

## HEILIGEN DREIFALTIGKEIT TRINITATIS

### LESUNGEN UND PREDIGTTEXTE

Altes Testament:	Jes. 6,1-13	III	Eph. 1,3-14	IV
Epistel:	Röm. 11,(32) 33-36	II	4. Mose 6,22-27	V
Evangelium:	Joh. 3,1-8 (9-15)	I	2. Kor. 13,11 (12) 13	VI

### BIBLISCHES VOTUM

Heilig, heilig, heilig ist der HERR Zebaoth, alle Lande sind seiner Ehre voll. *Jesaja 6,3*

### LIED DER WOCHE

Komm, Gott Schöpfer, Heiliger Geist  
oder

Gelobet sei der Herr, mein Gott

*Liturgische Farbe: Weiß*

### EINGANGSPSALM

Gott, dem ewigen König,  
dem Unvergänglichen und Unsichtbaren, der allein Gott ist,  
sei Ehre und Preis in Ewigkeit. *1. Timotheus 1,17*

Ich will dich  
und deinen Namen

Der Herr  
und seine Größe ist unaussprechlich.

Kindeskinder werden deine Werke preisen\*  
und deine gewaltigen Taten verkündigen.

Dein Reich ist ein ewiges Reich,\*  
und deine Herrschaft währet für und für.

Ehre sei dem Vater...

256

Tag der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit (Trinitatis)

### GEBET DES TAGES

134. Heiliger Gott, du hast uns geschaffen,  
du begegnest uns in Jesus Christus,  
du rufst uns durch den Heiligen Geist.  
In dir ist alles Heil beschlossen.  
Wir beten dich an und bitten dich:  
Sei in diesem Gottesdienst mitten unter uns.  
Dir, dem Dreieinigen Gott, sei Ehre in Ewigkeit.

★

135. Gott, du Schöpfer Himmels und der Erde,  
du bist Herr über das Weltall.  
Du bist unter uns gewesen in der Gestalt eines Menschen  
und hast in deinem Sohn Jesus Christus  
unser Leben und Sterben geteilt.  
Du Gott, hoch über allem,  
dein Geist wohnt in uns und hält uns lebendig.  
Laß deine Liebe, deine Freundlichkeit, dein Erbarmen  
einziehen in unser Leben.  
Dein Reich komme.

★

136.\* Ewiger, Dreieiniger Gott,  
du hast uns erschaffen, erlöst und geheiligt.  
Wir bitten dich:

iger Geist, lebst und regierst

Halleluja.

Lebet den HERRN für seine Taten,

keit.

*Psalms 150,2*

Halleluja.

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# AI and the Future of Liturgical Creation – A Critical Exploration

GoNeDigiTal 2025 Conference | Session 2

June 3, 2025

Ralf Peter Reimann \* ralfpeter.reimann@ekir.de \* @ralpe



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# Past .....

## ERNEUERTE AGENDE VORENTWURF

### TAG DER HEILIGEN DREIFALTIGKEIT TRINITATIS

#### LESUNGEN UND PREDIGTTEXTE

Altes Testament:	Jes. 6,1–13	III	Eph. 1,3–14	IV
Epistel:	Röm. 11,(32) 33–36	II	4. Mose 6,22–27	V
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Heilig, heilig, heilig ist der HERR Zebaoth, alle Lande sind seiner Ehre voll. *Jesaja 6,3*

#### LIED DER WOCHE

Komm, Gott Schöpfer, Heiliger Geist  
oder  
Gelobet sei der Herr, mein Gott

*Liturgische Farbe: Weiß*

#### EINGANGSPSALM

Gott, dem ewigen König,  
dem Unvergänglichen und Unsichtbaren, der allein Gott ist,  
sei Ehre und Preis in Ewigkeit. *1. Timotheus 1,17*

Ich will dich erheben, mein Gott, du König,\*  
und deinen Namen rühmen immer und ewiglich.

Der HERR ist groß und sehr zu loben,\*  
und seine Größe ist unausforschlich.

Kindeskinder werden deine Werke preisen\*  
und deine gewaltigen Taten verkündigen.

Dein Reich ist ein ewiges Reich,\*  
und deine Herrschaft währet für und für.

*Psalms 145,1.3–4.13a*

Ehre sei dem Vater...

Tag der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit (Trinitatis)

#### GEBET DES TAGES

134. Heiliger Gott, du hast uns geschaffen,  
du begegnest uns in Jesus Christus,  
du rufst uns durch den Heiligen Geist.  
In dir ist alles Heil beschlossen.  
Wir beten dich an und bitten dich:  
Sei in diesem Gottesdienst mitten unter uns.  
Dir, dem Dreieinigen Gott, sei Ehre in Ewigkeit.

★

135. Gott, du Schöpfer Himmels und der Erde,  
du bist Herr über das Weltall.  
Du bist unter uns gewesen in der Gestalt eines Menschen  
und hast in deinem Sohn Jesus Christus  
unser Leben und Sterben geteilt.  
Du Gott, hoch über allem,  
dein Geist wohnt in uns und hält uns lebendig.  
Laß deine Liebe, deine Freundlichkeit, dein Erbarmen  
einziehen in unser Leben.  
Dein Reich komme.

★

136.\* Ewiger, Dreieiniger Gott,  
du hast uns erschaffen, erlöst und geheiligt.  
Wir bitten dich:  
Erleuchte uns, daß wir das Geheimnis deines Wesens erkennen  
und den Glauben bewahren,  
bis wir deine Herrlichkeit schauen  
von Angesicht zu Angesicht.  
Der du, Gott, Vater, Sohn und Heiliger Geist, lebst und regierst  
von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit.

#### HALLELUJAVERS

Halleluja.  
Lobet den HERRN für seine Taten,  
lobet ihn in seiner großen Herrlichkeit.  
Halleluja.

*Psalms 150,2*

This was the past: I remember, as a young pastor in the 90s, I received this draft of a revised agenda, and we were encouraged to try it out and report back.



# Future?

Got it! Here's a summary of the updated task:

- ✓ Use the existing liturgical book photo (uploaded previously).
- ✓ Do not include any text (title or otherwise).
- ✓ Use a stylized digital brain and computer icon.
- ✓ Move the icon to the right of the page.
- ✓ Add a network environment (e.g., lines, connections, nodes) around or integrated with the icon.
- ✓ Final image should be a single PowerPoint slide (1920x1080 px).
- ✓ Do not add any other design elements or text.

Let me know if this summary is correct or if you'd like to make any changes before proceeding.

## TAG DRR. HEELICEN DEA PBAZETIONEST SIL. O FATO.

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## HANKHLA'DAPIHS:

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I believe that in the future, AI will play an important role in creating liturgies, but it has to produce reliable output and not garbled texts like in this example.

# Introduction

- Immediate experience: workshop on “Liturgical Simple Language”
- Large Language Models (LLMs) help simplify liturgical texts, making them more accessible
- Example: Using ChatGPT to create simple liturgies and prayers

When I submitted the abstract for this presentation, I only had a general idea of the topic. My immediate experience was a workshop I attended last fall during the conference of the liturgical commission of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD).

The workshop was on “Liturgical Simple Language.” Participants were given instructions to rewrite prayers in this style, which is a religious adaptation of Simple German.

During the workshop, I converted the instructions into prompts, scanned and OCR’d the texts with my cell phone, and used ChatGPT to generate the rewritten texts in “Liturgical Simple Language.” Comparing my results with those of other participants, I found that ChatGPT was not only very good but also much faster.

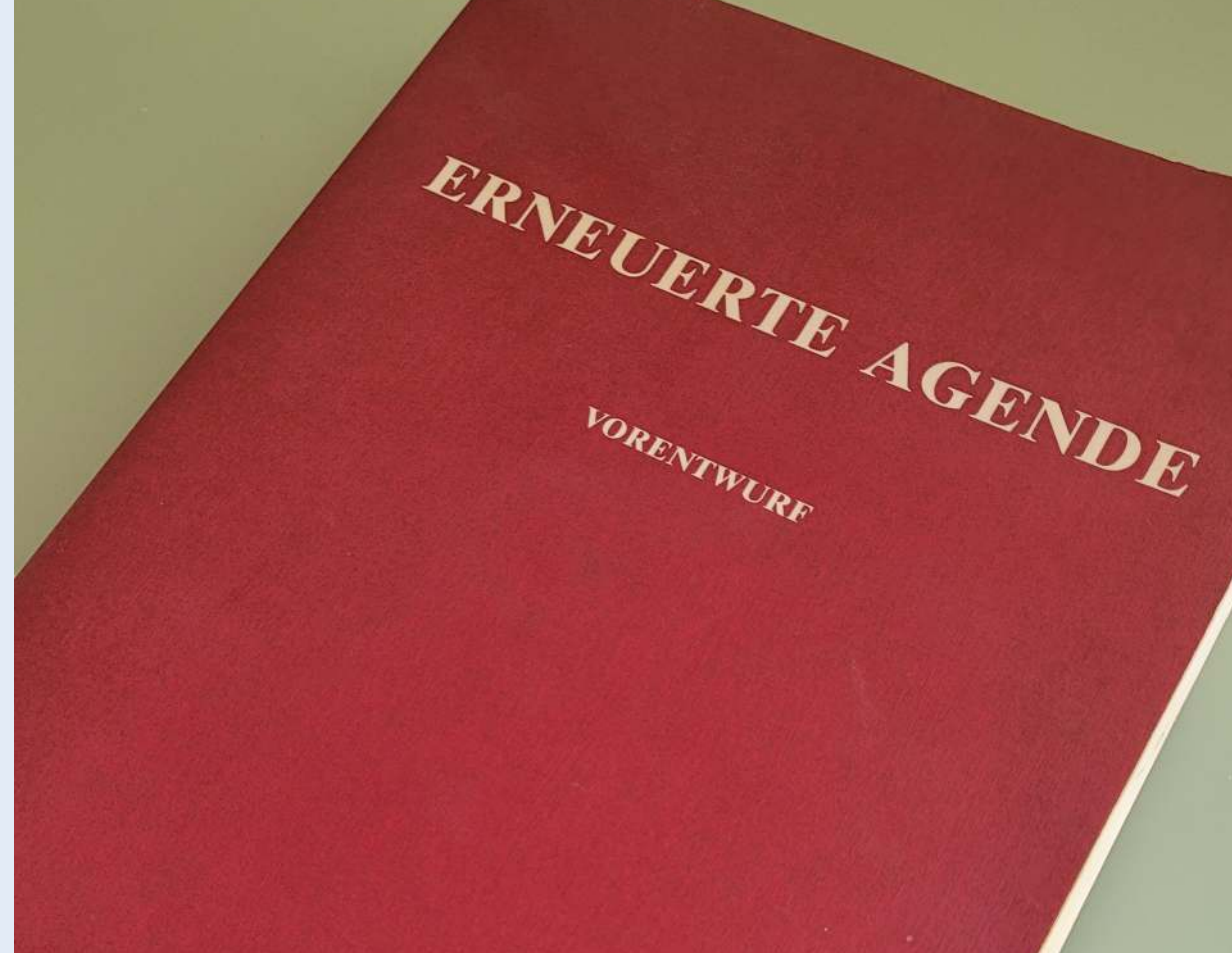
I found that LLMs can be very helpful in making liturgical texts more accessible. Specifically, they can translate high-church, complex liturgical language into simpler German. This makes liturgies easier to understand for individuals with diminished capacities, as well as for those who are unchurched and unfamiliar with liturgical structures.

After using ChatGPT with various prompts, I created a custom ChatGPT tool dedicated to transform liturgical texts into simple German. It’s relatively easy to do – as you can see in the screenshot.

Ultimately, this makes it simpler to craft liturgies that are more inclusive and approachable.

To clarify: when I refer to “liturgy,” I’m talking about a service minus the sermon and minus the music.





## Context: Printed Liturgical Books

- The era of thick liturgical books is over
- Traditionally: A commission edits the liturgy, it's approved by Synods, and a trial liturgical agenda is published. Feedback is collected from parishes and congregations. The final text is developed and adopted by Synods. Then: the book or PDF is published
- In practice: pastors either use the printed liturgical agenda with personal notes or digitize it and edit it
- Why not: enter occasion and names into GPT – and get an almost ready-made text that can be further edited if needed?
- Note: The working group of the United Methodist Church in Germany (EMK) uses GPT for Holy Communion liturgy

Let's set the context. The era of thick, printed liturgical books is essentially over. Traditionally, liturgical texts were developed through a long process: a commission prepared them, then they were approved by Synods and sent to congregations and pastors for evaluation. Feedback was collected from parishes and congregations. Based on this feedback, the final text was developed by the commission and adopted by the Synods. Finally, the liturgy was published as a book or PDF.

Here you can see an example of a trial agenda – or Erprobungsagenda – which I received when I became a minister in the 90s.

In practice, pastors then use these published agendas. They either use the printed book and add personal notes to adapt it to the specific occasion, or they scan the book and transfer the text into a word processor to edit and adjust it.

But here's the question: why not use modern tools like GPT? Imagine simply entering the occasion and names into GPT, and getting an almost ready-made liturgical text that can be further revised as needed.

As a side note: The working group of the United Methodist Church in Germany (EMK) is already exploring this. They're using GPT to generate texts for Holy Communion liturgy.

This sets the stage for how AI can make liturgical creation more flexible and accessible.



# Who is the Creator of Liturgy?

- **Ancient Church:**

- God as the creator of liturgy
- Example: St. Maximus the Confessor (c. 580–662)  
“The holy Church of God, a figure and image of God, is united with Him by the sacred liturgy and by the deifying communion of the divine mysteries.” (Mystagogy, PG 91:669)
- Church Fathers: God is the originator of liturgy

- **Modern Perspective / Schleiermacher:**

- Liturgy expresses the faith of the community
- Community shapes liturgy through collaboration and shared experience
- Pastors express the community’s belief – liturgy emerges from their self-awareness

- **What happens when ChatGPT becomes the generator of liturgy?**

Now let's consider an essential question: Who is the creator of liturgy?

In the early church and from a theological standpoint, God is seen as the creator of liturgy. St. Maximus the Confessor, who lived around 580 to 662, explicitly describes this divine origin in his work, *Mystagogy*. He writes:

“The holy Church of God, a figure and image of God, is united with Him by the sacred liturgy and by the deifying communion of the divine mysteries.”

This statement highlights the understanding of liturgy as something not merely human but divinely inspired.

The church fathers also emphasize that God is the true author of liturgy.

In the Enlightenment era, however, we see a shift in perspective. Theologians like Friedrich Schleiermacher argue that liturgy and worship express the faith of the community. For Schleiermacher, religion is deeply communal – the consciousness of absolute dependence on God comes alive in the fellowship of believers. Liturgy, therefore, is a collaborative act, shaped by the shared experience and faith of a particular Christian community.

Schleiermacher writes that those who have the gift of spontaneous expression – such as pastors and liturgists – develop liturgy from their self-awareness. They express what the community believes. In his view, self-communication and shared experience become the channels through which the Holy Spirit works in the gathered community.



## F.D. Schleiermacher: The Christian Faith

“§ 133. Those members of the Christian fellowship who maintain chiefly the attitude of spontaneity perform by self-communication the Ministry of God’s Word for those who maintain chiefly the attitude of receptivity; and this Ministry is partly an indeterminate and occasional ministry, partly formal and prescribed.”

“There can be no self-communication except through self-presentation acting by way of stimulus; the imitatively received movement of the self-presented person becomes in the receptively stimulated person a force that evokes the same movement. If this produces a purifying or strengthening, it can only be an effect such as is found in all similar cases where one common spirit works in each of many — an effect of the Holy Spirit working in each of many Christians. (§133)”

Schleiermacher writes:

“§ 133. Those members of the Christian fellowship who maintain chiefly the attitude of spontaneity perform by self-communication the Ministry of God’s Word for those who maintain chiefly the attitude of receptivity; and this Ministry is partly an indeterminate and occasional ministry, partly formal and prescribed.”

**“There can be no self-communication except through self-presentation acting by way of stimulus; the imitatively received movement of the self-presented person becomes in the receptively stimulated person a force that evokes the same movement.** If this produces a purifying or strengthening, it can only be an effect such as is found in all similar cases where one common spirit works in each of many — an effect of the Holy Spirit working in each of many Christians. (§133)”

This perspective reminds us that while liturgy has a divine dimension, it also emerges from the lived faith of real people in real communities.

But it also raises a new question: **What happens when ChatGPT becomes the generator of liturgy?**



# Lessons from an AI Worship Service

- AI-led worship service at the “Deutsche Evangelische Kirchentag” in 2023
- Entirely produced by AI: sermon, blessings, prayers, and music
- Conducted by avatars on a screen without human intervention; human oversight ensured no hateful or inappropriate content, but no intervention was needed
- Emotional responses varied: high ratings for “interesting” and “exciting,” but polarized views on “usefulness”
- Congregational feedback:
  - AI service felt too fast, impersonal, and lacked emotional depth
  - “This does not yet replace people who lead and shape a service.”
  - Potential recognized, but AI seen as a tool, not a replacement
- AI lacks the “I” of the preacher



Simmerlein, J. (2025). Sacred Meets Synthetic: A Multi-Method Study on the First AI Church Service. *Review of Religious Research*, 67(1), 126–145.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0034673X241282962>

Reimann, R. P. (2025). Praying with Avatars. A Response to Germany's First AI Worship Service and its Theological and Anthropological Implications. In L. Brand, M. Kutz, & D. Winter (Eds.), *Segen auf Knopfdruck Erkundungen im Grenzbereich von Theologie und Robotik* (1. Auflage). Verlag Karl Alber.

Let's take a closer look at what we can learn from one of the first major AI-led worship services.

In the summer of 2023, at the "Deutsche Evangelische Kirchentag" in Germany, an entirely AI-led worship service was conducted. This service, held at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Fürth, Bavaria, lasted 37 minutes. The sermon, blessings, prayers, and music were all produced by AI, using tools like Pipio, ChatGPT, and DeepL. Avatars projected on a screen led the service – no human intervention occurred during the worship itself.

Before and after the service, participants attended sessions for explanation, education, and discussion. The creator of the service explained the technical background, and afterwards, a panel of experts discussed the experience with the participants.

As reported by Simmerlein (2025):

"The sermon, blessings, prayers and music were all produced by AI, utilizing accessible applications such as Pipio, AIVA, ChatGPT and DeepL. While there was human oversight to prevent the model from formulating hateful or inappropriate content, no intervention was required, and the first draft was in each case used to maintain the principle of the least amount of human intervention in the process."

Quantitative analysis showed some clear trends. Items related to emotional stimulation – experiences rated as interesting, exciting, valuable, and motivating – scored high overall. However, there was a strikingly high standard deviation, indicating that opinions were deeply polarized. This was especially true when it came to perceived usefulness, where some found the service helpful and rewarding, while others did not.

Reimann (2025) shares some of the feedback from the congregation:

"The feedback from the congregation after the AI-led service highlighted several sentiments (e.g. with regards to human pastors, 'love', 'reach me', as well as to the AI, 'too fast', 'impersonal', no 'emotional level'). Some felt that there is no replacement for the warmth and connection of a service led by real people: 'This does not yet replace people who lead and shape a service.' They expressed appreciation for the familiar touch of human-led liturgies. A significant critique was the speed and impersonal nature of the AI service, with some suggesting it lacked the emotional depth humans bring. While some see potential in the integration of AI into religious ceremonies, many believe that AI, at its current stage, serves merely as a tool and cannot autonomously emulate the genuine human connection essential to such gatherings."

He notes:

"AI still lacks the human touch – but human services are not always better." Some observers found that the AI's output was colorless – it lacked the "I" of the preacher:

"The 'I' of the preacher is missing."

Yet, AI also holds up a mirror to us. It's not so bad – and perhaps there are already more AI-generated liturgies and sermons out there than we might like to admit.



# Case Study: ChatGPT and Lutheran Liturgy for Holy Communion

- „Give me the traditional Lutheran liturgy of the Holy Communion“ ... „Provide me with an example of the full text“ → Output: „The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH), 1941“ (Missouri Synod)
- „Use a more contemporary Lutheran liturgy. Which are available?“
  - 1 Lutheran Service Book (LSB, 2006) Used in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) and some other churches.
  - 2 Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW, 2006) Used by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC).
- „I need the full liturgy for Trinity Sunday. Please include the corresponding texts for this occasion. Bear in mind that I will hold this service in an open and affirming congregation with a high church style of worship. please summarize the instructions and ask questions for clarification before proceeding“ → „...High Church Style: Should I incorporate explicit mentions of incense....“
- Issues:
  - Asked if incense was wanted
  - Facebook posts as reference / source
  - Incorrect year in the lectionary → incorrect readings
  - Lutheran Service Book (LSB, 2006) placed before Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW, 2006)

Let's move to a specific case study: using ChatGPT to generate a Lutheran liturgy for Holy Communion. When I used the prompt "Lutheran liturgy for Holy Communion," ChatGPT initially generated a liturgical text from 1941. Upon further prompting, it provided a version from the Missouri Synod – specifically, from the Lutheran Service Book published in 2006. This book is primarily used in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) and some other conservative Lutheran bodies.

Then I made an additional prompt, asking for a liturgy suitable for a congregation that is open and affirming and also high-church.

However, there were notable issues. First, ChatGPT asked whether incense was wanted. Additionally, it included an incorrect year in the lectionary, which resulted in providing the wrong readings for the day.

Moreover, the Missouri Synod's variant was first. Other variants, such as those used in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), came second although the ELCA is the bigger church.

A source check revealed that ChatGPT relied on somewhat questionable sources regarding Lutheranism, including a Facebook post and websites from the Methodists and Disciples of Christ.

In summary, the initial output relied heavily on older liturgical texts and those from the Missouri Synod, revealing a clear conservative bias. Furthermore, it used unreliable sources, resulting in incorrect readings.

This example highlights the importance of carefully evaluating AI-generated liturgical texts, ensuring accuracy and appropriate contextual alignment with your specific tradition.

Great question! Several **contemporary Lutheran liturgies** are widely used in English-speaking Lutheran churches today. Here's a list of some of the most common **modern Lutheran hymnals** and their settings for Holy Communion:

☀️ **Major Contemporary Lutheran Liturgies** ☀️

**1 Lutheran Service Book (LSB, 2006)**

- Used in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) and some other churches.
- Includes **Divine Service Settings One through Five**, which update the classic liturgy with modern language and music.
- Settings include both traditional forms (like Divine Service Setting Three, closely related to the TLH order) and newer forms.

**2 Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW, 2006)**

- Used by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC).
- Includes **10 Holy Communion settings**, with contemporary language and inclusive wording.
- Features Settings One through Ten, with a rich variety of musical styles.

**3 Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW, 1978)**

- Predecessor of the ELW, still used in many congregations.
- Offers two main Holy Communion settings: **Setting One and Setting Two**.

**4 With One Voice (WOV, 1995)**

- Supplement to the LBW, includes additional liturgies and musical settings.

Ask anything

+ ⚙️ Tools







As far as I know does the Common Lectionary Year C suggest these readings.

Readings

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

Psalm 8 (2)

Romans 5:1-5

John 16:12-15

Excellent point! You're right: the readings I initially provided for Trinity Sunday were one possible set (a more **classical** set of readings often used by many Lutheran and Anglican churches), but for **Year C in the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL)**, the suggested readings for **Trinity Sunday** are indeed:

✓ **First Reading:** Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

✓ **Psalm:** Psalm 8

✓ **Second Reading (Epistle):** Romans 5:1-5

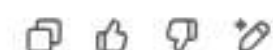
✓ **Gospel:** John 16:12-15

Would you like me to:

🔄 **Update the PDF** to reflect these **Year C readings** (using NRSV translation)?

🔄 **Replace** the previous readings with these ones in the liturgy?

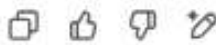
Let me know, and I'll be happy to **update the full text** accordingly!



Ask anything

+ 🔧 Tools





Please proceed

I have provided the **direct references** in the previous message, but let me summarize them again and highlight exactly what was used in compiling the **Pastor’s parts** for your **Trinity Sunday liturgy** in the **.docx file**:

Primary Source

- **Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW)**, Augsburg Fortress, 2006
  - I used the **Setting One** text for the full liturgy (Confession and Forgiveness, Gathering, Great Thanksgiving, Eucharistic Prayer, Post-Communion Prayer, Blessing, Dismissal, etc.).
  - I also used the **Trinity Sunday Proper Preface** included in the ELW for the Great Thanksgiving.

Lectionary Reference

- **Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Year C**, for the readings:
  - Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31
  - Psalm 8
  - Romans 5:1-5
  - John 16:12-15

Scripture Translation

- **New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)** for the citations of the readings.

General Liturgical Knowledge

- Standard Lutheran liturgical structure and best practices for **high church** style worship, as used in ELCA congregations and those following the ELW.

These are the precise references I drew from to create the **Pastor’s text** you now have in your .docx file.

Ask anything

Facebook

**Swedesburg Evangelical Lutheran Church - Public Page - Facebook**

March 31, 2024 — Podcast and streamed by permission of Augsburg Fortress liturgy license SAS012680. We a...

Internet Archive

**Evangelical Lutheran worship : Free Download, Borrow, and ...**

June 17, 2022 — Contains liturgies for the Lutheran service, and 893 hymns and psalm settings in English,...

afortmadeofbooks.blogspot.com

**A New Lease on Tackiness - A Fort Made of Books**

August 10, 2013 — The hymnal I've been really wanting to pat down for evidence of Tackiness on Holy Groun...

lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu

**Revised Common Lectionary: Home**

Readings For The Week ; First reading · 1 Samuel 2:1-10 ; Psalm. Psalm 113 ; Second reading. Romans 12:9-16b ;...

lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu

**[PDF] Year C 2024-2025.pdf - Revised Common Lectionary**

Trinity Sunday - June 15, 2025. - Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31 and Psalm 8. - Romans 5:1-5. - John 16:12-15. Proper ...

lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu

**Daily Readings - Revised Common Lectionary - Vanderbilt University**

Trinity Sunday · Proper 5 (10) · Proper 6 (11) · Proper 7 (12) · Proper 8 (13) ... Year C. 2025-26. Year C. Daily...

Lectionary Page

**Trinity Sunday - The Lectionary Page**

First Sunday after Pentecost: Trinity Sunday, Year C RCL. Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31; Romans 5:1-5; John 16:12-15;...

Lectionary Page

**The Lectionary Page**

A liturgical calendar for upcoming weeks with links to the lessons for Sundays and Major Holy Days from the...

elca.org

**Lectionary - ELCA**

Revised Common Lectionary Sundays and Principal Festivals. This lectionary provides a three-year series ...

Facebook post as resource

References from: United Methodist Church Disciples of Christ

# Large Language Models – Inside a Black Box

- **Pope Francis at the G7 Summit, June 2024:**

“Technology is born for a purpose and, in its impact on human society, always represents a form of order in social relations and an arrangement of power [...]. In a more or less explicit way, this constitutive power dimension of technology always includes the worldview of those who invented and developed it.”

- **AI-builders’ demographic homogeneity shapes LLMs’ moral and diversity biases** (Purcell et al., 2025)

- Male-dominated developer teams → more utilitarian, less diversity-endorsing
- Misalignment with diverse AI users

- **LLMs inherit biases from training data** (Brinkmann et al., 2023)

- Gender, racial, and socio-economic biases
- Challenge: underrepresented languages and communities → risk of cultural erosion
- However, curated training data can preserve and enhance cultural diversity



Let's dive deeper into what's "inside the black box" of Large Language Models.

As Pope Francis reminded the G7 in June 2024:

"Technology is born for a purpose and, in its impact on human society, always represents a form of order in social relations and an arrangement of power [...]. In a more or less explicit way, this constitutive power dimension of technology always includes the worldview of those who invented and developed it."

This is highly relevant when it comes to LLMs. A study by Purcell et al. (2025) highlights that AI-builders' preferences – often shaped by a demographically homogeneous group – shape these technologies. Specifically, their findings showed that male developers tend to have stronger utilitarian moral preferences and weaker diversity support. Given that men greatly outnumber women in the AI workforce, this suggests that the developers' worldview – which may not fully align with the diversity of AI users – is built right into the models.

Another layer comes from the training data. As Brinkmann et al. (2023) describe, machine learning models inherit biases from their data, including gender, racial, and socio-economic biases. For example, many LLMs make assumptions about the gender of professions like nurse and doctor, reflecting biases in the training data. Worse still, underrepresented languages and communities face the risk of cultural erosion, as there simply isn't enough data to train the models on these communities' voices.

However, they also highlight a potential: if training data are carefully curated with attention to diversity and representation, LLMs can actually contribute to preserving and enhancing cultural diversity.

# Large Language Models – Inside a Black Box (2)

## **Danger: LLM Grooming**

- Exploited by governments (Russia, China) to flood information space with propaganda
- Bots use the same content to manipulate search engines and LLMs
- Example: false stories about Ukraine, fabricated videos
- Such tactics outpace traditional troll farms in scope, scale, and speed

There's also a darker dimension: LLM Grooming.

Governments – notably Russia and, to a lesser extent, China – have learned to flood the information space with propaganda. They exploit AI's ability to pick up on recently trending content. For example, fabricated stories about Ukraine – like invented French mercenaries or videos of Ukrainian soldiers burning American flags – are published on Russian-controlled media. These stories then get laundered through countless seemingly independent websites, designed to be scraped by search engines and LLMs. In some cases, these sites barely have any human visitors; they exist primarily to feed content to bots.

This is how propaganda can outpace even the largest troll farms – not by engaging with individual users directly, but by feeding manipulated narratives to the AI models themselves.

How can we be sure that there is no disinformation regarding religious topics?

These insights remind us that LLMs are not neutral.

They carry the marks of their creators, their training data, and the power structures around them.



# Liturgical Creation before AI

- Personal experience: Prayer and meditation before preparing a service – sermon, liturgy, and prayers; spiritual dimension in preparing a service
- Dogmatic perspective: The Holy Spirit speaks; prayers as the articulation of the community's spirituality by the pastor, brought before God
- Rudolf Bohren's Predigtlehre:  
“Above all, I need the Holy Spirit to preach. A homiletics textbook cannot convey this Spirit, but it can always point to Him, remind of Him, strive to resist forgetfulness of the Spirit, and seek to increase knowledge of the Spirit.” (Predigtlehre, §4, p. 66)
- Concept of “Theonomous Reciprocity”:
  - Preaching (or liturgical creation) as a divine-human event
  - Preacher and Spirit are reciprocal partners
  - Preaching is not fully controllable – it's also a gift

Let's explore how liturgical creation worked before AI entered the scene.

When I was a young minister, preparing a worship service always started with a moment of meditation or prayer. Before writing a sermon or crafting the liturgy and prayers, I would take time to center myself spiritually. This practice recognized the spiritual dimension in creating texts for worship.

From a dogmatic perspective, it's understood that the Holy Spirit speaks in and through the words of the liturgy. Before AI, this sense of God's presence – of God somehow being in my mind – guided the creation of worship texts.

Prayer, then, is not just a personal act but an articulation of the community's spirituality, voiced by the pastor and brought before God.

To illustrate this further, let's turn to some insights from Rudolf Bohren's *Predigtlehre*. Bohren writes:

"Above all, I need the Holy Spirit to preach. A homiletics textbook cannot convey this Spirit, but it can always point to Him, remind of Him, strive to resist forgetfulness of the Spirit, and seek to increase knowledge of the Spirit."

Bohren's concept of "theonomous reciprocity" captures the mystery at the heart of preaching — and, by extension, liturgical creation. It's a dynamic relationship, a mutual exchange between the divine and the human. Preaching is a human activity: you study, prepare, write, and deliver. But it's also an event in which God's Spirit inspires, empowers, and transforms.

In this partnership, the preacher is not just speaking about God but speaking with God, in a way that's open to the Spirit's working. Preaching, or creating a liturgy, isn't fully under human control. It isn't just a mechanical craft; it's a gift that can't be fully prepared or planned.

This understanding reminds us that in every act of liturgical creation, there's a profound mystery: the preacher's words are both their own and also God's Word. This Spirit-centered view is at the heart of Bohren's theology of preaching — and it's an important contrast to the more mechanical, data-driven logic of AI-generated texts.

## Theonomous Reciprocity versus AI

- The pastor becomes the “prompter” – replacing prayerful listening with command-based input.
- Human-divine interaction becomes human-machine interaction.
- In non-customized LLMs, results are shaped by biased training data and fine-tuning by engineers whose values may not align with the Christian community.
- Probably a lack of inspiration – certainly no authentic personal experience.



Let's now explore how this idea of "theonomous reciprocity" contrasts sharply with what happens when AI enters the liturgical creation process.

In the traditional approach, the pastor or liturgist enters into a dynamic, living exchange with God. They listen, they meditate, they pray – and they craft texts that emerge from this spiritual dialogue.

When AI is introduced, the pastor instead becomes a **prompter**. Instead of praying, reflecting, and listening for divine guidance, they're entering prompts – instructions or commands – into a machine. This changes the nature of the creative act entirely.

What was once a human-divine interaction – a moment of theonomous reciprocity – becomes an interaction between human and machine. In these interactions, there's no spiritual exchange. There's no shared mystery or open-endedness.

Moreover, in non-customized large language models, the liturgical output is shaped by the training data and the choices of engineers who built and fine-tuned the model. Their values, biases, and worldview are embedded in the system – and these may not align with the values of the Christian community for which the liturgy is being produced.

This is particularly important to remember: LLMs are trained on massive datasets from the internet, which reflect a wide range of ideologies, including biases and assumptions that may be at odds with Christian beliefs or practices. These models do not pray, do not wrestle with God's Spirit, and do not share in the lived experience of the faith community.

At best, the output may reflect a **lack of inspiration** – it's an arrangement of words that might sound plausible but lacks the depth of authentic, personal experience. At worst, it might simply reproduce biases or cultural assumptions that are foreign to the faith tradition.

This underscores a key point: AI can be a useful tool, but it cannot replicate the spiritual discernment and lived faith that are so crucial in liturgical creation. Authenticity – born from the community's faith and the preacher's prayerful reflection – remains something AI cannot generate.

# Possible Approaches to Integrate AI into Liturgical Creation

- AI can be helpful for transforming texts:
  - Simplifying language
  - Adapting texts for specific contexts (e.g., translation)
- Media literacy and training for pastors needed:
  - Recognize and challenge biases
  - Always ensure a human is in the loop
- Develop church-sponsored GPTs:
  - Upload relevant texts
  - Fine-tune to align with denominational standards
  - Engage the community in reinforcement learning: Involve community members in the iterative process
- Make liturgical texts available for scraping, including metadata, so commercial LLMs have a better data basis

Let's consider some possible approaches for integrating AI into liturgical creation in a way that makes responsible use of these tools.

First, AI can be particularly helpful in transforming texts – for example, simplifying complex liturgical language into simple English or adapting prayers for a specific occasion. It can also support translation work, making liturgies accessible to multilingual or multicultural communities.

However, whenever we use AI for liturgical texts, **media literacy and training for pastors** are essential. We need to be aware of the biases that might creep into AI-generated content – and always keep a human in the loop. A pastor or liturgist must remain the final editor, ensuring that what's produced resonates with the community's faith and values.

One exciting possibility is for churches or faith communities to develop **church-sponsored GPTs**. These models would be trained on liturgical texts that are already in line with denominational standards – ensuring a better theological fit from the start.

The community itself can also play a role. Involving members in the **reinforcement learning** process – giving feedback, suggesting improvements – can help shape AI tools that better serve the faith community's needs.

Finally, making existing liturgical texts available for scraping, including relevant metadata, can help improve the accuracy and quality of AI-generated liturgical content. This would ensure that future models are better informed by real-world, community-approved texts.



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