6-9

It can be helpful to gather a congregation or a group within the congregation together either to introduce *Christian Worship 21*'s weekly order of service or to renew their appreciation for it. The purpose of the gathering would be to help everyone understand why they do what they do in worship each week. "When pastors, musicians, planners, and worshipers are all on the same page, striving for a common experience, the gospel will have free course and be proclaimed to the joy and edifying of Christ's holy people" (*Foundations*, p.12).

In a hymnal introduction / appreciation presentation, *Christian Worship: Foundations* can serve as the teacher's guide. Presenters can prepare by highlighting the portions of chapters 6 through 9 to emphasize, and by deciding how much to cover in each session, based on the interest and makeup of the group.

At the time of study, a hymnal may be provided to each person, and they may be encouraged to open to one of the settings of *The Service*. The teacher is encouraged to start with a summary and discussion of the liturgical philosophy for Christian Worship from *Foundations*, chapter 6. He may continue by using chapters 7 through 9 to walk the group through the service, a little bit at a time. He may pause to invite comments and discussion about the texts of worship and the flow of the service. He may use his marked-up copy of *Foundations* as his guide.

## III. WORSHIP ADMINISTRATION

When a pastor completes his seminary training and is assigned to his first place of service, there is still much for him to learn about organizing and planning worship from week to week. *Foundations*, chapters 5, 10-12, and 13-14, will prove especially helpful for him.

Other pastors or worship planners may have a good deal of experience with the week to week routine of administering worship, but there are things about *Christian Worship 21* that are new to them. In these cases, too, the chapters referenced above will prove beneficial.

What follows are key thought to help guide pastors as they study these chapters on worship administration. A pastor may choose to work through the key thoughts on his own, or with a brother in the ministry. A new pastor may ask his mentor for help. A circuit pastor may want to lead a workshop with the pastors he serves. Whatever format these discussions may take, ideally each participant uses his own copy of *Foundations* as a guide.

## Worship Administration: Festivals and Special Occasions

Reference: *Foundations*, chapter 5

Key thoughts for consideration:

- HINT: use a notebook or tablet to track worship planning ideas found in this chapter.
- NOTE: A number of special worship resources mentioned in this chapter are found in the digital resource *Christian Worship: Service Builder*. Those resources are marked in the book with an asterisk (\*).
- Why might a pastor use the Service of Lessons and Carols on Christmas Eve?
- How does the worship focus of Christmas Eve differ from that of Christmas Day?
- What factors play into how a congregation may celebrate Epiphany Day?
- How and why might a congregation use *Remembrance of Baptism* on *The Baptism of our Lord*?
- How and why might a congregation use *Imposition of Ashes* on Ash Wednesday?
- What's the difference between a celebration of *Palm Sunday* and a celebration of *Passion Sunday*? Why might a congregation choose to celebrate *Passion Sunday*? NOTE: If a congregation chooses to observe *Passion Sunday*, they are encouraged to use the Palm Sunday gospel for the preceding First Sunday of Advent. For specific Scripture reading options on Advent 1 and Palm Sunday, refer to *Christian Worship: Hymnal X* and *Christian Worship: Hymnal XV*.
- Are you interested in introducing Easter Vigil to your congregation? Consider offering it in place of a distinct Easter Sunrise service on Sunday morning.
- Consider why, when, and how you might plan to celebrate the minor festivals of Reformation, All Saints, and The Last Sunday of the Church Year on the closing Sundays of the church year.
- Considering the opportunities for seasonal worship detailed in this chapter, set a goal for how far in advance you and other worship leaders in your setting will plan worship. If 6 months ahead seems overwhelming, just add an extra Sunday's planning to what you're already doing. For example, along with your February 1<sup>st</sup> plan, Plan July 1<sup>st</sup>. Along with February 8<sup>th</sup>, Plan July 8<sup>th</sup>. Once you get to July, you'll be six months ahead, and you can go back to planning one weekend at a time.

## **Worship Administration: Serving in Worship**

Reference: *Foundations*, chapter 13-14

Key thoughts for consideration:

- How does 2 Timothy 2:15 inform a pastor's approach to presiding at worship?
- More available resources for worship mean more planning and worship administration on the part of pastors and worship leaders. What benefits come from good planning?
- What role does a pastor play in encouraging excellence in worship?
- Why does every pastor need to pay attention to the matters of ritual and ceremony?
- What are some considerations for a pastor who wants to introduce something new into the worship life of his congregation?
- What opportunities and resources are available for worship education in a given congregation? How important is this kind of education?
- On pages 222-230, highlight and discuss what you consider good takeaways for presiding in worship.

## **Worship Administration: Other Services and Resources**

Reference: *Foundations*, chapter 10-12

Key thoughts for consideration:

### Chapter 10

- HINT: use a notebook or tablet to track worship planning ideas found in this chapter.
- What rites does CW: Hymnal provide for the rite of baptism? When might each rite be used?
- In the rite of Holy Baptism (CW 151), the sign of one cross has moved later in the rite from where it was in our previous hymnal. What's the reason for the change?
- If the minister wants to offer baptismal exhortations to parents, sponsors, witnesses, and/or the congregation, where will he look ahead of time to find those exhortations?
- Why might a congregation want to make use of the service *Corporate Confession and Absolution*? What are some possible ways the service may be used?
- When might a pastor encourage someone to make use of the rite *Individual Confession and Absolution*?

### Chapter 11

- HINT: use a notebook or tablet to track worship planning ideas found in this chapter.
- What are some options for when a congregation may want to use *Service of Word and Prayer*?
- A good way to encourage familiarity with canticles like the *Venite*, *Magnificat*, *Te Deum*, and *Benedictus*, and to tap into the rich variety available in *Christian Worship: Psalter* is to use the hymnal's three services of the Daily Office: *Matins*, *Vespers*, and *Compline*. Check out the description these services. Are there times other than Sunday morning when one or more of these services might be used in your setting?
- On what occasions might you be able to make use of the hymnal's five brief orders of daily devotion?

## Chapter 12

- NOTE: The services and rites discussed in this chapter are found in *Christian Worship: Agenda*.
- What are some key pastoral considerations when preparing for a wedding, a funeral, or another special church occasion?
- Note the change in terminology used in *Christian Worship: Agenda*. The term *confirmation* is reserved for the rite that welcomes children as communing members of the church. Adults who have received various amounts of instruction based on their background may profess their faith publicly in the rite called *Reception of New Members*.
- In the Agenda's *Christian Wedding* service, what are the presuppositions concerning a pastor's pre-marriage interactions with the bride and groom? Why are the Lord's distinct roles for husbands and wives not explicitly mentioned in the couple's declaration of intent?
- How may pastors offer encouragement to grieving families as he helps them plan a service of *Christian Funeral*?
- What are some options a pastor may use during the *Remembrance of Baptism* section of the funeral service?
- As you read the remaining descriptions for occasional rites and services in CW: Agenda, highlight those items you'd like to remember when referring back to the book later.