



Year C Planning Comments

A time saving partnership

The mission of Congregational Services is to encourage and equip congregations, schools, and their leaders for gospel ministry. One way we do this is by providing various adaptable programs (like *God's People Gather*) and training tools (like *Everyone Outreach*). One value of these programs is saving time for pastors, teachers, and lay leaders, enabling them to plan ministry efforts without starting from scratch.

Later this summer Congregational Services will publish a large ensemble of resources called *The Foundation* at welscongregationalservices.net. Gathering around Word and sacrament serves as the foundation of a believer's week. So *The Foundation* includes a plethora of resources to help church leaders prepare for worship. There is a complete worship plan for Year C. There is a new WELS Preachers Podcast, where parish pastors and professors from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) discuss the upcoming week's sermon text. There will be a *Service Builder* file for every week for congregations that want to use that powerful tool.

However, *The Foundation* will include far more than worship resources. The Commission on Evangelism has produced promotional text, thematic graphics, and video promotions for every season and sermon series. Congregations can use these on their websites and social media platforms. The Commission on Discipleship is producing online devotions for individuals and families that revolve around Sunday's theme and readings. The Commission on Lutheran Schools is producing chapel talks that reinforce the worship plan themes. These resources are all free for congregations to use however they see fit.

The Foundation builds on all the other resources produced as part of the hymnal product. For example, pastors will find the sermon series themes explained more fully in [Commentary on the Propers, Year C](#). The hymn and psalm recommendations of the worship plan come from our new hymnal and psalter.

In addition to my colleagues in Congregational Services, there are many others I would like to thank for making *The Foundation* possible: Pastor Michael Schultz, director of the hymnal project, who put together the worship plan for Year C; Prof. Thomas Kock, director of *Grow in Grace*, who organized the WLS participation of the Preachers Podcast; Prof. Jonathan Micheel, professor of homiletics at WLS, who is the primary moderator for the podcast; the parish pastors and other WLS professors who contributed to the podcast; Mr. Brian Urbanek, who worked with the Commission on Evangelism to produce all the outreach materials.

Again, our prayer is that these resources help your congregation save some time as you plan your worship, outreach, and discipleship efforts.

Pastor Jon Hein, Coordinator of Congregational Services

Special features of the planning tool

No single plan can best serve a wide diversity of congregations. They differ in size, musician resources, and capacity for comfortably learning new material. They don't all offer the sacrament on the Sundays indicated in the planner.

The spreadsheet version of the planner allows congregations to customize the plan as much as desired. But also built into the spreadsheet are two options for introducing new orders of service. These are labeled "conservative" and "ambitious."

The plan doesn't expect too much from organists/pianists. A frequent question this past spring has been: "Can we obtain advance copies of new liturgies so that musicians can practice them in advance of first use in Advent?" Unfortunately, copyright restrictions do not allow that. But the plan does not introduce new canticles until January of 2022, giving musicians ample time to become confident with new music. In addition, new settings are introduced gradually, one canticle at a time—often with help from a cantor or choir.

Series/Sunday themes. The planner offers not only the new lectionary and hymn choices that fit the day's readings. It also provides series themes (covering an entire season, or portion) and themes specific to each Sunday. See columns C-E in the spreadsheet. This thematic information will be appreciated by pastors who like to preach sermon series and will demonstrate how such series can be crafted from the new lectionary.

Gospel Acclamation settings. (Previously termed "Common Verse" or "Verse of the Day.") Options are provided for both Seasonal and Proper Verses. The potential of this variety may not be obvious without actually seeing the musical settings. For now I simply emphasize that these options provide far more variety than in the 1993 *Christian Worship*, variety that is easily accessible to average worshippers.

Some new hymns require advance preparation and use of a choir or cantor. These are noted in the planner. It's never a good idea to schedule a new hymn tune and hope for the best. Even in congregations with members of higher-than-average musical literacy, some people will be uncomfortable if asked to sing something new without hearing it first. Sometimes (not designated in the planner), a choir or soloist might sing a new hymn as an anthem or during communion distribution before the congregation sings it the following Sunday. The choir or soloist can use a basic version from the hymnal or accompaniment edition. At NPH (online.nph.net) search on 'cw21choral' to find other arrangements of new hymns. Search 'cw21keyboard' for piano and organ settings.



Two file formats of the planner are available: Excel and PDF. The PDF, generated by exporting data from the Excel file, shows details for each Sunday on two pages. If your congregation uses Google Docs Editors suite, you can import the Excel file into a Google sheet and customize from there.

The hymnal introduction committee hopes that the Year C Planner will be beneficial for both your long- and short-range planning.

Pastor Bryan Gerlach, Director of the Commission on Worship