



Worship the Lord

No. 9, September 2004

Sharing worship ideas with WELS pastors

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP REMEMBERS DEPARTED BELIEVERS

This issue, the fourth in a series of five, describes an All Saints' Day contemplative service. Previous articles described contemplative worship at a women's retreat and for midweek Advent services. The first article in the series discussed the strong potential of contemplative worship to connect with people's deep needs. Author Wayne Schulz wrote: "Today's historical and cultural climate begs us to give time and consideration to the deep longings of emerging generations."

A service that remembers departed believers is an especially appropriate time for contemplative worship. Worshipers always welcome a clear and direct proclamation of God's Word in worship. But a service remembering departed loved ones is also a time for worship that is quieter, calmer, and slower-paced. Such a service gives ample space for worshipers to remember departed saints with whatever emotions accompany their remembrance.

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Bryan Gerlach

All Saints' Day—November 1: In the Style of Taizé By Mary Prange

Hardly a day goes by that I don't remember with thanks my sainted parents. They brought me to Holy Baptism as an infant and made sure that my faith was nurtured through daily devotions, prayer, and regular worship. All of you who are reading these words can identify saints whom the Lord placed into your lives. Some of these have been faithful to the point of death and have now received their crown of life. It is altogether fitting then that we should remember such believers and give thanks and glory to Jesus Christ, who by his holy life and death has made these saints holy through Baptism and faith. Since the first century the Christian church has set aside November 1 as a special day to honor the saints. It is known by Christians throughout the world as All Saints' Day.

For the last several years Atonement Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, the parish where I serve as Director of Music, has held a special service on All Saints' Day. One purpose of this service is to remember with thanks to the Lord all in our congregation who are now enjoying citizenship in the Kingdom of Glory. Letters

of invitation are sent to the family members of those who are being remembered in order to encourage them to use this service as a special opportunity to reflect upon the lives of their loved ones.

The format of the thirty minute service that we conduct is quite simple. It begins with several songs from the Taizé Community taken from *Songs and Prayers from Taizé*. This material is from GIA Publications (giamusic.com, 800-442-1358; or order from NPH). The Accompaniment Edition (G-3719A) contains cantor parts and instrumental parts. The People's Edition (G-3719P) contains the songs as they would appear in the service folder. Permission to reprint the music can be obtained through the purchase of a license

which is good for one year. The cost of the license is based on the size of one's congregation. (Many WELS parishes already have a GIA license. The license required for using Morning Praise from NPH's *Christian Worship: New Service Settings* covers use of the Taizé resources as well.)

If Taizé music is new to your parish, an All Saints' service is an easy and natural time to introduce Taizé songs. Some people who might otherwise wonder about the contemplative nature of these songs will find that they are especially fitting for an All Saints' service. If pastor and musicians are not familiar with Taizé music, see the WELS Worship Web site for some helpful guidance.

Following the opening songs and invocation is a reading from Isaiah 26, selected verses.

This is followed by the singing of Psalm 23 in a setting by Henry Gerike (CPH, *Psallite—Psalm Settings*, 97-6987; see note*) and the Psalm prayer. Revelation 7 may be read or included in the musical setting by Donald Busarow entitled *Prelude on Sine Nomine* for trumpet, organ and reader (CPH 97-6195). The Gospel



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appointed for All Saints' Day is Matthew 5:1-12. The Taizé song, *Jesus, Remember Me*, is most appropriate for this occasion. A period of silence may follow each pair of lessons and the songs. The silence after the last pair may be longer.

Following is an example of how the saints are remembered:

P: I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.

C: **And whoever lives and believes in me will never die.** (John 11: 25-26)

~ (name of person read by the pastor including date of death followed by a toll of a handbell) ~

A different passage is used for each person. This is followed by a prayer, the Lord's Prayer, and the musical setting *Blessed Are They* by Larry Fleming (MorningStar Music MSM-50-8106). This song can be introduced by a soloist or a small choir or simply sung by the congregation. Note the instructions in the music about varying degrees of complexity, from simple to elaborate (with optional full choir, brass, bells, and more!). A closing hymn from the Saints and Martyrs section of the hymnal would also be proper.

Honoring the memory of the saints for their examples to us and thanking the Lord for giving them to us as companions on our earthly pilgrimage is certainly fitting.

Hand-held candles are a useful element in this service. Each worshiper is given a candle upon entering the church. The candles are lit during the song following the Gospel. They are brought to the front of the church during the singing of the final song and placed still lit into a container with sand thus bringing the focus of light back to Christ, the Light of the world. (The sand serves as a solid and safe anchor for the candles.) The worshipers then leave in silence after a period of meditation.

If holding a service on November 1 is not practical for your congregation, many of the ideas mentioned in this article could also be used on the Sunday called Saints' Triumphant, November 14 this year.

Honoring the memory of the saints for their examples to us and thanking the Lord for giving them to us as companions on our earthly pilgrimage is certainly fitting. Many worshipers have expressed their appreciation for the All Saints' service we have offered.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. – Revelation 13:13

* Note on Gerike psalm settings: Practical, easy psalm settings including refrains and chanted tones, available on CD-ROM. This convenient resource includes 23 settings for use throughout the church year. Everything on the CD-ROM is reproducible for the choir, and the refrains may be used for congregational singing.



FURTHER RESOURCES

Several resources at wels.net/worship can help parishes to use some of the ideas above. For responsive readings of scripture and the names of departed saints look under Church Year Resources / End Time / Saints Triumphant. (Or under New Year.) This resource includes several appropriate passages arranged for responsive reading. This material can be pasted into a worship folder and edited to reflect local needs.

For Taizé information look under Non-Church Year Worship Resources.

Taizé songs are available from GIA as well as in hymnals, supplements, and collections. GIA is the licensed publisher of Taizé materials in the United States. One title is found in NPH's LAPPY (*Let All the People Praise You*): "Jesus, Remember Me." Some selections are in CPH's *Hymnal Supplement 98*.

Numerous recordings and videos are available from GIA. One recording is especially useful for those who want to use Taizé songs but lack a variety of musicians: *Taizé Instrumental*, GIA CD-586, released in 2003. The CD booklet states, "Behind this recording is the desire to support people who would like to meet to sing and pray together, using the songs of Taizé, but who do not feel they have the confidence to sing a cappella. It contains instrumental support for nineteen songs that are straightforward to sing and do not require solo verses. . . . This recording is only intended as a help when needed. It is not intended to replace live accompaniments or a capella singing when these are possible."

For devotional thoughts on All Saint's Day (and all of the Minor Festivals), see Richard Lauersdorf's book, *With Our Eyes on Jesus: Devotions on the Minor Festivals of the Church Year*, NPH 2000. The back of the book quotes Luther: "[In the lives of the saints] one is greatly pleased to find how they sincerely believed God's Word, confessed it with their lips, praised it by their living, and honored and confirmed it by their suffering and dying."



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