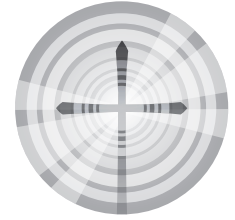


# EXPLORING...



## THE CREATION OF A GOOD BULLETIN

How do you create a bulletin that is easy for people to follow, especially if they have never before attended your worship service? How is your bulletin a theological statement and a mission statement? In this issue, we share ideas and resources to help you in creating your bulletin. We also realize that some congregations no longer print a bulletin and use a projection screen for the same purpose. Some of these ideas might be helpful to you as well. We also welcome your ideas about creating good projections to share in a future issue.

*Susan Lukey, Editor*

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## A BASIC WORSHIP SERVICE – IN THREE PARTS

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### Gathering

We come from our daily activities into this time set apart to focus on God and on apprenticing as people who have chosen to follow the Way of Jesus.

This part of the service may include the following elements: Prelude; Greeting; Scripture Sentences; Call to Worship; prayers (such as an Opening Prayer/Prayer of Approach/Prayer of Invocation, a Prayer for Mercy, and a Prayer of Confession/Words of Assurance); service music, such as an Introit; and one or two hymns. Announcements about the congregation's broader life together may be offered either in the time of Gathering or in the Response.

### Word

We open ourselves to God's Word, listening, interpreting, considering, and pondering what it means for our daily lives.

This part of the service may include a story time, a Prayer of Illumination or Prayer of Preparation, the reading of scripture (one or more), a sermon or message, a discussion of scripture, a song in preparation for receiving the Word or in response to hearing the Word, and a hymn.

### Response

We now respond in gratitude and hope to what we have received and begin to shape our lives around the Word and take action as people committed to following the Way of Jesus.

This part of the service may include one or two hymns, the Prayers of the People/Pastoral Prayer, the act of offering, sung responses, the Minute for Mission, the passing of the peace, the sacrament of communion, and going forth with the Commissioning and Blessing. Going Forth into the world continues our response to the Word as apprentices of the Way of Jesus.

The sacrament of baptism may be shared during the time of Gathering or during the Response.

Special music such as a choir anthem, solo, duet, or instrumental piece may be included in any part of worship to enhance the worship and expand the message.

For other ways to understand the shaping of the worship service, see *Celebrate God's Presence*, pp. 1–8.

**Invite people to take the bulletin home** and pray the prayers each day that week, shaping their spiritual practice and that of the congregation.

## *Thank you,* TERRY FLETCHER!

for your cartoon and articles for this Exploring section. Prior to entering ministry, Terry was the publisher of *Britannia* magazine for several decades and also taught desktop publishing for a few years at Lambton College, Sarnia, Ont. Thanks to Terry for offering to help with this issue after seeing it mentioned in Upcoming Themes. We welcome all of our readers to share your ideas and wisdom for Upcoming Themes.

## WHEN DESIGNING A BULLETIN...

A clear, well-laid-out bulletin helps ground your worship service and supports the congregation in offering their worship to God. Here are some ideas:

- Work to create a familiar and easy-to-read format for your bulletin, and then stick with it. Don't create a new format or style every week, though you may wish to make slight changes for each season of the church year. People can participate more fully in worship when they aren't guessing about the order of service or trying to decipher the text. Consistency and familiarity will help them work with other aspects of the service that might be new and creative.
- Create sections for each of the major parts of worship—Gathering, Word, and Response—divided by a bit of space or a simple graphic. Don't jam everything in. Give people space in the bulletin just as you give silence in worship.
- Use clear and easy-to-read headings for each major part of worship so that people can easily follow the order of service.
- Make the subheadings under each major part of worship prominent by using bold type or a slightly larger font.

- Indent by a few spaces the prayers and other worship materials that the congregation will read aloud so that they stand out from the headings.
- Align the text to the left, rather than setting it centred or justified (which distributes the words across both margins). Both centred and justified text are harder to read.
- Use one font for the whole bulletin. An exception might be made for the three main headings (Gather, Word, and Response), but the font you choose should still be clear and easy to read.
- Use the same font each week, so it is familiar to the readers. Arial and Times New Roman, which are familiar and clean looking, are easiest for people to read.
- Use italics or "all caps" (all capital letters) sparingly. These make the text much harder to read.
- Think about how to accommodate the visual needs of members of the congregation. For a bulletin in Arial or Times New Roman, 11- or 12-point size is a good standard to follow. You could also create a large-print bulletin; check with those for whom you are creating it to see if you have chosen an appropriate font and size.
- People approach the bulletin with their own preconceptions. Check your bulletin format with various members of the congregation to see what they notice.



NOBODY LISTENS TO THE SERMON  
SINCE WE REDESIGNED THE BULLETIN—  
THEY JUST KEEP READING IT!

© Terry Fletcher. Used with permission.

### What Size Will the Bulletin Be?

Consider what a new size and shape of bulletin might allow you to provide.

- trifold bulletin on either 8½ x 11 or 8½ x 14 (legal) paper
- 8½ x 11 folded in half horizontally to create a 5½ x 8½ page
- 8½ x 11 folded in half vertically to create a 4¼ x 11 page
- 8½ x 14 (legal) paper folded to create either an almost square page or a long, narrow page
- 11 x 17 paper for a large-print format or for a service with sacraments

How does each work in people's hands?

If you need more space than a single folded sheet provides, do not insert a single half-page that contains part of the worship service. There is nothing more frustrating than having that half-sheet drop out and then not being able to figure out which side is which. Instead:

- Forgo the bulletin cover so that you can make use of all sides of the paper.
- Expand the bulletin to two full folded sheets by including graphics, announcements, Minute for Mission, a colouring picture or puzzle, etc. Number the pages to make the order clear.
- Use larger paper.

If you must use a half-sheet, use it for a stand-alone piece that is referred to in the order of service, such as the communion prayer or the baptism section of the service.

## MORE BULLETIN SUGGESTIONS

### Format

It seems the vast majority of bulletins are simply printed on letter-sized paper, horizontally folded in two. This is economical and allows for a reasonably sized end product. But dare we break with convention? There are, after all, many other options.

If sticking with letter-sized paper, does it have to be a horizontal fold? What about folding it vertically? Maybe even a horizontal triple-fold? Yes, extra work for the folders. However, there are low-cost folding machines that can automate this quite efficiently.

Another configuration, which I used to good effect in a newsletter for some years, is taking legal-sized paper and folding it in two horizontally. This gives a nice, almost square, page and offers interesting space with which to play.

So, let's play with the format a little and maybe people will see the bulletin through fresh eyes.

### Content

If the only thing a bulletin does is tell us the hymn numbers, then it is a waste of paper. A good bulletin is a take-home promotion piece for letting people know about the life of your church. Announcements belong here, of course, but how about expanding the content to make it more likely to travel home with folks?

We always include quotes presented as "Bulletin Thoughts," sourced from quotation pages on the Internet. Searching for quotes that fit our weekly theme is easy on many of these pages. People often save these quotes for further reflection.

Why not include cartoons? *The Joyful Noiseletter* at [www.joyfulnoiseletter.com](http://www.joyfulnoiseletter.com) offers subscriptions for around \$40 a year. This gives you the right to reprint their funny stories and cartoons in your church publications.

Some bulletins offer children's puzzles or a colouring page to engage the little ones in the pews.

Consider running a short reflection (a paragraph or two) on topics related to the theme. Minutes for Mission are also very suitable. Whatever we can do to make the bulletin into something that people will keep is worth trying!

*Terry Fletcher, Londesborough U.C., Londesborough, Ont.*

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## HOW TO WRITE FOR THE BULLETIN

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### Call to Worship

The Call to Worship may simply gather people, call their whole presence into the place of worship, and guide them to settle into the act of worship. Or it may introduce the theme of the scripture and preaching for the day, drawing on words from the readings to create the Call to Worship.

#### A Call to Worship

- addresses the people and calls them to gather for worship
- talks *about* God, not *to* God
- may be spoken by the worship leader, inviting the congregation to worship, or may be a dialogue between the worship leader and the congregation
- may use a repetitive response to include younger children or those who are not able (for a variety of reasons) to follow the written words
- can be spoken in everyday language or in more formal worship language, depending on the congregation and context

#### *Example:*

Come, followers of Jesus, it is time to gather. Come settle into this place of worship, and continue your apprenticeship as followers of the Way.

*For more Calls to Worship, see Celebrate God's Presence, pp. 20–24.*

### Opening Prayer (a.k.a. Prayer of Approach or Prayer of Invocation)

An Opening Prayer names that we are in God's presence and invites God to bless and support us in our worship (or acknowledges that God is already doing so). A Prayer of Approach tends to focus on the idea that we are reverently and respectfully, sometimes cautiously, coming into God's presence for worship, whereas a Prayer of Invocation emphasizes the invitation of God's Spirit to enliven and energize our worshipping.

#### An Opening Prayer

- talks *to* God, not *about* God
- may use words from the scripture readings for the day or other words that introduce the theme
- may reflect the season of the church year
- is usually prayed by the whole congregation together, though it may also be written responsively
- addresses God in a way that fits with the intent of the prayer and/or theme of the service. Using the name "God" is very colloquial, but it may seem too familiar for the Holy One. "O God" gives a bit more rhythm and thought to God's name. A phrasing such as "Gracious God," "Loving God," or "Holy God" offers more attention and reverence to the name of God and shares a characteristic that reinforces, for those praying, God's role in our lives.

#### *Example:*

Gracious God,  
**in whom we live and move and have our being,  
we gather today as your people  
and as followers of the Way,  
opening our hearts to your presence  
and our lives to your will.  
Bless us in our worship that we may go forth to  
be your blessing in the world. Amen.**

*For more Opening Prayers, see Celebrate God's Presence, pp. 49–51.*

## Prayer of Confession (a.k.a. Prayer for Mercy)

The Prayer of Confession is the opportunity for people to open their hearts to God’s healing and hope. While confession has typically been focused on confessing sins and wrongs done, there is nothing to say that it cannot be the confession of doubts or longings or fears. Remember that there is only one “sin,” and that is a broken relationship, with God and with others. Our confession of sin is meant to help us mend our relationships with God and with others. Some or most of the mistakes people feel guilty about are really learning opportunities, not earth-shattering wrongs.

### A Prayer of Confession

- talks *to* God, not *about* God
- is usually prayed by the whole congregation together, though it may also be written responsively
- avoids a long list of possible sins and wrongdoings. People already know what makes them feel guilty
- must avoid the danger of too specifically naming what is to be confessed. People may tune out if they don’t feel that the named “sins” relate to them. For example, the prayer may invite everyone to say, “We do not share what we have,” yet a particular person in the congregation, just that week, gave a large donation to a local food bank
- can include a time of silent confession, allowing people to share with God what they need to confess. End a time of silent confession with words spoken by the worship leader, so that the congregation has a cue to draw their attention back to the whole group

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### Worship Leaders

We ask that you include this statement when using material from **Gathering**.

Written by \_\_\_\_\_ .

**Gathering**, Pentecost 2 2017, page \_\_\_\_\_ .  
Used with permission.

### Example:

God of all love and hope,  
you know the burdens of our hearts  
before we share them,  
**and, yet, in naming our doubts, our fears,  
our mistakes, our challenges  
in your presence, our load is lightened  
and our hearts are set free.**

*(a time of silent confession)*

God of all love and hope,  
**we know you have heard our confessions.  
Amen.**

*For more Prayers of Confession, see Celebrate God’s Presence, pp. 31–42.*

## Words of Assurance (a.k.a. Assurance of Pardon or Assurance of Grace)

The Words of Assurance proclaim the words people need in their hearts to move toward mending and healing in their lives and in their relationships. The point to be made always is that God’s love and forgiveness are unconditional.

### Words of Assurance

- are addressed *to the people*, not to God
- proclaim clearly and joyfully the assurance of God’s action. What do your people need to hear? Is it assurance of God’s abiding presence or God’s unconditional love? God’s grace-filled forgiveness or God’s healing?
- may draw on words of scripture for the assurance or may use quotes from non-biblical spiritual writings
- may include the declaration, “This is the Good News,” and the people’s response “Thanks be to God. Amen.”

### Example:

Nothing can separate us from the love of God.  
Nothing can come between us  
and God’s healing presence.  
God works with us for the mending of the world  
and the mending of our lives.  
This is the Good News!  
**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

*For more Words of Assurance, see Celebrate God’s Presence, pp. 42–44.*

## Prayer of Illumination

The Prayer of Illumination provides a few moments for the scripture reader(s) and preacher to prepare and focus. It invites God into the act of sharing the Word and asks that the words on the page of the Bible and the words shared become, in us, the Word of God.

### A Prayer of Illumination

- talks *to* God, not *about* God
- might honestly name the doubts, confusion, and desires we have as we come to scripture
- may draw on the theme of worship or words of scripture to form the prayer
- does not need to be long
- may be spoken by the worship leader alone or by the whole congregation

### Example:

Gracious God, we come to your Word today, hoping, longing, anticipating what it has to say to us, but fearing that we might not notice or understand its meaning. Yet we trust that, in your presence and together as a community of faith, we can let these words become your Word for us today. Amen.

For more *Prayers of Illumination*, see *Celebrate God's Presence*, pp. 44–45.

**Remember**, some scripture translations are under copyright and you may need permission to print the scripture passages in your bulletin. The United Church of Canada has an agreement to print scripture from the NRSV (New Revised Standard Version) in its publications such as *Gathering*; however, this agreement does not extend to every United Church congregation.

## Prayers of the People (Prayers of Thanksgiving, Prayers of Concern, and the Pastoral Prayer)

The prayers offered each week are the work we do (the *liturgia* or liturgy) as people of God. It is a public service we offer as followers of the Way to pray for each other, for others, and for our community, our leaders, our world. We take seriously that our prayers make a positive difference in the world. We embrace this work, in faith and in joy.

Prayers of the People are divided into Prayers of Thanksgiving and Prayers of Concern. They may include responses (sung or spoken) by the congregation as well as times of silence during which people can, within their hearts or aloud, add their own prayers.

A Pastoral Prayer begins with adoration of God and then focuses on prayers of concern or intercession for others. It is offered by the minister or a worship leader on behalf of the congregation.

### Prayers of the People

- talk *to* God, not *about* God
- may be introduced by a sentence from scripture or a call to prayer
- focus on sharing our prayers with God, inviting God's wisdom, strength, blessing, and healing
- are not a time to tell the congregation what they should be doing or to repeat the message of the sermon, though the prayers may extend themes from the scripture and sermon
- focus on gratitude for God's continued presence and action, in which we can be partners

### Suggested Sung Prayer Responses:

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| VU 34  | "Come now, O God of peace"              |
| VU 400 | "Lord, listen to your children praying" |
| VU 948 | "O God, hear my prayer"                 |
| VU 951 | "Santo, santo, santo"                   |
| MV 96  | "And when you call for me"              |
| MV 115 | "Behold, behold, I make all things new" |
| MV 175 | "May we but wait"                       |

For more *Prayers of the People*, see *Celebrate God's Presence*, pp. 53–67.

## Offering Invitation

The Offering Invitation provides a time to name what we are doing in the act of offering. It invites people to consider how their gifts help the congregation live its mission and how these gifts are a response to all that God has given to us.

### An Offering Invitation

- is addressed to *the people*, not to God
- may relate to the theme of the service or words of scripture
- may name specific ministries and happenings in the congregation that are possible only through the gifts of the offering
- names that some people give by PAR (Pre-authorized Remittance)
- invites an attitude of joyful giving and gratitude
- may acknowledge that commitments of time, talent, and energy are also part of the offering

### Example:

In joy and gratitude,  
let us gather and present our offerings to God  
for the work of this congregation.  
Our offerings are given in many ways,  
but are all gathered in this moment of worship,  
and shared in joy and in gratitude.

*For more offering invitations, see Celebrate God's Presence, p. 47.*

## Offering Prayer (a.k.a. Prayer of Dedication)

In the words of the Offering Prayer, we make known that we are giving these gifts for God's work and asking that God bless both the gifts and the givers, as well as the work done in the congregation and beyond because of these gifts. An Offertory is the musical selection played and/or the act of bringing forward the gifts, not the name of the prayer.

### The Offering Prayer

- is addressed *to God*, not to the people
- may reflect the theme of the service, the season, or the scripture readings
- reflects joy and gratitude as well as the hope for what these gifts can do to bring God's hope, healing, and peace in the world
- may be a sung prayer or be followed by a sung response

### *Suggested Sung Offering Prayers:*

- VU 540 "Grant us, God, the grace"
- VU 542 "We give you but your own"
- MV 183 "I'm gonna shout, shout"
- MV 185 "Ev'ry day is a day of thanksgiving"

*For more Offering Prayers, see Celebrate God's Presence, pp. 49–51.*

## What Colour Will the Bulletin Be?

Plain white or a light-cream paper is the best, with black type. This allows for good contrast and readability. While occasionally it can be fun to use another colour, think of those in the congregation who may find it hard to make out the words if the contrast is not clear.

For the same reason, use solid black type for any material that will be read aloud by the congregation. Major headings could be presented in other colours to make them stand out, but always do a test print to make sure the colour looks the same on paper as it does on the computer screen.

## Commissioning (a.k.a. Sending Forth)

Commissioning is the statement of the mission you are giving to the people as they leave the service. Our living of the Way of Jesus does not end at the conclusion of worship; it just begins.

We worship, and then we go out to live our faith day by day, as apprentices of the Way. What do you hope that the people have gained from the service to take out into the world?

### A Commissioning

- is addressed *to the people*, not to God
- often begins with words such as “Go into the world,” or “Let us go from this place of worship,” or “Go now and...”
- usually reflects the theme of the worship service
- may use words from the scripture reading(s) of the day
- is offered as a clear, energizing proclamation

### Example:

Go now from this place of worship,  
filled with the love of God,  
ready to share that love with friend and stranger.

For more Commissionings, see Celebrate God’s Presence, pp. 72–74.

## Benediction (a.k.a. “the blessing”)

The benediction may either follow or precede the words of commissioning. In the Commissioning, the congregation is given the challenge to live their faith. In the Benediction, they are reminded that God is with them; they are not alone in taking on the task given to them.

### A Benediction

- is addressed *to the people*, not to God
- may use the first-person plural (we/us) or the second-person plural (you). Worship leaders need to decide if their role is to bless the people or if they are naming that God’s blessing includes worship leader and congregation together. Both forms are acceptable to use as appropriate to your context and congregation.
- often uses the language of the Trinity

- often uses blessings from scripture
- clearly reminds people of God’s loving presence as they move from the place of worship
- is offered in a reassuring, confident, quiet tone
- may be sung, or may be a spoken blessing followed by a sung response

### Example:

The grace of Christ attend us,  
the Holy Spirit keep us,  
and the love of God surround us,  
now and forever. Amen.

For more Benedictions, see Celebrate God’s Presence, pp. 70–72. See also page 86 of this Exploring section for Blessings and Commissionings from the Epistles.

### Suggested Sung Blessings and Commissionings

- VU 298 “When you walk from here”
  - VU 402 “We are one” *last verse*
  - VU 424 “May the God of hope”
  - VU 431 “Sing amen”
  - VU 649 “Walk with me” *chorus, verse 4, chorus*
  - VU 964 “Go now in peace”
  - MV 171 “Christ has no body now but yours” *chorus, verse 4, chorus*
  - MV 214 “May God’s sheltering wings”
  - MV 221 “I am walking a path of peace”
  - MV 223 “We will go with God”
- “Joy be in thy heart” by Paul Rumbolt (from his *Songsmith* album)

See Voices United 416–431 and More Voices 209–225 for others. Consider using one verse of a longer hymn as a sung blessing or commissioning.



Help us showcase the life and work of the United Church in our resources. Consider submitting your photos for United Church bulletins.

See [www.united-church.ca/community-faith/get-involved/submit-your-photos](http://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/get-involved/submit-your-photos) for the details.



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## LOOKING FOR IMAGES

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We like to economize at the churches I serve. It's not that we don't appreciate the beautiful full-colour bulletin covers available from various sources. We just count our pennies. So we produce our own bulletins on the photocopier—in glorious black and white!

This has been an interesting step because the secretary and I have become used to finding images both that are suitable and that don't infringe any copyright restrictions. It is tempting to just fire up the Internet and search for the right image, but, as we are committed to justice, we want to know where our content comes from. For years, I made my living as an artist, and I know how it feels when someone just takes one of my drawings and uses it without asking (or paying!). To avoid doing this to someone else, we have specific places we search.

There are several CD/DVD collections of clip art chosen to be suitable for church use. We do have a couple of these, but we find it simply quicker to search on the web. Here are some handy sites we have found for usable images:

- **La Vista Church of Christ** ([www.lavistachurchofchrist.org/Picture.htm](http://www.lavistachurchofchrist.org/Picture.htm)) has some great, old public-domain images, mostly from Sunday school books of days gone by.
- **Hermano León Clipart** ([www.cruzblanca.org/hermanoleon/byn/index.htm](http://www.cruzblanca.org/hermanoleon/byn/index.htm)) has excellent art in a clear graphic style that has been collected for years. The art is free for use.
- **Bible History Online** ([www.bible-history.com/ibh/](http://www.bible-history.com/ibh/)) has images that are free for church use.
- **Wikimedia commons** ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)) is an option if you just can't find what you want on the sites listed above. It has a great selection of all kinds of images.  
Be aware, though, that some images may require you to attribute the author in a caption. Please do so.
- Yahoo image search is another great source. Just go to Yahoo.ca and search for the image. Then, when the results pop up, look at the top right corner of the page. A drop-down menu item called Any License lets you choose the

type of licence you are interested in. Choosing Public Domain, for example, filters out everything else and gives you results that are freely usable. Good hunting!

*Terry Fletcher, Londesborough U.C., Londesborough, Ont.*

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## WHEN USING IMAGES...

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Images enhance a bulletin and provide another way of considering the scripture, the season, and the theme of worship. Images engage and include people who are natural visual learners, as well as younger children and those who, for various reasons, may find dealing with the words difficult. Images can help make a point, expand on ideas, and guide beyond the text.

When using images, remember:

- Be aware of copyright and give proper credit to copyright holders.
  - Keep the aspect ratio (proportions) the same as the original when you enlarge or shrink an image.
  - Pictures for colouring or puzzles can engage every age and draw attention to the scripture.
  - Cartoons can make a point and reveal a truth about faith and scripture, as well as appeal to those who enjoy having their perceptions challenged.
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## THE RIGHT TOOLS

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It's time for the service and the minister steps up to the pulpit, shuffles her notes, and then picks up the megaphone to begin her message. Does that seem odd? Should she stick with old technology? Maybe not, if she wants to enhance the worship service. It's the same with bulletin preparation. How many church secretaries and administrators are still struggling with old, out-of-date software that does a poor job?

Word has gone through many incarnations. But basically these are word-processing programs, designed to write letters and articles, not to do desktop publishing. Yes, I know it can be done with a lot of fiddling around. However, using these types of programs to put together bulletins is like using your weed-trimmer to cut your lawn. It *can* be done, but why?

The problem is that putting together a bulletin, or any other brochure or newsletter, requires a different approach. We are not looking at one continuous block of text. Instead, we are dealing with boxes or frames that contain information and need to be adjusted to appear in specific places on our pages. Early desktop publishing (DTP) programs had names like Framemaker and Pagemaker, which reveal this structure.

Placing text or pictures into frames allows us to modify the contents without affecting the rest of the publication. Frames can be moved to new positions and their shapes can be modified. Frames can even be linked so that text can flow from one to another.

Magazine publishers have several professional options for designing their publications. Programs like QuarkXpress and InDesign offer amazing layout capabilities. They also come with a large price tag. I used both of these for years until I discovered the existence of cheaper, and sometimes better, alternatives.

For example, if you have a full installation of Microsoft Office on your computer, you may have **Microsoft Publisher**. This is a versatile frame-based program that comes with many ready-made templates into which you can simply copy and paste your content.

Don't have Office? Consider joining **TechSoup** ([www.techsoupcanada.ca/en](http://www.techsoupcanada.ca/en)), where you can register as a non-profit organization and become eligible to receive Microsoft Office for a handling fee of \$40.\* It comes with all the other Office goodies, too.

Or if, like me, you are attracted to the smaller companies who try to compete with the big guys, why not try Serif Software's **PagePlus** ([www.serif.com/pageplus/](http://www.serif.com/pageplus/))? Serif has been making this alternative DTP software for years and has a suite of programs that do the job very efficiently. I switched from InDesign to PagePlus and was

amazed at its capabilities. It even has a built-in image editor for simple adjustments. Serif PagePlus can be purchased for only \$33.\* Serif also offers **PhotoPlus**, a Photoshop equivalent for the same price. Be aware that the company is moving into higher-end products with their Affinity range. The Affinity products generally have more demanding hardware requirements. Don't be alarmed by the site notices that say the PagePlus and other Plus programs are legacy products and will not be updated. As they stand, they do an excellent job and run well on lower-end computers.

There are several other programs that offer similar capabilities, and some are even free. It is important, though, to make sure a program is compatible with your needs before investing learning time into it. Both of the above Plus programs import Microsoft Word files and all the usual picture formats. They also output to good quality PDFs, which makes printing easy.

It may take some practice for your designated bulletin-preparer to become used to the way desktop publishing programs work, but switching to these methods will eventually save time and produce bulletins that look a whole lot better.

**Terry Fletcher**, Londesborough U.C., Londesborough, Ont.

*\*as of February 2017*

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## LAYOUT OF A PRAYER FOR PUBLIC READING

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Here are some ways to make a prayer easy for your congregation to read together:

- Use an easy-to-read font such as Times New Roman or Arial.
- Employ a standard method of indicating different voices (see section on p. 86).
- Avoid writing the prayer as a paragraph.
- Each line in the prayer should feel natural to say in one breath.
- Be consistent from week to week in how you present prayers.

## WHEN CHOOSING A PRAYER OR WRITING A PRAYER...

Here are some items to keep in mind when choosing prayers from various sources:

- How does the prayer address God?
- What does the prayer say about God?
- What does the prayer say about the role of people in God’s realm?
- Do the language and the images include everyone? For example, does the language talk about “seeing” when there are those in your congregation who have various challenges with sight? (See *Gathering Pentecost 1 2016: Exploring the Language of Worship* for more information.)
- Do the images fit for your context, your congregation, and the theme of scripture?
- What does the prayer add to worship? How does it enhance the worship experience?
- What is the reading level of the prayer, and does that work for your congregation? Depending upon your context—the number of children or new immigrants, for example—the appropriate reading level might be anywhere from Grade 3 to Grade 7, more or less. Do an Internet search for “plain language at work newsletter” for hints and ideas.

## HOW TO WRITE SCRIPTURE VERSES

When writing scripture verses, here is the standard form:

- Use a colon (or a period) to divide the chapter from the verses, e.g., Exodus 2:1–4 or Exodus 2.1–4. Note that no space is used after the colon or period.
- Use the en dash to indicate the beginning and ending verses of a continuous reading, e.g., Exodus 2:1–5.
- When verses are from different parts of a chapter and not continuous, use a comma to indicate the break, e.g., Exodus 3:1–4, 11–12, or Luke 2:21, 39.
- Some verses of scripture contain more than one sentence. If you wish to only use the first or last sentence of the verse, use a lowercase letter to indicate a part of a verse, e.g., Exodus 2:1–3a.
- Some verses may have parts *a*, *b* and *c*. If all are being used, you do not need to indicate the parts. If only one or two parts are being used, indicate them as in the above point.
- When a scripture reading starts in one chapter and continues in the next, use an em dash, like this: Exodus 3:1–4:5.
- Use Arabic, not Roman, numbers to indicate book number, e.g., 1 Peter.

### Hyphen or Dash?     -     –     —

Use a **hyphen** when dividing word syllables from one line to the next or when joining two words to form a compound, such as *wake-up*.

An **en dash** is longer than a hyphen, the width of a typesetter’s *n*, giving it the name *en* dash. It is used to mean “through” or “from this to that,” as in June 1–9, 2018.

An **em dash** is longest of all, the width of a typesetter’s *m*, giving it the name *em* dash. It is used to separate a part of a sentence from the rest — to highlight a word, phrase, or clause — for emphasis.

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## HOW TO WRITE HYMN TITLES

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You might have noticed in *Gathering, Voices United*, and *More Voices* that sometimes hymn “titles” are written with capitals and sometimes not. In reality, this is the difference between a first line of a hymn and the title.

In *Gathering*, we typically use the first line of a hymn, since that is how most of us know the hymns. In addition, many hymns do not have a separate title.

*Examples:*

- VU 395 “Part of the Family” (title) or “Come in, come in and sit down” (first line)
- VU 595 “The Servant Song” (title) or “We are pilgrims” (first line)
- MV 120 “Canticle of the Turning” (title) or “My soul cries out” (first line)

When looking in a hymn book index for a hymn whose title differs from its first line, you should find both in the listing.

Be careful when shortening titles or first lines for a bulletin. For example, VU 506 is better listed as “Take my life and let it be” rather than as “Take my life,” especially in funeral bulletins.

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## BOLD, ALL CAPS, NUMBERS: HOW TO SHOW MULTIPLE VOICES OR PARTS

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In *Gathering*, we show prayers and worship material divided into parts by using regular and bold print. This division can be used in several ways:

- The worship leader reads the regular print and the congregation reads the bold print.
- Two voices read the two parts (and more voices could be included).
- Two sides of the sanctuary read alternately.
- Other divisions could include young and old, choir and congregation, etc.

“All caps” (all capitals type) is not a good way to show the second voice or the divisions (or even for titles). It is difficult for many people to read. In text messages, all caps is considered shouting. Even on paper, it looks as if someone is shouting. If we do use all caps, such as for HALLELUJAH!, we do mean for it to be shouted or said in a loud voice.

You may also use Voice 1 and Voice 2 or Leader and All, especially if there are multiple voices that need to be designated, along with the whole congregation responding at certain points. However, it can be cumbersome and add to the length of lines and, therefore, the length of the bulletin. If possible, keep it simple by alternating bold and regular type.

The most important thing is to be consistent! Don’t use bold one week, italics the next, and then Voice 1 and Voice 2 another week. Work with one format for showing alternating voices so that the congregation is not left guessing week by week.

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## BLESSINGS & COMMISSIONINGS FROM THE EPISTLES

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Find inspiration in the Epistles!

*Romans 16:25–27* Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel.

*1 Corinthians 16:23–24* My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus.

*2 Corinthians 13:11–13* Greet one another with a holy kiss.

*Galatians 6:18* May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

*Ephesians 6:23–24* Peace be to the whole community.

*Philippians 4:19–20* And my God will fully satisfy every need of yours.

*Colossians 4:2–6, 18c* Devote yourselves to prayer; keeping alert with thanksgiving.

*1 Thessalonians 5:16–24* Rejoice always; pray without ceasing.

*1 Thessalonians 3:16* Now may the Lord of peace give you peace.

*1 Timothy 6:20, 21* Guard what has been entrusted to you.

*2 Timothy 4:22* The Lord be with your spirit.

*Titus 3:14, 15b* Devote yourselves to good works.

*Philemon 3-7* I remember you in my prayers; I thank God for you.

*Hebrews 13:20-21* May the God of peace make you complete in everything good.

*James 5:13-14, 16c* Are any among you suffering? They should pray.

*1 Peter 5:6-8a, 10-11* Cast all your anxiety on God.

*2 Peter 3:18* Grow in grace and knowledge.

*1 John 5:20b-21* We are in him who is true.

*2 John 5c-6* Let us love one another.

*3 John 11* Imitate not evil but what is good.

*Jude 20-21* Build yourselves up on your most holy faith.

*Revelation 22:17* Let everyone who is thirsty come.

## UNITED CHURCH BULLETIN COVERS

United Church Bulletin Covers are brought to you by Mission & Service, and proceeds from the sale of the covers help support the work of the church. In addition, the stories on the back of the bulletins build connections between United Church congregations across Canada and with mission partners around the world.

Bulletin covers are sold in sets of 50. If you don't need that many, consider purchasing together with a neighbouring church. You might also have sets of bulletin covers available to use for funerals or wedding services. **To submit your photos for potential use on upcoming bulletins, visit [www.united-church.ca/community-faith](http://www.united-church.ca/community-faith) (click on Get Involved).**



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- **unite us** in worship across the church
- offer choices that are **unique to The United Church of Canada**
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