

Contents

Preface	xi
Historical Function, Development, and Defenses	xv
How to Use This Book	xliii

CALLS TO WORSHIP

Advent	2
Christmastide and Epiphany	8
New Year	13
Baptism of Our Lord	15
Transfiguration	16
Lent	20
Palm Sunday	27
Eastertide	32
Ascension	37
Pentecost and Holy Trinity	40
Reformation	42
All Saints	44
Thanksgiving	47
Christ the King	51
Ordinary Time	55

Contents

INVOCATIONS

Advent	122
Christmastide and Epiphany	124
New Year	125
Baptism of Our Lord	126
Transfiguration	127
Lent	128
Palm Sunday	130
Eastertide and Ascension	131
Pentecost and Holy Trinity	133
Reformation	135
All Saints	136
Thanksgiving	137
Christ the King	138
Ordinary Time	139

BENEDICTIONS

Advent	154
Christmastide and Epiphany	156
New Year	157
Baptism of Our Lord and Transfiguration	158
Lent	159
Palm Sunday	161
Eastertide	162
Ascension	163
Pentecost and Holy Trinity	164
Reformation	165
All Saints	166
Thanksgiving	168

Contents

Christ the King	169
Ordinary Time	170
Practical Resources	185
Study Resources	191
Index of Themes in the Calls of Worship	197
Index of Themes in the Invocations	211
Index of Themes in the Benedictions	217
Index of Scripture	223

Preface

This book is for ministers and worship leaders in Christian churches who select calls to worship, invocations, and benedictions for their worship services. Many books include a small collection of these, but few are as extensive as this one is in terms of comprehensively using the Scriptures as their source and giving leaders seasonal and topical suggestions to help them with planning worship. My faith and theology are rooted in the Protestant Reformed tradition, yet I hope the book will help leaders across traditions to better understand, implement, and execute these worship elements.

I wrote this book for two reasons. First, I am passionate about Scripture-filled worship. While many calls, invocations, and benedictions are influenced by Scripture, they do not always showcase as much of the Bible's content as they could. I hope to encourage pastors to adapt Scriptures for these elements and to do so without the fear of abusing them, overstepping their ministerial role, or offering "strange fire" unacceptable to God. In Matthew 6, Christ does not command all ministers to use only his prayer in worship; rather, by saying "Pray then like this," he instructs believers in the

Preface

structure, posture, content, and manner of biblical prayer. Historically, Reformed theologians decried those who would bind churches with prescribed worship language. This does not mean that vocabulary is irrelevant, but when Scripture does not mandate vocabulary, Paul's exhortation "Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17) applies. Thus, calls to worship, invocations, and benedictions should reflect the entirety of the Scriptures, acknowledge their historical functions, and demonstrate the rhetorical latitude afforded to appointed ministry leaders.

My second reason is to offer some historical perspective regarding these elements. Worship styles are strikingly dissimilar among the greater Reformed Church, and pastors may think their personal worship experiences represent accepted and historical Presbyterian or Reformed practice when, in reality, they are much less historical and universally accepted than they are perceived to be. While I do argue for a few positions regarding worship elements, my primary goal is to demonstrate that, five hundred years after the Reformation, many faithful leaders have disagreed over these elements and implemented them differently—and that there is no single, authoritatively Reformed practice.

I thank Dr. Peter Lillback for seeing this work's potential and encouraging me to make it available to the church; Amanda Martin, Aaron Gottier, and Dave Almack at P&R Publishing for assisting me through the publishing process; and Pastor Jerry Peterson, formerly at First Lutheran Church in Oklahoma City, Pastor Steve Simmons, at Fifth Street PCA in Tyler, Texas, and Pastor Jason Helopoulos, now at University

Preface

Reformed PCA in East Lansing, Michigan, for helping me to grow as a worship leader and liturgist. I especially thank Pastor Ben Falconer, at Proclamation PCA in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, for entrusting me with liturgy planning and giving me great freedom to lead our saints' worship; without the humility, grace, and experience he offered, I may never have written this book.

Lastly, I thank my parents, Michael and Kim, for raising me in the Lord. They provided a Scripture-saturated home and prioritized our attendance of corporate worship, family and personal devotions, Scripture memorization, catechization, and decision making that was governed by God's Word. I'm thankful for my dad's uncompromising affirmation of the authority of the Scriptures and God's sovereignty and for my mom's fostering of my writing skills—from teaching me grammar to tirelessly proofing most every essay I wrote until graduate school. In this book's genealogy, both my parents are prominent ancestors. Thank you both.

May the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament remain the foundation of our worship practices from beginning to end, for the glory of God and the discipling of his saints.

How to Use This Book

In this book, each call to worship, invocation, and benediction is based on Scriptures selected from the Old and New Testaments, Genesis through Revelation, using the English Standard Version (ESV). The elements include quotations as well as adaptations from verses; references beside the calls, prayers, and blessings indicate what Scripture was the inspiration for their content. References in standard typeface indicate content that is quoted without modification; italicized references indicate modifications that have been made from the ESV.

For calls to worship, I selected texts containing explicit exhortations either to worship or to assemble for worship, such as

Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness. ♦ 1 Chron. 16:29

Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving. ♦ Ps. 95:2

or exhortations to execute a worship act such as prayer, offering, or singing, such as

How to Use This Book

O kingdoms of the earth, sing to God. Ps. 68:32

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; Ps. 96:8

bring an offering, and come into his courts! ♦

or descriptions of God and his works that ought to inspire a worship response. In cases of the latter category, I appended an extrabiblical exhortation, which is indicated by italic text, so that the call contains a summons to respond—for instance,

Surely the Lord is in this place; there is none Gen. 28:16; 28:17
other like the house of God, and this is the gate
of heaven. *Come and worship the Most High.* ♦

At first glance, certain passages may seem as if they lack “calling” language. Consider these:

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised Ps. 48:1
in the city of our God! ♦

Praise is due to God, in Zion, Ps. 65:1
and to him shall vows be performed. ♦

The above could be read as if they were simply factual statements. However, the words “(to) be,” “may,” or “shall” become commands when they are delivered with clerical authority to an assembly.

In some cases, I have adapted verses so that their truths are rhetorically formed to function as a call to worship—or, later in the book, as an invocation or benediction. For instance,

How to Use This Book

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; Psalm 9:1–2

I will recount all of your wonderful deeds. (ESV)

I will be glad and exult in you;

I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

Give thanks to the Lord with your whole heart; Psalm 9:1–2

recount all of his wonderful deeds. (author's adaptation)

Be glad and exult in him;

sing praise to the Most High. ♦

While all calls should draw a congregation's reverent response, some more naturally elicit an immediate verbal response from the congregation. These are presented as responsive calls to worship, containing the worship leader's text in regular typeface and the assembly's response in bold typeface. Other calls are presented with optional responses, which are labeled as "OPTIONAL" in the margin above the bold text. In these cases, ministers may use their discretion and choose whether to deliver the call without the optional response or to print or display the response for the assembly. Because responsive calls model the dialogical nature of worship, in which God speaks and the people respond, worship leaders should maintain their authoritative role by speaking only their assigned text and not the text that is assigned to the assembly.

For invocations, I selected some texts containing petitions for God's presence, assistance, and mercy, along with some descriptions of biblical truths, to which I appended appeals for God's presence and help (with all such cases of appended text being indicated by italics)—for instance,

How to Use This Book

O Lord the God of Israel, who is enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. Incline your ear and hear; open your eyes, O Lord, and see. *Visit us and accept our worship today in the name of your Son Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit. Amen.* ♦ *2 Kings 19:15–16*

In nearly all cases, language is included that invokes not just God's grace and favor but specifically his presence. These invocations are intentionally short and designed to draw worshipers' thoughts to the content of the Scriptures they are drawn from and to succinctly petition the Spirit's presence and grace.

For benedictions, I selected texts containing explicit blessings, such as

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it. ♦ *1 Thess. 5:23–24*

or descriptions of God's blessings, which I adjusted to be a pronounceable blessing, such as

May the Lord bless you when you come in, and bless you when you go out. *Deut. 28:6*

May all the peoples of the earth see that you are called by the name of the Lord. May you *Deut. 28:10*
Deut. 28:11

How to Use This Book

abound in the prosperity of his good treasury and *Deut. 28:12*
may he bless all the work of your hands. ♦

or “good words” that describe God’s benefits to his people, to which I typically appended a dismissal in italics—for instance,

Neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor *Rom. 8:38–39*
things present nor things to come, nor powers,
nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all crea-
tion, will be able to separate you from the love
of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. *Go in peace.* ♦

Throughout all three sections of the book, I quote many Scriptures without modification—for example,

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love *2 Cor. 13:14*
of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be
with you all. ♦

I have also paired some verses with complimentary verses from other passages as well as truncating some verses—for instance,

There is none holy like the Lord; *1 Sam. 2:2*
there is none besides him;
there is no rock like our God.
Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name. ♦ *1 Chron. 16:29*

Finally, I have summarized a few select Scriptures to communicate a particular biblical truth. Here are two examples:

a call that summarizes several Old Testament verses and a benediction that summarizes Psalm 23.

God called Abraham, and he said, “Here I am.” *Gen. 22:1*
God called Jacob, and he said, “Here I am.” He *Gen. 31:11; Ex. 3:4*
called Moses, Samuel, and Isaiah, and they said, *1 Sam. 3:4; Isa. 6:8*
“Here I am.” And the Lord created you, redeemed *Isa. 43:1*
you, and calls you by name.

Here I am, Lord, to worship you. ♦

May the Lord shepherd you *Ps. 23:1*
and make you lie down in green pastures; *Ps. 23:2*
may he restore your soul *Ps. 23:3*
and lead you in paths of righteousness;
may he be with you *Ps. 23:4*
and comfort you;
may he anoint your head with oil *Ps. 23:5*
and bestow his goodness and mercy on you *Ps. 23:6*
all the days of your life. ♦

Each chapter’s entries are organized first thematically—by liturgical season or festival. Some churches observe no special services beyond Good Friday and Easter, others observe Ascension and Pentecost, and others observe Advent, Lent, Reformation, Thanksgiving, and additional festivals and seasons. By arranging the entries seasonally, I hope to particularly assist those who do observe these times and related services. However, none of the entries contain season-specific wording; there is no call to worship that begins, “In

How to Use This Book

this time of Lent” or “On this day of Pentecost.” Thus, those who do not celebrate seasons or festivals may still peruse the entries contained in those sections for themes connected to their titles. Advent texts focus on waiting for and anticipating Christ’s coming, Epiphany texts on seeking the Lord and bringing him worship, Lent texts on peoples’ need for God’s salvation and restoration, Reformation texts on the centrality of the Word of the Lord, and All Saints texts on the universal church. Texts for Ordinary Time can be used throughout the year. And, in every section, the entries are arranged in biblical order based on the first Scripture that each one references.

CALLS TO WORSHIP

by Seasons and Festivals

Calls to Worship: Advent

In your distress, call upon the Lord your God. *2 Sam. 22:7*
From his temple he will hear your voice,
and your cry will come to his ears.

**Hear my prayer, O Lord;
give ear to my pleas for mercy!
In your faithfulness answer me, in your righteousness! ♦**

OPTIONAL
Ps. 143:1

Lift up your heads, O gates! *Ps. 24:7-10*
And be lifted up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.

Who is this King of glory?

The Lord, strong and mighty,
the Lord, mighty in battle!
Lift up your heads, O gates!
And lift them up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.

Who is this King of glory?

The Lord of hosts,
he is the King of glory! ♦

Rejoice and be glad in God's steadfast love, *Ps. 31:7-8*
because he has seen your affliction;
he has known the distress of your soul,

Calls to Worship: Advent

and he has not delivered you into the hand of the
enemy;
he has set your feet in a broad place. ♦

You who seek God, let your hearts revive. Ps. 69:32–33
For the Lord hears the needy
and does not despise his own people.
Let heaven and earth praise him, Ps. 69:34–35
the seas and everything that moves in them.
For God will save Zion
and build up the cities of Judah. ♦

From heaven the Lord looked down from his holy Ps. 102:19–20
height;
from heaven the Lord looked at the earth,
to hear the groans of the prisoners,
to set free those who were doomed to die.
You who are gathered together, Ps. 102:22
declare in Zion the name of the Lord, Ps. 102:21
and in Jerusalem his praise,
and worship the Lord. ♦ Ps. 102:22

The Lord of hosts has made for all peoples Isa. 25:6
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well
refined.

Calls to Worship: Advent

This is the Lord; we have waited for him;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation. ♦

Isa. 25:9

Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth;
break forth, O mountains, into singing!
For the Lord has comforted his people
and will have compassion on his afflicted.

Isa. 49:13

**You have turned for me my mourning into
dancing;
you have loosed my sackcloth
and clothed me with gladness,
that my glory may sing your praise and not be
silent.
O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you
forever! ♦**

OPTIONAL
Ps. 30:11–12

You who pursue righteousness,
you who seek the Lord:
look to the rock from which you were hewn,
and to the quarry from which you were dug.
For the Lord comforts Zion;
he comforts all her waste places
and makes her wilderness like Eden,
her desert like the garden of the Lord;
joy and gladness will be found in her,
thanksgiving and the voice of song. ♦

Isa. 51:1
Isa. 51:3

Calls to Worship: Advent

Break forth together into singing,
you waste places of Jerusalem,
for the Lord has comforted his people;
he has redeemed Jerusalem.
The Lord has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

Isa. 52:9-10

**I believe that I shall look upon the goodness
of the Lord
in the land of the living! ♦**

OPTIONAL
Ps. 27:13

Be silent before the Lord God!
For the day of the Lord is near.
He will change the speech of the peoples
to a pure speech,
that all of them may call upon the name of the Lord
and serve him with one accord.

Zeph. 1:7

Zeph. 3:9

**O Lord, I have heard the report of you,
and your work, O Lord, do I fear. ♦**

OPTIONAL
Hab. 3:2

Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold,
I come and I will dwell in your midst, declares
the Lord.

Zech. 2:10

**I will greatly rejoice in the Lord;
my soul shall exult in my God,**

OPTIONAL
Isa. 61:10

**for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness. ♦**

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Zech. 9:9

Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation is he.

His rule shall be from sea to sea, Zech. 9:10
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

How great is his goodness, and how great his
beauty! ♦ Zech. 9:17

Stay awake, for you do not know on what day Matt. 24:42
your Lord is coming. *Pray to the Lord, wait for*
him, and be ready, for the Son of Man is coming Matt. 24:44
at an hour you do not expect. ♦

Behold the coming kingdom of our father David! Mark 11:10
Hosanna in the highest!

**Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name Mark 11:9
of the Lord! ♦**

Calls to Worship: Advent

Sisters and brothers, magnify the Lord;
let your spirit rejoice in God your Savior.

Luke 1:46-47

**With my mouth I will give great thanks to the
Lord;**

OPTIONAL

Ps. 109:30-31

**I will praise him in the midst of the throng.
For he stands at the right hand of the needy
one,
to save him from those who condemn his
soul to death. ♦**

Lift up your voice! Blessed is he who comes in the
name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!

John 12:13

I will offer in his tent

OPTIONAL

Ps. 27:6

**sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make melody to the Lord. ♦**

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say,
rejoice. The Lord is at hand. ♦

Phil. 4:4

Phil. 4:5

*With great hope, hear and hold fast the promise of
the Lord Jesus:* “I am the Alpha and the Omega,
the first and the last, the beginning and the end.
Surely I am coming soon.”

Rev. 22:13

Rev. 22:12

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! ♦

Rev. 22:20

Calls to Worship: Christmastide and Epiphany

Salvation for Israel has come out of Zion! *Ps. 14:7*

Christ the Lord restores the fortunes of his
people.

Let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad.

**He put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to our God. ♦**

OPTIONAL

Ps. 40:3

Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion,
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. *Isa. 12:6*

**My mouth will tell of your righteous acts,
of your deeds of salvation all the day,
for their number is past my knowledge. ♦**

OPTIONAL

Ps. 71:15

Go on up to a high mountain, *Isa. 40:9*
O Zion, herald of good news;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good news;
lift it up, fear not;
say to the cities of Judah,
“Behold your God!”

**All the promises of God find their Yes in Jesus
Christ. That is why it is through him that we
utter our Amen to God for his glory. ♦**

OPTIONAL

2 Cor. 1:20

Calls to Worship: Christmastide and Epiphany

Arise, shine, for your light has come, Isa. 60:1
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. ♦

Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; Zeph. 3:14
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter of Jerusalem!

The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; Zeph. 3:15
you shall never again fear evil. ♦

The Lord your God is in your midst, Zeph. 3:17
a mighty one who will save;

he will rejoice over you with gladness;
he will quiet you by his love;

he will exult over you with loud singing.

Rejoice and exult with all your heart, Zeph. 3:14
O daughter of Jerusalem!

The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst. ♦ Zeph. 3:15

Thus says the Lord: “I have returned to Zion and Zech. 8:3
will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.”

People of Zion, come, let us entreat the favor Zech. 8:20; 8:21
of the Lord and seek the Lord of hosts. ♦

Calls to Worship: Christmastide and Epiphany

Come and worship Jesus Christ, the Son of the Most High; to him the Lord God will give the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end. ♦ *Luke 1:32–33*

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, *Luke 1:68–69*
for he has visited and redeemed his people
and has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David. ♦

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. *Rejoice in the Light of the World and praise the glorious radiance of Christ. ♦* *John 1:1–5*

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. *Saints of God, exalt the name of the Lord, praise the salvation of the Lord, and offer him your true worship. ♦* *John 1:14*

Calls to Worship: Christmastide and Epiphany

You have seen the Son of Man; he is Jesus Christ, the Living Word. Believe in him and worship him. ♦ John 9:37; 9:35
John 9:38

Our God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. *Believers in Christ, come and seek the face of your Lord.* ♦ 2 Cor. 4:6

The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. Titus 2:11–15

Declare these things! ♦

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom Heb. 1:1–2

Calls to Worship: Christmastide and Epiphany

also he created the world. *All you who hear, draw near to his temple and adore the Son of God.* ♦

We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. *Bow your hearts to worship him today.* ♦ 1 John 5:20

Calls to Worship: New Year

The Mighty One, God the Lord, Ps. 50:1-2
speaks and summons the earth
from the rising of the sun to its setting.

Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
God shines forth.

He calls to the heavens above Ps. 50:4
and to the earth,

“Gather to me my faithful ones, Ps. 50:5
who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!” ♦

Sing aloud to God our strength; Ps. 81:1-3

shout for joy to the God of Jacob!
Raise a song; sound the tambourine,
the sweet lyre with the harp.

Blow the trumpet at the new moon,
at the full moon, on our feast day. ♦

Praise the Lord! Ps. 113:1-3

Praise, O servants of the Lord,
praise the name of the Lord!
Blessed be the name of the Lord
from this time forth and forevermore!

From the rising of the sun to its setting,
the name of the Lord is to be praised! ♦

Calls to Worship: New Year

From the rising of the sun to its setting, magnify God's name among the nations, and in every place offer incense to his name and a pure offering. ♦ *Mal. 1:11*