The Benefits & Costs of Worship Folders
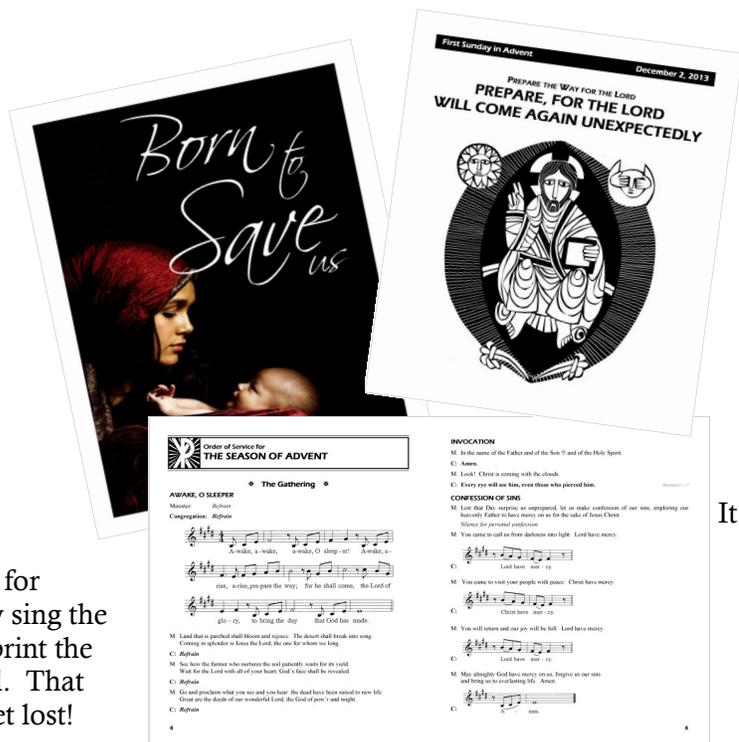
C13

WORSHIP FOLDERS: WHY BOTHER?

The C13 program is encouraging churches to consider using worship folders more often than they perhaps already do.   We believe there are four compelling reasons to do so.

1. **Worship folders make it almost impossible for someone to get lost.**   Flipping around from pages to psalms to hymns is probably second nature to you.   Although, if you watch what goes on in a worship service, you will notice times when even life-long WELS members can't turn to the correct portion of the hymnal quickly enough.   Just think of how complicated this would be to a guest.

   For example — a church is worshiping out of the hymnal on Good Shepherd Sunday, and the pastor announces that the congregation is going to sing Psalm 23, *The Lord is my Shepherd*. When the psalm begins, the visitor may be quite confused, wondering why you aren't singing *Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel,* which is *hymn* 23. Or, he may be ready to read the Words of Institution and sing the *Agnus Dei*, which are found on *page* 23.

   The visitor may feel embarrassed or foolish as people glance at him sideways as he frantically tries to find where you are at in the hymnal. But his embarrassment is not really that big a problem. What *is* a problem is that the Gospel seed which is being sown isn't sinking into the soil of his heart. How can it? He isn't paying attention to a thing that is going on, because he's lost, both spiritually and within the liturgy!

   Worship folders eliminate all this. They make it very hard to get lost. Some churches use worship folders for everything except the hymns. They sing the hymns out of the hymnal. Others print the hymns in the worship folder as well. That makes it absolutely impossible to get lost!   It

2. **Worship folders allow you to explain your rites and ceremonies, which make them compelling, rather than confusing.** Why, for example, does everyone say, "Praise be to you, O Christ!" at the end of a Gospel reading? A note in the worship folder can explain to the prospect that Christians believe that through the word the incarnate Christ is present. *"Where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them"* (Matthew 18:20). Or how about an explanation at the bottom of the page explaining that the *Gloria* is partly comprised of a song sung by angels on the first Christmas Eve; and, therefore, when we sing it in worship, we can assume that the angels who are present with us are delighted that we would praise our God in the same way they did. Explain that for this reason, Christians have used this song regularly for over 1600 years.

   Again, this comes down to serving the visitor with the Gospel, helping them *see* the Gospel where they might otherwise just see a tradition which they do not understand. This is not only helpful to the visitor. It is helpful to our members, many of whom do not understand why we do what we do in worship.

3. **Worship folders allow you to explain the service in the overall arch of the Church Year.** At the front of the worship folder, you can provide a brief explanation of where you are at in the Church Year. You can explain the emphasis of that season. You can offer a "theme of the day," giving a summary of what you are talking about, explaining how everything – the three lessons, the psalm, the Prayer of the Day, the hymns – are all related.

   In the C13 worship folder templates for Advent, you will even find a suggested "series." It is entirely based upon the assigned lessons for that Sunday. However, it also helps people to see how worship flows from week to week throughout Advent. It encourages them to *be there* from week to week when they see that the weeks do not stand alone. Each one builds upon the previous week. The Gospel is well served.

4. **Worship folders give prospects (and members) something to hold on to and meditate upon.** Do you think all your prospects have a Bible in their home? Probably not. However, if they take the worship folder home, they have scripture, prayers, and hymns they can meditate upon, giving the Spirit opportunity to do his good work through the Gospel.

Therefore, we hope you consider giving worship folders a try for the season of Advent and your Christmas services. Let your members see what it would be like to use worship folders week after week. When it is over, you can survey them. Was the Gospel served? Was it helpful for the members? Do they think it would be helpful for the guests? Give it a try! Then decide.

To help in these efforts, we will break down the costs of using worship folders regularly.

In another C13 module, we will also provide a list what constitutes a "good" worship folder.

Finally, in yet another C13 module, we offer page-by-page guides for how to utilize the C13 worship folder templates, if your church would choose to do so. It would allow someone (such as an administrative assistant) go through the worship folder templates and modify them as the pastor/worship committee desires.

THE COST OF USING WORSHIP FOLDERS REGULARLY

There are a lot of churches that are open to the idea of using worship folders regularly. In an exit survey for E12 (the worship/planning/outreach program for Easter in 2012), 80% of responders said they would consider using worship folders regularly.   However, many expressed concerns over the cost, both in money and in time. Let's discuss both.

The financial costs of producing a worship folder consist of four things:

1. **The cost of paper.**
2. **The cost of printing.**   This could be the cost of ink, toner, or a per-page price if you lease a copier.
3. **The cost of licensing.**   To print music in a worship folder you need to have a license unless that music is in the realm of public domain.
4. **The cost of assembly.**   Perhaps you can find a volunteer to produce worship folders. If not, it will probably become the responsibility of a paid office assistant.

Let's break those costs down.

Paper

If you follow the style guides we recommend as part of C13, the typical worship folder will be 16 to 24 pages. If you don't print the hymns, they are typically 12 to 16 pages.   You note that worship folder pages have to be an interval of four.   You are using both sides of a piece of paper, folded in half. Thus, you get four "pages" per sheet of paper.

So let's use 20 pages as an average worship folder length.   That would be five sheets of paper per worship folder. We *strongly* recommend you use legal size paper — 8.5 inches by 14 inches. When you fold that in half, that results in four pages that are each 8.5 inches tall and 7 inches wide. If you fold letter sized paper in half, it results in four pages that are 8.5 inches tall and only 5.5 inches wide.   5.5 inches is too narrow for most music graphics. You would have to scale them down so much, the lyrics would be tiny.   So you want to plan on using legal sized paper for your weekly worship folders.

A 10 ream (5000 sheets) case of legal sized paper costs about $60. If the average worship folder uses 5 sheets of paper, that means that the paper cost is 6 cents per worship folder.

Printing

Printing is where there are huge cost variables.   If you use an ink-jet printer, the per page cost can be 4 to 6 cents a sheet, even just for black and white. Color will cost you about 20 cents per sheet. If you use a laser printer you save money. To print on one side will cost 0.9 cents to 1.5 cents for black and white and 10 to 12 cents per color. Therefore, if you would consider using worship folders regularly, you'd probably want to consider an investment in a good laser printer.

Many churches own their own Xerox machine. They simply buy toner and pay for maintenance when needed. The cost for those copies is about 1 cent per sheet for black and white.

Many churches lease copier/printers.   They pay a monthly fee for having the machine.   They then pay a flat per page price.   A reasonable price for those prints are about a 1 cent for black and white and 9 cents for color.

Since black and white printing is about one-eighth the cost of color, we recommend doing weekly worship folders in black and white. You can still print in grayscale, using various densities of black, to provide variety.   Then use color in worship folders only on special occasions.   For example, the cover art on the C13 worship folder templates is full color. Print up that page separately.   Then print the interior pages in black and white.

If you stick with black and white/grayscale, it means that to print two "pages" of a worship folder (which are on one side of a piece of paper) will cost you about 1.4 cents *maximum*, using either: 1) a good laser printer, or 2) a Xerox machine owned by the church, or 3) a copier/printer leased by the church (where you are paying a per page cost).

We said an average worship folder requires 5 sheets of paper. That is 10 "runs" because you are printing on both sides. Therefore, it will cost you about 14 cents to print the folder.

In summary, a twenty page worship folder will cost you twenty cents to produce — 6 cents for the paper and 14 cents for the printing.

Licensing fees

One of the expenses of producing worship folders is getting the proper permission to reprint music. Copyright laws must be met. The artists who produced the music deserve to be compensated for their work.   To *not* follow copyright laws is tantamount to stealing from those artists and musicians. (NOTE: For the C13 worship folder templates, we will list copyright licensing requirements in the page-by-page walk-through of the worship folder templates.)

So let's break down the various fees involved in producing a worship folder.

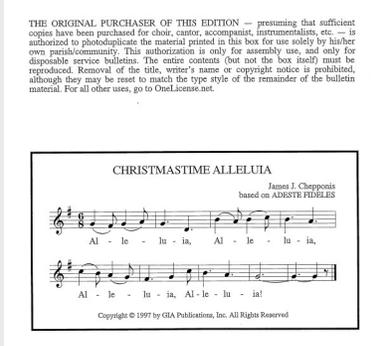*Much of the music you use in worship is in public domain.*

Works in the public domain are those whose intellectual property rights have expired, have been forfeited, or are inapplicable.   This applies to the vast majority of the hymns in *Christian Worship*. Since they were written so long ago, legal rights to those hymns are long expired.   Thus, you can create and use images of those hymns for free. (You could create the images using notation software, such as *Finale*. You can learn about *Finale* HERE.) Or you could purchase the digital edition of *Christian Worship*. It contains image files for everything: hymns, psalms, liturgy. More on that in a moment.)

With some music, simply purchasing the music gives you permission to reprint it.

Sometimes, the permission to print music comes with purchasing the music itself. All you need to do is purchase enough pieces of music for your "performers" — the instrumentalists, cantors, choir, etc. — and then you are allowed to reprint the congregational parts of the music in as many worship folders as you want.

For example, in the C13 worship folder template for Christmas we suggest using *Christmastime Alleluia* by James Chepponis.   One copy of that music costs $1.80.   If you used this piece with just the organist and a cantor, you would only need two pieces of music. For less than four dollars, you would now be allowed to reprint the congregational parts — the "Alleluias" — in as many worship folders as you needed.   You can do this multiple times.   There are verses suggested for Christmas, January 1, Epiphany, and the Baptism of our Lord.   You can

Here is the back cover of the music for *Christmastime Alleluia.* At the top of the page, it gives you legal permission to reprint the content of the box below.   It even allows you to reformat what is in that box to fit your worship folder. So you can change the fonts, put the copyright announcements at the end of your worship folder, etc.

print the music in worship folders for each of those Sundays, and it doesn't cost you any extra. You can use that same piece of music in future years, reprinting the congregational parts then too.
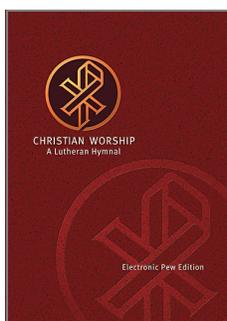
Thus, you could have special music in your worship folders for all those days for years to come, and the *only* cost you would incur is when you purchased the music.   (Just make sure you buy enough pieces for your performers. To buy one piece and then Xerox copies for your choir is a violation of copyright law, and would be stealing.)

With some music, you will need an annual license.

If you are going to produce worship folders week after week, you will almost certainly need to purchase an annual license. For C13 we have chosen hymns that are in public domain. But it would be a challenge to do that *every* week of the Church Year.   Fortunately, those annual licenses are very affordable.

For example, Northwestern Publishing House has made the entire *Christian Worship: a Lutheran Hymnal* available in digital format for $249.   [You can order it HERE](). It contains all the liturgies, psalms, and hymns as image files.   You can put the music and lyrics right into your worship folder. Once you purchase the digital hymnal, you will need to pay an annual usage cost. (The first year is included in the cost of the digital hymnal.) For over 90% of our WELS churches, it will $75 or less annually.   [You can find the price breakdowns HERE]().

Owning the electronic version of the hymnal is enough to reprint *most* hymns. However, there are

Should you print hymns in the worship folders or have people use the hymnals?

If your church would consider using worship folders, this is one of the big decisions you would have to make.

Putting the hymns in the worship folders eliminates the need for hymnals.   It makes it impossible for anyone to get lost.   However, it increase your printing costs as you will use more paper and toner.

As you prayerfully wrestle with the decision, factor in that there are benefits to having hymnals in the pews:

- It provides a model tool for people to use in their family devotional life.

- It shows that your church is something bigger, a synod. (An individual church can produce worship folders, but probably not their own hymnal!)

Ultimately, there are pros and cons to each method.   May God grant you wisdom.

some hymns which require you to obtain additional copyright permission if you want to reprint them.

One of the best companies to do this is OneLiscense.net.   For over 90% of our churches, this will cost $195 annually or less. A membership with OneLiscense.net will let you print all but 18 hymns from *Christian Worship*. It covers most in *Christian Worship Supplement* as well.   It is also the licensing company used by GIA, a large Christian publishing house.

Another company that is often used is Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI). They are also priced at $195 annually for churches that worship 200 people or less on average.   This company covers many hymns that are more contemporary. For example, a modern classic is Keith Getty's *In Christ Alone.* To reprint the music for that hymn on a regular basis requires a CCLI annual license. (NOTE: For almost every licensing company, you can purchase a single use license that allows you to print a piece of music in your worship folder one time.)

Don't forget about the artwork!

Music isn't the only licensing cost you may incur.   Another minor cost might be for artwork. Many churches purchase worship folder covers that contain pre-printed full-color artwork on the front cover. While the color is nice and the images are lovely, these are costly.   Plus, they require you to print the cover of the worship folder separately from the rest of the worship folder, which takes more time and thus creates additional labor costs.   A simpler approach is to use high-quality liturgical line-art on the cover of your worship folders. We'll suggest some options in the C13 program.   The usage fees for liturgical artwork is very, very small.

Production costs

If you are going to use worship folders every week, someone needs to lay them out, print them, and assemble them.

The biggest of those jobs is laying the worship folder out.   However, that job only stays big if you are producing a brand new order of service every week. We are *not* recommending that.   Most churches that use worship folders use the orders of service form the front of *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal*. The hymnal itself recommends simple ways to achieve variety.

For example, on page 16 of *Christian Worship*, it says, *"GLORY BE TO GOD* or another song of praise is sung."   That might be a fine place to insert hymn 262, Martin Luther's *All Glory Be to God Alone.* Or it would be a wonderful place to substitute any of the dozens of versions of the *Gloria in Excelsis* that are available. (We are recommending one for Christmas Day in our worship folder template for the Festival of the Nativity.)

Therefore, using worship folders will allow for a lot of variety *without* the need to write new orders of service.   In fact, once you produce a couple of worship folders, it really becomes quite simple to swap out the things that do change from week to week: lessons, hymns, etc.

It is the same for assembly. It shouldn't take long. If you congregation is blessed enough to have a printer/copier that collates, all you need to do is grab five pages at a time, put a staple in the center of it, and fold it in half. For a typical sized church, laying out the worship folder and assembling it should take one to two hours.

In summary

Let's use the example of a church which needs to print 120 worship folders a week, and figure on 65 services annually. They want to include the hymns in the worship folder. There will be the start up costs of purchasing the electronic edition of *Christian Worship*. But after that?

The material costs of producing the worship folder would be about $1560. The labor would be $975 (unless you can get volunteers to do it). The licensing would be at least $270. It could go as much as $460.

It means the annual cost for that church is going to be around $3000.

ANNUAL COST OF WORSHIP FOLDERS (120 FOLDERS PER SERVICE)	
worship folders needed per service	120
paper costs per worship folder	$0.06
printing costs per worship folder	$0.14
worship services per year	65
total material costs of worship folders	**$1,560.00**

labor costs per worship service	$15.00
total annual labor costs of worship folders	**$975.00**

annual usage fee of electronic version of CW	$75.00
Other licensing costs	$350.00
total annual license costs	**$425.00**

total annual cost of worship folders	**$2,960.00**

That is certainly not chump-change! But go back to the four reasons we suggested for using worship folders. Ask yourself:

- Might using worship folders to explain things like the theme of the day, the place in the Church Year, and certain liturgical rites make the worship service that much more edifying for members and prospects alike?

- Might using worship folders remove the "stumbling block" of feeling lost for your worship visitors? And if that stumbling block is removed, might it make it slightly more likely that a worship visitor might return?

- Might using worship folders make it easier to utilize appropriate variety with the worship service, and to do so in a way that is dignified and worthy of the Gospel? Might that variety be of spiritual benefit, as members learn to cherish treasures both old and new?

- Might using worship folders help increase personal and/or family devotional life by providing scripture passages, hymns and prayers — all of which relate to each other — in a simple, portable format which can be meditated upon throughout the week?

It is hard to answer those questions theoretically. Therefore, again, we would encourage you to consider using worship folders not just for Christmas Eve but throughout Advent. We will provide a survey at the end of the Christmas season which lets you solicit feedback from your people, in helping you determine if the benefits outweigh the cost.