

# Table of Contents

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Foreword .....	7
Suggestions for Use .....	8
Advent and Christmas	
Advent I: Prepare the Way .....	11
Advent II: A Voice Cries Out .....	12
Advent III: Wait for the Lord .....	13
Advent IV: Annunciations .....	14
Christmas I: The Birth of Christ .....	15
Christmas II: The Word of God in Flesh .....	16
Christmas III: The Holy Family .....	17
Christmas IV: The Epiphany .....	18
Christmas V: The Baptism of the Lord .....	19
Christmas VI: The Presentation of the Lord .....	20
Days of Discipleship	
Days of Discipleship: The Call .....	23
Days of Discipleship: Behold the Lamb of God .....	24
Days of Discipleship: The Spirit Is upon Me .....	25
Days of Discipleship: Blessed Are You .....	26
Days of Discipleship: Signs and Wonders .....	27
Days of Discipleship: Come unto Me .....	28
Days of Discipleship: In Times of Trial .....	29
Days of Discipleship: Be Forgiven, Be Healed .....	30
Lent and Holy Week	
Ash Wednesday: Return to the Gospel .....	33
Lent I: Trial and Temptation .....	34
Lent II: From Temptation to Transfiguration .....	35
Lent III: Living Waters of Grace .....	36
Lent IV: Light for Our Eyes .....	37
Lent V: The Resurrection and the Life .....	38
Palm Sunday: Blessed Is He .....	39
Holy Week: The Lord's Supper, The Lord's Passion .....	40

## Easter

Easter Day: Christ Triumphant over Death .....	43
Easter II: Blessed Are They Who Believe .....	44
Easter III: Worthy Is the Lamb .....	45
Easter IV: The Shepherd Is Risen .....	46
Easter V: All Things New in Christ.....	47
Easter VI: Christ Who Sends the Spirit .....	48
The Ascension of the Lord: At the Right Hand of God.....	49
Easter VII: The Spirit and the Bride .....	50
Pentecost: Come, Holy Spirit .....	51

## Days of Proclamation

Days of Proclamation: Live in Faith .....	55
Days of Proclamation: Live in Hope .....	56
Days of Proclamation: Live in Love .....	57
Days of Proclamation: Bread of Life, Blessing Cup .....	58
Days of Proclamation: Forgive As We Forgive .....	59
Days of Proclamation: Hearts Filled with Gratitude.....	60
Days of Proclamation: In the Sight of the Angels .....	61
Days of Proclamation: The Way, the Truth, the Life .....	62
Days of Proclamation: Praise the Trinity .....	63
Days of Proclamation: The Mother of God.....	64
Days of Proclamation: The Cloud of Witnesses.....	65
Days of Proclamation: Christ Will Come Again .....	66

## Ministry Occasions

Ministry Occasions: A First Rehearsal .....	69
Ministry Occasions: A Final Rehearsal .....	70
Ministry Occasions: Welcoming a New Music Minister .....	71
Ministry Occasions: Departure of a Music Minister .....	72
Ministry Occasions: Death of a Music Minister .....	73
Ministry Occasions: Ecumenical Gatherings of Musicians ....	74
Ministry Occasions: Before a Concert, Tour, or Recording ....	75
Ministry Occasions: St. Cecilia, Patron of Musicians .....	76

Scripture Index.....	77
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## Foreword

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Music directors are constantly preparing—choosing music, creating programs, attending meetings, and conducting rehearsals. Members of choirs and other musical ensembles likewise discover at a very early stage that they will be spending far more time engaged in rehearsals and in other preparation activities than in singing or playing at actual liturgical celebrations.

While all of these preparatory activities are important, even essential, surely common prayer is every bit as necessary as warming up the voice or tuning an instrument. Praying together roots us and unites us. Prayer provides the foundation for carrying out our ministry as a response to a call from God. Praying in common prepares us to minister together as one choir or ensemble as we join and lead the entire assembly in a communal act of worship.

One of the main reasons that many parish members choose to participate in liturgical music ministry is to help themselves and others enter into the liturgy at a deeper level. The prayers in this book will help them to do just that. Alan Hommerding has provided liturgically based prayers for music ministers to use as they prepare for worship or for other occasions when they gather together. He has drawn on his deep knowledge and love of the liturgy to craft prayer experiences that will draw musicians into the spirit of the various Sundays and seasons.

These prayers have deep roots in the Word of God that is proclaimed in the liturgical assembly. Like the psalms, canticles, hymns, and anthems that directors choose for the liturgy, the texts in this book lead participants to pray with images from Scripture: living water, vine and branches, light and darkness. The prayers found here also make frequent references to the scripture readings that are proclaimed during the various seasons of the liturgical year. In this way, they help to form musicians into people who pray the scriptures according to the rhythm of the church year. This formation is vital, since psalmists, cantors, choirs, and other musicians are so frequently entrusted with proclaiming sung texts from the Bible as they carry out their ministry.

Another important contribution of this collection is the inclusion of a sung litany for each set of prayer texts. If music ministers are to lead assemblies in singing the liturgy—rather than punctuating a recited liturgy with songs—then they themselves need to be formed in the art and practice of sung prayer. In addition to praying with psalms and hymns at their gatherings, musicians will benefit greatly from singing these simple intercessory prayer settings as they prepare for worship.

Directors who find themselves scrambling for appropriate prayer suggestions for various events will be grateful to find here prayers for a concert or tour, and on the occasion of the departure or death of a member of the music ministry.

In this collection, Alan Hommerding has provided music ministers with an extraordinarily rich and valuable resource for their common prayer. May all who use this book be formed into more committed servants of the worshipping assembly and of the liturgy itself.

J. Michael McMahon, President  
National Association of Pastoral Musicians  
Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
December 12, 2003

## Suggestions for Use

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*Blessed Are the Music-Makers: Warm-ups for the Musician's Spirit* is intended for use by choirs and other music ministry ensembles at rehearsals, prior to worship, or at any gathering of musicians.

Prayers for the Sundays and seasons of the year have been approached in a two-fold manner. The liturgical seasons with a consistent number of Sundays or celebrations from year to year (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter) have prayers provided for each Sunday or feast. The sections “Days of Discipleship” and “Days of Proclamation” encompass the remainder of the year. “Days of Discipleship” are intended for those Sundays between the close of the Christmas season and the beginning of Lent, when the focus of the Lectionary Gospels is on the call of the disciples and the early public ministry of Jesus. “Days of Proclamation” are for the Sundays following Pentecost, arranged according to various topics, as we hear scriptures about the Church living out its mission in the Spirit.

Each Sunday or feast includes the following types of prayers:

**Litany** — All the litanies are provided with a short response and four invocations (along with the option for another invocation for particular needs). These may be sung or recited. Communities that sing a seasonal or common psalm response at worship may wish to use that response or another simple liturgical response. For those who prefer beginning rehearsal with song, an easy chanting tone is provided for the individual invocations of the litany. These tones may need to be adapted or transposed if other responses are used. More adventurous prayer leaders may improvise their own tones for these prayers. Litany invocations may be led by the director, a cantor, or any member of the ensemble able to do so. If sung, it is recommended that they be *a cappella*. If the litany is used as a closing prayer, an additional invocation, such as “For what else shall we pray?”, may be used to allow members of the group to voice their own needs.

**Gathering Prayer** — This is a scripture-based prayer, led by one member of the group. After the invitation “Let us pray,” the leader should allow some time for silent prayer. The concluding formula always follows the same pattern in order to enable the concluding “Amen” from the entire group.

**Brief Gathering Prayer** — For occasions when a brief prayer is desired (the end of rehearsal or prior to Sunday worship, for example), this shorter prayer has been provided. The concluding formula, again, follows the same pattern to enable “Amen” by all.

**Suggested Scriptures** — For those groups who wish to begin rehearsal with a brief reading from scripture, several suggestions have been provided. Other appropriate scripture passages may be chosen by the prayer leader.

Prayers for special music ministry occasions and feasts are provided as well.

These are only initial suggestions for the use of this resource. They may be varied and used in different ways throughout a music group's ministry. Adaptation and creativity in their use will make this resource more fruitful for the prayer of those who make music for the glory of God.

Alan J. Hommerding



ADVENT  
AND  
CHRISTMAS

# Advent I

## Prepare the Way

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### Litany



℞. Come, O Lord; come set us free. (tone for intercessions) we pray:

*(A seasonal psalm refrain or another seasonal response may be used.)*

For the grace to call upon the name of God,  
so we might remain ever-faithful, we pray: ℞.

That the Lord will find us ready, doing what is right,  
repenting what is not, we pray: ℞.

That we will look forward eagerly to the day of fulfillment,  
promised by the Lord, we pray: ℞.

For ears to hear the herald voice, eyes to see signs of glory,  
watchful, awake, we pray: ℞.

*(If desired, an additional invocation for particular needs may be added.)*

### Gathering Prayer

*Leader:* Let us pray. *(Pause for silent prayer.)*

Shepherd of Israel,  
in love you grant us this season of Advent,  
a new dawn of grace to begin our celebration,  
our reflection upon your saving power in Jesus Christ.  
As we come together, may we make music in the Spirit.  
Grant us your light, keep us steadfast,  
guide our growth in love through prayer and song.  
We ask this of you, our one, true, living God,  
forever and ever. Amen.

### Brief Gathering Prayer

*Leader:* Let us pray.

God, redeemer forever,  
thank you for the grace bestowed on us in Christ.  
May our ministry prepare the hearts of all  
as we wait for you to come in glory.  
We pray in the one voice of the Spirit,  
one God forever and ever. Amen.

### Suggested Scriptures

Jeremiah 33:14–16

Romans 13:11–12

Mark 13:33–37

## Advent II

### A Voice Cries Out

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#### Litany



℞. Come, O Lord; come set us free. (tone for intercessions) we pray:

*(A seasonal psalm refrain or another seasonal response may be used.)*

For the desire to follow the example of the Baptist's herald voice, we pray: ℞.

That our ministry may bring God's comfort to those who have **no** hope,  
we pray: ℞.

For the building of communities and nations that live  
and believe **in** harmony, we pray: ℞.

That we may always sing of God's peaceful kingdom,  
where **justice** reigns, we pray: ℞.

*(If desired, an additional invocation for particular needs may be added.)*

#### Gathering Prayer

*Leader:* Let us pray. *(Pause for silent prayer.)*

Let your Spirit rest upon us, God, our hope;  
may we answer the call to sing praises to your name,  
here and among all the nations.  
Shake off our mourning and misery,  
fill our mouths with laughter, place your joy on our lips.  
Join our voices to the voice of the Baptist,  
proclaiming a new heaven and new earth in Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you,  
one God forever and ever. Amen.

#### Brief Gathering Prayer

*Leader:* Let us pray.

Our voices sing out in expectation, saving God.  
You have begun your work in us;  
complete it on the day of Christ's coming.  
"Marana tha!" "Come, Lord!"  
Today, forever and ever. Amen.

#### Suggested Scriptures

Baruch 5:1–4

Romans 15:5–6

Luke 3:4–6

Alan J. Hommerding  
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# Advent III

## Wait for the Lord

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### Litany



℞. Come, O Lord; come set us free. (tone for intercessions) we pray:

*(A seasonal psalm refrain or another seasonal response may be used.)*

That our joyful hearts will lead us onward in song  
to the house of **the** Lord, we pray: ℞.

That we may be known as witnesses to the Light **from** Light, we pray: ℞.

For our troubled world, for the gift of peace  
that surpasses all **under**standing, we pray: ℞.

For an eager, patient yearning as we wait for the heavens  
to rain down **the** Just One, we pray: ℞.

*(If desired, an additional invocation for particular needs may be added.)*

### Gathering Prayer

*Leader:* Let us pray. *(Pause for silent prayer.)*

Faithful God who calls us,  
send your Spirit upon us  
so that we may delight in you.  
May your Spirit in us never be quenched.  
Let the joyful news of your Son's coming  
resound through our music.  
Make us messengers sent ahead of him,  
proclaiming repentance and rejoicing.  
Hear us, answer us, come to us, Lord,  
now and forever. Amen.

### Brief Gathering Prayer

*Leader:* Let us pray.

Lord, we hear you say, "Be strong, fear not."  
Let us proclaim these mighty words, hearts filled with hope,  
preaching your good news,  
forever and ever. Amen.

### Suggested Scriptures

Isaiah 35:10

Philippians 4:4–7

Matthew 11:2–6



# Christmas I

## The Birth of Christ

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### Litany



℞. Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o! (tone for intercessions) we pray:  
or



℞. Glo - ry to God in the high - est! (tone for intercessions) we pray:

*(A seasonal psalm refrain or another seasonal response may be used.)*

That the joy of this season will cause our new song to resound  
to the ends of the **earth**, we pray: ℞.

For the knowledge that the Lord delights in us,  
and a generous heart to share that delight with **all**, we pray: ℞.

That we might seek the wonder of God's glory in the poor and **lowly**,  
we pray: ℞.

For the wisdom to worship Christ with all of God's **angels**, we pray: ℞.

*(If desired, an additional invocation for particular needs may be added.)*

### Gathering Prayer

*Leader:* Let us pray. *(Pause for silent prayer.)*

God of endless glory,  
Christ, our Savior, is born today!  
We bow before the wonder of this mystery:  
your love humbly born, so we may walk in your light  
and dwell in darkness no more.  
We reflect on the glory of this day;  
through the power of your Spirit we sing your song,  
ever-new in Christ,  
forever and ever. Amen.

### Brief Gathering Prayer

*Leader:* Let us pray.

God Most High, your promise is fulfilled  
in the fruit of Jesse's tree and David's royal house:  
Christ, our Lord and Savior,  
forever and ever. Amen.

### Suggested Scriptures

Isaiah 9:5–6  
Hebrews 1:5–6  
Luke 2:10–14

# Christmas II

## The Word of God in Flesh\_\_\_\_\_

### Litany



℞. Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o! *(tone for intercessions)* we pray:  
or



℞. Glo - ry to God in the high - est! *(tone for intercessions)* we pray:

*(A seasonal psalm refrain or another seasonal response may be used.)*

For joyful hearts and voices, a new song in Christ who dwells **among us**,  
we pray: ℞.

That the wonder of this season will lead us to be witnesses  
to the dawn of heaven's **grace**, we pray: ℞.

For those who listen in silence to hear the angels sing God's grace upon **grace**,  
we pray: ℞.

That we may be messengers of the Holy One each day,  
bringing glad tidings of **salvation**, we pray: ℞.

*(If desired, an additional invocation for particular needs may be added.)*

### Gathering Prayer

*Leader:* Let us pray. *(Pause for silent prayer.)*

Eternal God,  
your infinite Word embraced our human flesh,  
born in our nakedness to one day die in nakedness,  
gently swaddled, as if tenderly wrapped in a shroud.  
Through the gift of your Holy Spirit,  
we see your love revealed to us today.  
May we sing in endless wonder and praise  
to your boundless glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.

### Brief Gathering Prayer

*Leader:* Let us pray.

Ever-living God, today is born light, joy, and peace.  
From the dawn of our days you spoke to redeem us;  
in Christ is your glory  
forever and ever. Amen.

### Suggested Scriptures

Isaiah 52:7–8  
Titus 2:11–12  
John 1:1–5

# Christmas III

## The Holy Family

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### Litany



℞. Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o! *(tone for intercessions)* we pray:  
or



℞. Glo - ry to God in the high - est! *(tone for intercessions)* we pray:

*(A seasonal psalm refrain or another seasonal response may be used.)*

That the joy and glory of this season will ring out in psalms, hymns,  
and inspired **songs**, we pray: ℞.

For a greater desire to honor all peoples of the world,  
raising up God's house of **justice**, we pray: ℞.

That we will live as God's chosen ones: holy, compassionate, kind,  
humble, gentle, and **patient**, we pray: ℞.

For the strength to heed the voice of Christ until the day we are called  
to his Father's **house**, we pray: ℞.

*(If desired, an additional invocation for particular needs may be added.)*

### Gathering Prayer

*Leader:* Let us pray. *(Pause for silent prayer.)*

Trinity most blessed,  
in the love of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus  
we see a reflection of your own perfect love.  
Bind us together in the word of Christ,  
your divine Word made incarnate in our human family.  
Watch over every household of faith;  
hear the prayer of your daughters and sons  
who sing your glory  
now and forever. Amen.

### Brief Gathering Prayer

*Leader:* Let us pray.

God of Promise, may we continue to walk in your ways,  
dedicated to you in these days of your Son's Nativity.  
Hold your faithful children in loving-kindness,  
now and forever. Amen.

### Suggested Scriptures

Genesis 15:5–6

Colossians 3:16–17

Luke 2:49–52

# Christmas IV

## The Epiphany

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### Litany



℞. Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o! (tone for intercessions) we pray:  
or



℞. Glo - ry to God in the high - est! (tone for intercessions) we pray:  
(A seasonal psalm refrain or another seasonal response may be used.)

For the wisdom to journey in the light of heaven,  
so we may come to find the **Christ**, we pray: ℞.

That we will be wise stewards of God's grace,  
offering to others every gift bestowed on **us**, we pray: ℞.

For every nation on earth: may all come to flower with justice,  
living in profound **peace**, we pray: ℞.

That our share in the splendid hymn of angels and starlight  
will make us **radiant**, we pray: ℞.

*(If desired, an additional invocation for particular needs may be added.)*

### Gathering Prayer

*Leader:* Let us pray. *(Pause for silent prayer.)*

God of every nation,  
your light and peace appear today in Christ.  
Let your glory shine on us and fill us;  
lead us to sing joyfully of this wondrous mystery.  
Make us wise so that we may seek you  
among the poor, afflicted, and lowly.  
We offer you the gift of our lives,  
bowed down in worship before you,  
now and forever. Amen.

### Brief Gathering Prayer

*Leader:* Let us pray.

Shine on us in glory, Creator of the stars;  
guide our footsteps to Christ our Morningstar,  
your profound peace singing in our hearts  
now and forever. Amen.

### Suggested Scriptures

Isaiah 60:1–3

Ephesians 3:2–3

Matthew 2:10–11

# Christmas V

## The Baptism of the Lord

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### Litany



℞. Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o! *(tone for intercessions)* we pray:  
or



℞. Glo - ry to God in the high - est! *(tone for intercessions)* we pray:  
*(A seasonal psalm refrain or another seasonal response may be used.)*

For all the baptized, the Church, born anew in water and Spirit,  
beloved children of **God**, we pray: ℞.

For the Sun of Justice to shine forth from our lives each day,  
that all might sing “**Glor**y!” we pray: ℞.

That we will be true servants, pleasing to the Lord,  
serving all who await **teaching**, we pray: ℞.

That our tongues will be loosened and livened by the voice  
that thundered over creation’s **waters**, we pray: ℞.

*(If desired, an additional invocation for particular needs may be added.)*

### Gathering Prayer

*Leader:* Let us pray. *(Pause for silent prayer.)*

Peace to your people on earth,  
God of all blessing.

Your Son began his mission in the waters of baptism;  
keep us faithful to our baptismal call  
to open eyes, to free prisoners,  
always to proclaim the one mightier than we.  
Pour out your spirit upon us once again,  
so we may sing of your glorious reign,  
now and forever. Amen.

### Brief Gathering Prayer

*Leader:* Let us pray.

We thank you, God of all creation,  
for choosing us in baptism to be your children.  
Send your Spirit to renew and guide us,  
forever and ever. Amen.

### Suggested Scriptures

Isaiah 42:1–2

Acts 10:37–38

Mark 1:9–11

# Christmas VI

## The Presentation of the Lord\_\_\_\_\_

### Litany



℞. Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o! (tone for intercessions) we pray:  
or



℞. Glo - ry to God in the high - est! (tone for intercessions) we pray:  
(A seasonal psalm refrain or another seasonal response may be used.)

That our ministry will draw all people closer in Christ,  
who shared the fullness of our **humanity**, we pray: ℞.

As the heavens raise their portals, may our hearts and voices  
be lifted in **music**, we pray: ℞.

That we may be strengthened and comforted by faith in the gospel  
when sorrow pierces our **hearts**, we pray: ℞.

That the light of grace shine in the world,  
guiding us in the ways of **holiness**, we pray: ℞.

*(If desired, an additional invocation for particular needs may be added.)*

### Gathering Prayer

*Leader:* Let us pray. *(Pause for silent prayer.)*

Strong and mighty God,  
in human flesh you became one of us;  
you call us sisters and brothers.

Lead us in the Spirit to your temple;  
enfold us in the arms of your prophets  
as we make music to your name, King of Glory.  
In peace, may we one day see the gates of paradise  
lifted up in your splendor,  
forever and ever. Amen.

### Brief Gathering Prayer

*Leader:* Let us pray.

King of glory, Light of the world,  
bring us in joy to the light of your temple.  
Send us forth as your messengers,  
now and forever. Amen.

### Suggested Scriptures

Malachi 3:1–2

Hebrews 2:14–15

Luke 2:29–32