



Introduction

Welcome to the 2026 edition

For three decades *Sundays and Seasons* has been a trusted worship planning resource, guiding the church's leaders as they prepare for worship in their communities. Whether you are encountering *Sundays and Seasons* for the first time or it has been essential for you for many years, you are welcome here! As it has been from the beginning, the Sundays and Seasons family of resources continues to support week-by-week planning for Lutherans with content and ideas shaped by the Revised Common Lectionary, the church year, and the assembly gathered around word and sacrament. Its robust family of resources includes the online planning tool sundaysandseasons.com.

Introducing the NRSV Updated Edition

This 2026 edition of *Sundays and Seasons* is the first to adopt the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVue), which is now utilized across the full family of resources (Preaching, Bread for the Day, Worship Planning Calendar, etc.) as well as on sundaysandseasons.com. The NRSVue is an update of the NRSV instituted by the National Council of Churches, created by the Society of Biblical Literature, and first made available through Friendship Press. Its primary purpose is to reflect advances in biblical scholarship over the past thirty years, such as more recent study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and updates in the English language. In some biblical passages these changes will be clearly noticeable, while in others they may be quite minor, such as a single word or punctuation mark. The best place to find information about the NRSVue is on the Friendship Press website at www.friendshippress.org/pages/about-the-nrsvue. We hope that you find the updated scholarship and language beneficial for your worship, study, and preaching.

With the whole church

Sundays and Seasons would not exist without the creative talents of many people across the church. Pastors, musicians, deacons, members of worship committees and altar guilds, seminary professors, and visual artists contribute their wisdom and ideas. They work full-time, part-time, or as volunteers in their churches. They serve large and small congregations and campus ministries in rural areas, small towns, cities, and suburbs in the United States, Canada, and abroad. They come from various cultural contexts and with different approaches to worship in word and sacrament. Over the past thirty years literally

hundreds of people have contributed to *Sundays and Seasons*. Here's this year's group.

Topical essays

Now retired, **Mark Allan Powell** (An Introduction to Matthew) was professor of New Testament at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, for thirty-eight years. He is the author of numerous books, including *Matthew* in the New Interpretation series (WJK, 2023). **Gail Ramshaw** has written texts for public worship and has published extensively in the field of liturgical language. Her 2025 book from Fortress Press is *Mystery Manifest: The Triune God, Figuratively Speaking*.

Preparing for the season

Bradley E. Schmeling (Advent/Christmas/Time after Epiphany preaching) is a pastor at Gloria Dei Lutheran, St. Paul, Minnesota. After thirty-five years inhabiting word and sacrament ministry, he's still practicing in prayer and in work. **Clayton Faulkner** (Advent/Christmas/Time after Epiphany assembly song) is dean of the chapel at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, and pastor at Wiota Lutheran in South Wayne, Wisconsin. **Leah D. Schade** (Advent/Christmas/Time after Epiphany connections with creation) is associate professor of preaching and worship at Lexington Theological Seminary in Kentucky, author of *Creation-Crisis Preaching: Ecology, Theology, and the Pulpit*, and is the "EcoPreacher" blogger for [Patheos.com](https://patheos.com). **Grace Cox-Johnson** (Advent/Christmas/Time after Epiphany worship space) is a liturgical fiber artist and musician. Currently she serves as artist in residence at several churches in the Kansas City area. Her work may be found at [ColorfortheJourney.com](https://colorforthejourney.com). **Yolanda Denson-Byers** (Lent/Three Days/Easter preaching) is an ELCA senior pastor and professional writer residing in Minnesota. Her most recent book is entitled *See Me, Believe Me: A Guide to Deepen Allyship with Congregational Leaders of Color* (Augsburg Fortress, 2024). **Lorraine S. Brugh** (Lent/Three Days/Easter assembly song) is senior research professor of music at Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana. Prior to retirement in 2020 she served as professor of music. She is a charter member and past president of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians (ALCM). **Kristen Daley Mosier** (Lent/Three Days/Easter connections with creation) is a writer, preacher, and eco-theologian rooted in the Pacific Northwest. She has written on baptismal ethics, the Flint Water Crisis, and ways to faithfully

connect with the more-than-human world. **Ollie Bergh** (Lent/Three Days/Easter worship space) is the pastor of Fairbanks Lutheran in Fairbanks, Alaska. **Miriam Schmidt** (Summer/Autumn/November preaching) serves as pastor/priest at All Saints in Big Sky, a shared ministry of the Episcopal and Lutheran (ELCA) churches. She enjoys hiking and cross-country skiing in her Montana mountain home. **Andy Pokel** (Summer/Autumn/November assembly song) is a church musician and composer. He shares a musical home with his wife, pastor Elise Pokel, and they collaborate as Foundry Hymnal (music on streaming platforms, scores at andypokel.bandcamp.com). **Nelson H. Rabell González** (Summer/Autumn/November connections with creation) serves the Spanish-speaking communities of Stockton and Lodi as a pastor and founder of Iglesia Luterana Santa María Peregrina Lutheran in Stockton, California, and is co-founder of the nonprofit A New Lodi. **Timothy Weisman** (Summer/Autumn/November worship space) serves as pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity in New York, New York. His website is timothyweisman.com.

Seasonal worship texts

Tracey Breashears Schultz (Advent) is bishop's associate for leadership (Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod). Her areas of ministry include call process and candidacy. She and her husband, Chris, live in a historic home near downtown Houston. **Steven Wilco** (Christmas) is a Lutheran pastor serving as interim canon to the ordinary for the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts. **Jonathan Niketh** (Time after Epiphany) serves as senior pastor of Trinity Lutheran in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He previously served for sixteen years at First Lutheran in Lynn, Massachusetts. **Rhoda Schuler** (Lent), Lutheran deaconess, has a master's degree in liturgical studies from St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota, and is co-author of the forthcoming book *Journey to Jesus: Faith Formation into Christ and Community* (Cascade Books). **Matt Musteric** (Easter) serves as pastor at St. Peter Lutheran in Martin, Ohio, and St. Luke's Lutheran in Curtice, Ohio. He also dabbles in improv comedy with Glass City Improv in Toledo. **Anna Mercedes** (Summer) is professor of theology at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University. She is ordained in the ELCA, serving in campus ministry. **Melissa Bills** (Autumn) (she/her) serves as the director of college ministries and college pastor at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. She is a native of the Chicago suburbs, a graduate of St. Olaf College and Princeton Theological Seminary, and has served congregations in the Metro Chicago and Northeastern Iowa synods. **Bekki Lohrmann** (November) lives in San Diego, California, where she mothers two small children and serves as pastor at St. Peter's by the Sea Lutheran.

Liturgical, theological, and sensitivity review of the seasonal worship texts: LSTC PhD candidate **Denise Rector** is writing a dissertation on Womanist theology and Rev. Earlean

Miller. Rector is the doctoral scholar in residence at Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University, Columbus, Ohio. **Priscilla Paris-Austin** serves as pastor of Immanuel in Seattle where she and her family share their gifts with youth and family, while nurturing communities with authentic diversity in the church and in the world.

Seasonal rites

Abby d'Ambruoso (Advent midweek service) has served as a parish pastor and as a hospital chaplain in pediatrics and obstetrics. She was blessed to be the village pastor at Holden Village, 2022–2025. **Yolanda Denson-Byers** (A Service for Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day): See bio under Preparing for the Season. **Bryan Cones** (Lent midweek service) is pastor of Trinity Episcopal in Highland Park, Illinois, and the author of *This Assembly of Believers: The Gifts of Difference in the Church at Prayer* (SCM Press, 2020). **Matt Keadle** (Intergenerational Palm Procession) is pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran, a multiracial congregation in the heart of Los Angeles. With Zach Parris, he co-hosts *The Vinyl Preacher*, a podcast about preaching and popular culture. **Craig Mueller** (Preparing for the Easter Vigil) is lead pastor at Holy Trinity Lutheran in Chicago, and auxiliary professor of spiritual formation at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. **Callista Isabelle** (Farewell and Godspeed for Various Occasions) is the director for religious, spiritual, and ethical life at Washington University in St. Louis. She has also served as college chaplain at Muhlenberg College and associate university chaplain at Yale University. **Mark Mummert** (Creation Service of Lessons and Carols) is cantor at Trinity Lutheran, Worcester, Massachusetts. Mark was also director of worship at Christ the King Lutheran in Houston, Texas, and seminary cantor at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (now United Lutheran Seminary).

Prayers of intercession

Brad Froslee (Advent 1–4) serves as co-pastor at St. Michael's Lutheran in Roseville, Minnesota. He stays busy as chauffeur to a dean, dog walker to the family border collie, justice worker, husband, poet, and genealogist. **Jessica Davis** (Christmas–Epiphany of Our Lord) is a Christian educator (MA) and freelance writer and editor living in the Philadelphia area. When not doing churchy things, they can usually be found knitting or working as a freelance makeup artist. **Marda Messick** (Baptism of our Lord–Transfiguration) is a poet and retired ELCA pastor living in Tallahassee, Florida. She served congregations in the Metro Washington, D.C., and Florida-Bahamas synods. Her work has appeared in *The Christian Century* and other literary journals. **Joel Bergeland** (Ash Wednesday–Sunday of the Passion) lives in Berkshire County, Massachusetts, where he serves as pastor of Zion Lutheran in Pittsfield. With his husband and dog, he hikes, frequents the local brewery, and fixes

up their old house. **Javen Swanson** (Maundy Thursday–Easter 4) is a member of Our Saviour’s Lutheran in Minneapolis and works as donor engagement director at ISAIAH and Faith in Minnesota. **Kyle Schiefelbein-Guerrero** (Easter 5–Day of Pentecost) (he/him) is the grace professor of leadership and director of contextual formation at the Lutheran Theological Seminary Saskatoon, Canada, having previously taught worship in California and Pennsylvania. **Mallory Morris** (Holy Trinity–Lectionary 13) was ordained in 2023 and serves in the Northern Texas–Northern Louisiana Synod. She lives in the Dallas–Fort Worth Metroplex with her husband, dog, and cat. **Andrew Tobias Nelson** (Lectionary 14–17) is a bivocational pastor serving in Upstate New York. They and their partner, a local Druid priest, together tend the folk and the land, and have been adopted by three neighborhood cats. **Day Hefner** (Lectionary 18–22) is the pastor of Spirit of Hope Lutheran in Lincoln, Nebraska. She lives in Lincoln with her two cats and a truly obscene amount of yarn. Read her work at dayhefner.com. **Eric L. Bodestab** (Lectionary 23–26) is pastor at Trinity Lutheran in Kent, Ohio. Check out his work connecting the Lutheran Confessions and the lectionary readings at theothru.net. If you’re in Kent, let’s play a board game! **Catherine Healy** (Lectionary 27–30) is an Episcopal priest and the associate vicar of the Daily Office Network (dailyoffice.org). She lives in Chicago with her wife, children, and a magnificent family forest that includes many different trees. **Monica Butler** (All Saints–Day of Thanksgiving) serves campus and young adult communities in Northern Colorado. She is committed to cultivating communities of faith and belonging that embody God’s transforming love in the world.

Liturgical, theological, and sensitivity review of the prayers of intercession: **Elle Dowd** (she/they) is a bi-furious pastor with deep gratitude to the places that taught her the most about justice and liberation: Sierra Leone and Ferguson. **Jim Honig** is pastor of Shepherd of the Bay Lutheran in scenic Door County, Wisconsin. He is also board president of Door County Housing Partnership, providing home ownership opportunities for working families. **Ernesto Medina** is a pastor in the Nebraska Synod. He is considered an expert in congregational systems. His hobbies include disc golf, photography, travel, and big-ole model rockets.

Ideas for the day

Elise Anderson is the pastor at St. John Lutheran in Abingdon, Virginia. She enjoys time in the mountains with her dog Idgie and working to make the church a more welcoming and inclusive place for all. **Nikkeya Berryhill** is a pastor, writer, life/grief coach, creator, justice-minded dreamer, wonderer, questioner, deep thinker, and deep laughter. She loves crafting rituals, writing liturgy, practicing embodiment, and helping people realize their connections to the Divine. **Tim Brown** currently serves in the office of the presiding bishop as director

for congregational stewardship support. He lives in Raleigh, North Carolina, with his wife and two sons and likes reading and writing interesting things. **Darla DeFrance** has served as the founding pastor of Columbia City Church of Hope, an ELCA congregation in southeast Seattle, since 2010. She lives with her family and dogs in Seattle. **Becca Ehrlich** is a writer, author, and spiritual director. She serves as executive director/founder of New Breath Spirituality Center, and adjunct professor of Christian Spirituality at United Lutheran Seminary. **Keith C. Fair** is pastor for faith formation and discipleship at St. Matthew Lutheran in York, Pennsylvania. In addition to writing, he enjoys cooking, carpentry, running, and being a dad and husband. **Matthew Ian Fleming** leads Church Anew, creating fresh content and vibrant gatherings for faith communities nationwide. Matthew’s debut book, *The End Is the Beginning* (Broadleaf, 2024), wrestles with Revelation through humor, story, and invitation. **Francisco Herrera** is a deacon for Christian agitation and education who studies intersectionality and Christian mission, writes Christian devotional music, raises money for those in need, and loves making friends. Find him everywhere at [@PolyglotEvangel](https://twitter.com/PolyglotEvangel). **Derek Hoven** lives in Orlando and serves as an assistant to the bishop and director of evangelical mission for the Florida–Bahamas Synod. He enjoys creative projects and playing board games with friends and family. **Katie Johnson** serves at Dr. Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran, where she is part-time co-pastor with her husband, Michael. When not at church, she enjoys nourishing her family with delightful cooking and homeschooling her son. **Liz Lowry** currently serves Lutheran Church of Hope in Anchorage, Alaska. She enjoys writing, baking, and singing along to Disney music while her dog looks on in confusion. **Jack Mandeville** lives in the beautiful Willamette Valley region of Oregon with his husband, where he serves as pastoral care coordinator and will soon be ordained as deacon for a local ELCA congregation. **Henry Martinez** serves as pastor of Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran in Beaverton, Oregon. He is an amateur bird feeder behavior analyst, enjoys drawing and camping with his family. **Troy Medlin** is an associate pastor at Grace Lutheran Church and School in River Forest, Illinois. Troy enjoys running, cooking, and spending time with his husband, who is also a Lutheran pastor, and with their beagle, Lady Bug. **Lauren Mildahl** is a former school librarian, a church nerd, and a recent graduate of Luther Seminary. She is awaiting her first call after serving as the vicar of Mount Olive Lutheran in Minneapolis. **Joel Nau** is married to Annie and is the father of two adult children. He serves as pastor of Redeemer Lutheran in Bettendorf, Iowa. **Serena Rice** is the pastor of Abiding Peace Lutheran in Budd Lake, New Jersey, where she has served since 2016, following a career as a licensed social worker with a focus on poverty-related issues. **Jill Rode** serves as co-pastor at St. Anthony Park Lutheran in St. Paul, Minnesota. In her free time, she loves traveling, playing

games, eating ice cream, and hanging out with her family. **John Rohde Schwehn** (he/him) serves as one of the campus pastors at Augsburg University in Minneapolis. He enjoys the Minnesota seasons and spends most of the winter staying warm in his sauna. **Sarah Taylor** is a pastor who has served congregations (often more than one at a time) in Minnesota and Ohio. In her spare time, she likes to look at birds. **Sawyer Vanden Heuvel** is a pastor at St. Mark's Lutheran in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and mission developer of Shepherd's Table. He works to create spaces for all people to belong at Christ's table.

Let the children come

Imogen Rhodenhiser (Advent–Transfiguration of Our Lord) pastors in Raleigh, North Carolina. An Episcopal priest, she is passionate about lifelong formation and stewardship, running long distances and reading long books, and chasing after her two young sons. **Mark Spitzack** (Ash Wednesday–Easter 6) is organist and worship coordinator at Lakeview Lutheran in Maplewood, Minnesota, and also works part-time as an administrative assistant, writer, and event planner. He rents a house from two cats. **Jess Daum** (Easter 7–Lectionary 22) serves as the senior pastor of First Lutheran in Brookings, South Dakota. She and her husband, who pastors alongside her, enjoy adventures with their three children who are in elementary school. **Amy Lindeman Allen** (Lectionary 23–Day of Thanksgiving) is Indiana Christian Church Associate Professor of New Testament at Christian Theological Seminary (Indianapolis, Indiana). She is an ordained pastor in the ELCA, author, and advocate for youth and children's ministry.

Music suggestions

Julie Grindle (assembly song) is a lifelong Lutheran church musician, now serving as associate to the bishop in the Upstate New York Synod. She lives in Baldwinsville, New York, with her husband, David. **Andrew Schaeffer** (assembly song) serves as the director of music at Luther Memorial (ELCA) in Madison, Wisconsin, and as editor-at-large of *The Diapason*, one of the oldest and largest journals devoted to organ and church music. **Chris Shelton** (additional assembly song) is the pastor of Broadway Presbyterian in New York City. He is a writer and composer whose collection of hymns, *Sing No Empty Alleluias*, was published in 2021 by GIA. **Lacey Brown** (additional assembly song) is a singer/songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, recording engineer, and producer from Seattle, Washington. Passionate in the liturgical arts, Lacey leads worship and composes liturgical settings and songs for congregational singing. **Ivar Hillesland** (additional assembly song) is canon for congregational development and leadership formation in the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia, a lifelong musician/composer, a contributor at thereverbcollective.com, and co-director of the College for Congregational Development. **Lisa Elliott**, PhD, (choral) has been the music director at Grace Presbyterian Las Vegas

since 2015. She is an accomplished choral conductor, professional soprano, and adjunct music professor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. **Kyle Haugen** (choral), a native of Tacoma, Washington, is cantor at Seattle's Queen Anne Lutheran (named for its neighborhood). He has previously served music ministries in greater Seattle; St. Louis Park, Minnesota; and Boston, Massachusetts. **Mari Espeland** (children's choir) has worked with children and music in public school, private school, church, and community settings for thirty-eight years. She currently teaches children from birth to fourth grade at Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. **Rebekah Schulz** (children's choir) (she/her) is a church musician who has served congregations in Minnesota, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. She joyfully leads the youth choir at Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. **Michael Schaner** (keyboard/instrumental) serves as the director of music ministries at St. Luke's Lutheran, and as collaborative keyboard artist and university organist at Carroll University, both in Waukesha, Wisconsin. **Michael J. Glasgow** (handbell) serves in leadership roles for the North Carolina Master Chorale, Singapore's Ministry of Bellz, and the Tar River Orchestra and Chorus. He's conducted nearly two hundred engagements worldwide and completed more than sixty commissions. Visit www.michaeljglasgow.com. **Fernanda Van Atta** (handbell) is a handbell director and performer based in the San Francisco Bay Area. She performs with Sonos Handbell Ensemble and was formerly on staff at the Lutheran Summer Music Academy and Festival.

You make it happen

Sundays and Seasons continues to be a collaborative endeavor each year. In our editorial conversations here at Augsburg Fortress we regularly evaluate the scope, format, and quality of the content provided in these pages. Your feedback—collected from you firsthand at events around this church, from postings in various forms of social media, from phone calls and emails to our sales and service representatives, and from surveys—helps us make decisions about how to adjust content so it is even more helpful. You, dear partners in ministry, make this resource happen. We welcome your ideas for future content, your suggestions for potential contributors (maybe you!), and your constructive feedback. If that potential contributor is you, send an email expressing your area of interest to afsubmissions@augsburghfortress.org. The link to the submission guidelines can also be found at www.augsburghfortress.org by clicking on “about” on the home page. Thank you for the trust you place in the changing roster of contributors who offer their time and talent to the whole church through Sundays and Seasons. Even more, thank you for the many and various ways in which you care for the Sunday assembly and its worship of the triune God.

Jennifer Baker-Trinity, Suzanne Burke, and Marissa Sotos, editors