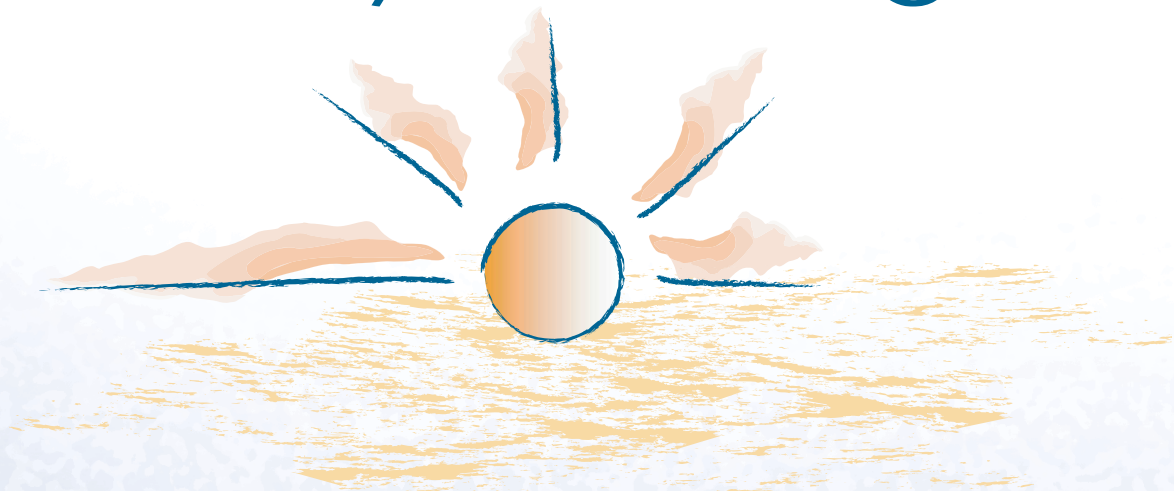


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Ending Commercial Sexual Exploitation  
**A Day Full of Light**



# A Day Full of Light

## Ending Commercial Sexual Exploitation

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### COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

A 12-year-old girl we'll call Lori lives in a country popular with foreign visitors for its commercial sexual exploitation of children. Lori began dancing in a strip club at 11. She has had many male customers from many countries. She has tried suicide twice and does not want to live to see her next birthday.

Regina was raped by both her brothers by the time she was 10. When she reported their crime to her aunt, her aunt did not believe her. Regina ran away when she was 12 and was on the streets working as a prostitute by the time she was 15.

Cathy told the two pimps who approached her on the streets of a Midwestern city that they would have to make her work for them, and they did—they beat her unconscious. Cathy has been working the streets for four years now.

### WHY “DAY FULL OF LIGHT”?

At the 2002 Triennial Convention of Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a memorial was passed to establish “A Day Full of Light” as a means of educating individuals and congregations about the grip the sex industry has on society.

From the advertising industry to the adult video stores off interstate highways, the commercialization, avariciousness, and exploitation that have taken God's gift of human sexuality from us all affects us all. Not only this country, but the world, has reached a saturation point of sexual exploitation.

It is impossible to address systemic sexual exploitation in a single resource. Hence, this introductory resource with worship ideas is the first response to the 2002 triennial convention action. In this way, Women of the ELCA has made commercial sexual exploitation a focus of our prayers, our advocacy, and our ministry.

### The ELCA Action

The ELCA has responded to the issue of sexual exploitation with *A Message on Commercial Sexual Exploitation*, which states that “sexual exploitation in any situation, either personally or commercially, inside

or outside legally contracted marriage, is sinful because it is destructive of God's good gift [of sexuality] and human integrity.” The document goes on to say that:

Commercial sexual exploitation is an organized form of this sinful behavior. It is especially demonic when it exploits children and youth.

Commercial sexual exploitation is widespread throughout the United States and around the world, and it continues to grow. To a large extent, this exploitation remains hidden from public attention and ignored by Church and society. It includes what customers do by:

- viewing pornographic videos
- downloading pornography from the Internet
- visiting strip clubs
- engaging in simulated sex by phone or computer
- using escort services
- participating in sex tourism

While customers may think they harm no one but themselves, the truth is that they are swept up in a system of sexual exploitation that degrades all participants, both providers and customers. <sup>1</sup>

### Biblical and Theological Basis for Action

We need wise women who will speak boldly and passionately for the lives of the children and the young men and women who are being lured or coerced into sexual trafficking in its many forms. We find role models in women like Abigail (1 Samuel 25:1-14), Tamar (Genesis 38), and Esther (Esther 4-9), women who keenly perceived a situation, thought quickly when needed or strategized when needed, and were not afraid to act boldly.

If we are going to genuinely shine the light of Christ on sexual exploitation, though, we must also acknowledge the many ways it appears in the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament: Lot offers his daughter to the rapists of Sodom; Abram uses Hagar; the Levite (Judges 19) first offers his concubine to the men of Gibeah only to take her body home, divide it into pieces, and send these pieces as parcels to the

twelve tribes of Israel. We remember biblical instances such as these even as we work against sexual exploitation today.

But there are many, many passages in the Old and New Testaments that address injustice. Let us focus on James 2:15-17: “If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,’ and yet do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.”

When we look at the scope of commercial sexual exploitation and say, “there is nothing I can do,” or “that doesn’t affect me,” we have in fact already done something—we have made the decision to not be critical of our society, to not become involved, to not act. By doing nothing, we allow someone else to determine how things will be done.

That is not the example Jesus set for us. When Jesus began his public ministry in his hometown synagogue, he read the powerful words of Isaiah that proclaim release from oppressions (Luke 4:16-18). But he did more than talk: He followed up that message by ministering to all with unconditional love and mercy. He was not concerned with anyone’s social status, ethnic background, or religious affiliation. People were in need. Jesus recognized the need and responded. That is our model for responding to commercial sexual exploitation and all other issues that need questioning, research, listening, discerning, and action by people of faith.

## BACKGROUND

### Increase in Commercial Sexual Exploitation

The growth of human trafficking linked to sexual exploitation is of worldwide concern. Transnational, organized criminal activity trafficking people for commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) is increasing globally.<sup>2</sup> This worldwide growth represents the increasing commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) alongside the worldwide development of the hotel and resort industries.<sup>3</sup>

The ease of accessibility to pornography makes people feel confident that they will not face any effective prosecution for their distribution or use of it. Impoverished girls, boys, and teenagers are recruited through advertisements that promise high incomes working as tour guides, while others are recruited by pimps.<sup>4</sup> The United States military’s ECPAT<sup>5</sup> campaign aims to end the U.S. military’s role in sustaining the

prostitution industry worldwide.

The system of CSE has domestic manifestations. For example, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota is one of 13 major urban areas in the United States identified as having a high level of juvenile prostitution.<sup>6</sup> Hundreds of thousands of children in the United States, Canada, and Mexico are sexually abused every year for the profit of others. The commercial sexual exploitation of children includes the use of child victims in prostitution, pornography, and trafficking for sexual purposes.<sup>7</sup>

### A System that Exploits the Most Vulnerable

Those who suffer sexism, racism, poverty, and homelessness, or who have been victims of domestic violence, rape, or incest, both domestically and globally, are terribly vulnerable to CSE.

Poverty alone is not a reason children are sold into commercial sex, but the conditions that are often present in poor communities—such as a generally high rate of illiteracy and lack of marketable skills—make it easier for exploiters to get children for the sex trade. Both urban slums and poor rural villages are affected.

Between 700,000 and 2 million women and children are trafficked across national borders each year for prostitution. The average age of entry into prostitution in the United States is 14. The majority of these teens flee emotional, physical, and sexual abuse in their homes.<sup>8</sup> Too often this abuse continues while they are in the care of law enforcement and human service agencies.<sup>9</sup>

Outreach workers in the U.S. report that prostituted children have been raped, sodomized, beaten, emotionally abused, tortured, and killed by the adults who control them or abuse them.<sup>10</sup> In addition, pornographic stereotypes of women of color and ordinances that zone sex-oriented businesses and prostitution into poor neighborhoods and communities of color make the women who live there especially vulnerable.<sup>11</sup>

Prostitution is not the oldest profession in the world; rather, it is the oldest form of women’s oppression in the world. Prostitution’s ancient past is evidence that women have been objectified and dehumanized for centuries. This objectification has reached epidemic proportions; the sexual exploitation of women has become so pervasive that it has become accepted, if not normalized. So acceptable is the notion that any adult woman involved in prostitution has made a free-will choice to do so that very little research has been done, and fewer attempts are



being made to intervene. What was once shocking is now tolerated, and to not tolerate such objectification of women is to be labeled as behind the times, prudish, and inhibited. Yet, women of all faiths cannot desist from our protest.

## Who Is Involved in CSEC?

Adult males make up 90 percent<sup>12</sup> of the customers of children who are sexually exploited commercially. There are primarily two kinds of abusers: preferential and situational.

The preferential abusers are those who seek out children for sexual relations. Many preferential abusers seek children of a specific gender and age. There is no way of knowing how many preferential abusers there are worldwide.<sup>13</sup>

The situational abusers are those who do not prefer children and do have sexual relations with adults, but will exploit children when and where they are conveniently available. According to ECPAT, the majority of people who use prostituted children are situational abusers.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, the United States is a primary point of origin for sex tours to Asia and Latin America.

Americans lead the list of the 240 sex exploiters who have been arrested, convicted, imprisoned and/or deported, or otherwise found guilty of child sex crimes in the past seven years in Asia (followed by Germans, British, and Australians).<sup>15</sup>

## Conclusion

Commercial sexual exploitation and commercial sexual exploitation of children demand our response. The concept of A Day Full of Light goes beyond a special Sunday observance—it calls us to energetic and strategic action. Using the Day Full of Light worship service can be one step in educating people and increasing awareness.

The following sections provide you with a method for taking action as well as an example of an action step. Also, in the bibliography are books and Web sites you are encouraged to use. Finally, you have a list of ministries that work to address the critical challenge of CSE and CSEC.

## TAKING ACTION

Using the model for action that Jesus has given us, how can you and your community respond to the critical issues presented in this Day Full of Light resource? The following outline recommends action steps that provide a sound and practical method for

any justice work, but particularly the work that needs to be done to end commercial sexual exploitation.

## Recommended Action Steps for Day Full of Light

### 1. DETERMINE THE ISSUE

Sexual trafficking

### 2. GATHER A SMALL GROUP

Ask the questions:

- What is happening right now that makes this issue of concern to you?
- How many neighbors, local or global, are affected by this issue?
- What is the relationship between this issue and the economy, society, employment, business, quality of life, health, and safety?
- What are the short- and long-range implications?
- How complex is the issue?
- What are the legal, attitudinal, cultural, and ethical dynamics to be considered?

Determine what resources you have to work with:

- What does your group already know?
- How can they find out more?
  - Read: newspapers, magazines, Web sites, statements and studies from the ELCA and other churches or organizations
  - Listen: to TV, radio, your children, grandchildren, their friends
  - Question: what is really being promoted in ads, in media, on the internet, at shopping malls; question people working with kids in your area, such as police, juvenile authorities, teachers
  - Share: information you glean with whatever is your community, such as your congregation, women's group, etc.

How can the group work together on this issue, and who else might be able to join?

- Determine the possible actions
- Develop a strategy
- Develop a timetable
- Develop a plan of action
- Determine resources
- Decide who will do what
- Important! Ask, "Who is missing from the group—whose voices are lacking that could assist in addressing this issue?"

### 3. ACT: YOU HAVE PLANNED, SO NOW YOU ARE READY

### 4. EVALUATE: CONTINUE TO MEET AND CHECK PROGRESS OR LACK OF PROGRESS

### 5. CELEBRATE: DID YOUR PLAN WORK? IF NOT, WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?

Do not let the issue die until we all can say together, "There is no more sexual exploitation in the world!!!"

Here is an example of a possible action. Using the outline above, how might you proceed?

Please e-mail or call your senators at 800-270-0309 to support the House-passed bill (HR 2620) designed to curb international sex trafficking. The bill would reauthorize the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 to provide continued support for a Department of State program dedicated to fighting trafficking and related issues. HR 2620 would strengthen the trafficking laws. The new provisions would: (1) call for programs that assist trafficking victims and their families, (2) offer new strategies for prevention, including programs designed to deter and eliminate "sex tourism," and (3) target traffickers seeking to force women and children into prostitution through illegal transfer across international borders. Further, the bill would extend refugee protections, normally reserved for victims, to parents or their siblings. Too often, victims are resettled through refugee programs separate from their families.

## Notes

### ENDNOTES

1 "A Message on Commercial Sexual Exploitation," ELCA, ISBN: 6-0001-6286-3, Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, A message of the ELCA challenging the church not to accommodate itself to "the sinful evil of the sex system."

2 [www.protectingthepublic.homeoffice.gov.uk/chapter5.htm](http://www.protectingthepublic.homeoffice.gov.uk/chapter5.htm)

3 See footnote 3 of "A Message on Commercial Sexual Exploitation." ELCA, [www.elca.org/dcs/commercial\\_sexual\\_exploitation.html#3](http://www.elca.org/dcs/commercial_sexual_exploitation.html#3) The system of sexual exploitation encompasses the often independent business enterprises that are linked together by common patterns of belief, attitude, and behavior.

4 Sexual exploitation of girls, boys and teenagers, a cruel reality, Forum "Exploitation and sexual tourism" March 28th, 2000, Mexico City. Rocío Rodríguez García, Casa Alianza / Covenant House Latin America [www.casa-alianza.org/EN/human-rights/sexual-exploit/docs/001028.phtml](http://www.casa-alianza.org/EN/human-rights/sexual-exploit/docs/001028.phtml)

5 ECPAT-USA stands for "End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes-USA." It is the U.S. affiliate of Thailand-based ECPAT-International, fighting to stop this growing form of child abuse. ECPAT-International was started in Asia and in 1991, ECPAT-USA got its start as the US support group for the international campaign. ECPAT-USA is working in coalition with women's organizations and churches on this issue. See [www.ecpatusa.org/child\\_prosti\\_us2.asp](http://www.ecpatusa.org/child_prosti_us2.asp)

6 "Decades-old problem becoming a priority," Rubén Rosario, Pioneer Press columnist, [www.twincities.com/mld/pioneerpress/7111921.htm](http://www.twincities.com/mld/pioneerpress/7111921.htm)

7 "The Commercial Exploitation of Children In the U.S., Canada and Mexico, a U.S. National Study," Richard J. Estes, Ph.D., Neil Alan Weiner, Ph.D., September

19, 2001, University of Pennsylvania, Center for the Study of Youth Policy, 4200 Pine Street, 3rd. floor, Philadelphia, PA, 19104-4090, [caster.ssw.upenn.edu/~restes/CSEC.htm](http://caster.ssw.upenn.edu/~restes/CSEC.htm)

8 Commercial Sexual Exploitation Resource Institute, [www.captivedaughters.org/Resources/Otherorganizations/CSERI.htm](http://www.captivedaughters.org/Resources/Otherorganizations/CSERI.htm)

9 "The Commercial Exploitation of Children In the U.S., Canada and Mexico, a U.S. National Study," Richard J. Estes, Ph.D., Neil Alan Weiner, Ph.D., September 19, 2001, University of Pennsylvania, Center for the Study of Youth Policy, 4200 Pine Street, 3rd. floor, Philadelphia, PA, 19104-4090, [caster.ssw.upenn.edu/~restes/CSEC.htm](http://caster.ssw.upenn.edu/~restes/CSEC.htm)

10 Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, Youth Involved in Prostitution, Pornography, and Sex Trafficking, [www.yapi.org/old/publications/bookletseries/cse.pdf](http://www.yapi.org/old/publications/bookletseries/cse.pdf)

11 Commercial Sexual Exploitation Resource Institute, [www.captivedaughters.org/Resources/Otherorganizations/CSERI.htm](http://www.captivedaughters.org/Resources/Otherorganizations/CSERI.htm)

12 Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, Youth Involved in Prostitution, Pornography, and Sex Trafficking, [www.yapi.org/old/publications/booklet-series/cse.pdf](http://www.yapi.org/old/publications/booklet-series/cse.pdf)

13 Ibid

14 Ibid

15 Europe and North America Regional Profile, World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, August 1996.

16 Gleaned from: The Episcopal Public Policy Network, Policy Alert, November 6, 2003

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL WEB SITE

Find an exhaustive bibliography in *The Sexual Exploitation of Children: A Working Guide to the Empirical Literature*, at: [http://caster.ssw.upenn.edu/~restes/CSEC\\_Files/CSEC\\_Bib\\_August\\_2001.pdf](http://caster.ssw.upenn.edu/~restes/CSEC_Files/CSEC_Bib_August_2001.pdf). Or contact Richard J. Estes at University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Work, Center for Youth Policy Studies, 3701 Locust Walk, Philadelphia, Penn.

## Resource list

### Books

*Casting Stones: Prostitution and Liberation in Asia and the United States*

Brook, Rita Nakashima, and Susan Brooks Thistlethwait. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.

The global sex industry is examined in this book, which provides new approaches to the problems from the perspective of religion and social change.

*Out of the Shadows: Understanding Sexual Addiction* Carnes, Patrick.

Center City, Minnesota: Hazelden Foundation, 1994

This first work ever published on sexual addiction offers hope for those who have no hope and insight for those who want to learn how and why this addiction occurs.

*Not with My Child*

Castillo, Roger Jr., ed.

Carson City, Nevada: United Youth Security, L. L. C., 1999

This resource for the prevention and detection of

child sexual abuse exposes the way pedophiles think and the ploys they use to seduce children.

*Unmasking Sexual Con Games: Helping Teens Identify Good and Bad Relationships*

Herron, Ron, and Kathleen M. Sorenson.

Boys Town, Nebraska: Boys Town Press, 1997

Helping youth identify and deal with sexual harassment and abuse, as well as make healthy choices, is the focus of this curriculum. To order, call 800-282-6657 .

*High Heels and Teddy Bears*

MacInnes, Ross.

Calgary, Alberta, Canada: Street Teams Society, 1994

Interviews with young women and pimps help provide information about why children are in prostitution. To order, call 403-228-3390.

*Erica's Choices: Alternatives to Running Away*

Watson, Carol.

Minneapolis, Minnesota: Missing Children Minnesota, 1996

The resource sets out realities of running away, written to inform teenagers, their parents, and teachers. Activities for youth encourage them to look at choices other than running away.

*Child Lures: What Every Parent and Child Should Know About Preventing Sexual Abuse and Abduction*

Wood, Kenneth.

Arlington, Texas: The Summit Publishing Group, 1995

The author provides sexual prevention techniques to protect children from fifteen favorite ploys or "lures" used by pedophiles and abductors to secure their victims.

## Organizations

Adults Saving Kids (ASK)

[www.adultssavingkids.org](http://www.adultssavingkids.org)

Formerly known as A-STOP (Adults Speaking Truths on Prostitution) ASK is a non-profit, faith-based organization founded in 1990 by an ELCA Lutheran pastor and wife team, Al and Ina Erickson. Their mission is to prevent commercial sexual exploitation, bringing honor and accountability to all relationships. They have a variety of resources, including speakers and a training program.

The Paul & Lisa Program, Inc.

[www.paulandlisa.org](http://www.paulandlisa.org)

This non-profit organization was established to address the growing crisis of children, youth, and young adults at risk for sexual exploitation, including juvenile prostitution and pornography. It pro-

vides education, professional training, crisis counseling, street outreach, court-based rehabilitation, and the development and distribution of prevention information in order to dispel myths and provide alternative lifestyle choices.

Children of the Night

[www.childrenofthenight.org](http://www.childrenofthenight.org)

This private, non-profit, tax-exempt organization was founded in 1979 and is dedicated to assisting children between the ages of 11 and 17 who are forced to prostitute on the streets for food and a place to sleep.

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

[www.missingkids.org](http://www.missingkids.org)

The Nation's Resource Center for Child Protection  
1-800-the-lost

NCMEC was established in 1984 as a private, non-profit organization. It provides services nationwide for families and professionals in the prevention of abducted and sexually exploited children. It serves a number of functions, including being a clearinghouse of information about missing and exploited children.

International Center for Missing and Exploited Children

[icmec.missingkids.com](http://icmec.missingkids.com)

Founded in 1998 and launched by the U.S.-based National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (listed above) ICMEC works to identify and coordinate a global network of organizations fighting child sexual exploitation and abduction. ICMEC does not duplicate local or national efforts; its purpose is to coordinate, facilitate; and enable agencies by providing counsel, standards, tools, and resources to help maximize the individual and collective effectiveness of agencies worldwide.

US Department of Justice, Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section

[www.usdoj.gov/criminal/ceos/index.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/ceos/index.html)

Going to this Web site will link you to a variety of other sites with related topics, including state by state sex offender registry information.

Internet safety tips for kids, parents, teachers

[www.Netsmartz.org](http://www.Netsmartz.org)

This interactive Web site uses cartoon characters to speak to children and features a personal story directed to the teen computer user. The site also provides some free materials. Parents should log on first to be certain this is age-appropriate.

# Worship Resources

## Confession & Forgiveness

Presider: God of power and light, you created humankind in your own image.

**Community:** You created us as sexual beings intended for mutual relationships of trust, love, and equality in your light. We confess that the system of sexual exploitation has corrupted your wonderful gift, reducing it to a marketable item. We acknowledge that we have not let our light shine enough to eliminate sexual exploitation. We have not brought those imprisoned in the system of sexual exploitation into your light. God, we ask for your mercy and your strength as we commit ourselves to making every tomorrow a day full of light.

Presider: In mercy Almighty God gives us Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Through his death, burial and resurrection, God also gave to us the Spirit of God to lead us into light. As a called and ordained minister of the Church, by Christ's authority, I declare to us the entire forgiveness of all our sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. May we all walk in God's light.

**Community:** Amen.

## Litany

Leader: Gracious Creator, Jesus said to his disciples, "you are the light of the world." We pray that you will lead us further into the light of your son that we may find your paths of healing and restoration for all who have been made less by commercial sexual exploitation.

**All:** Lord, show us the ways in which we have compromised our gift of sexuality, making us less than you intended.

Leader: As reconciled children of light, we confess to you, Lord, that we have often felt a burning desire to share the good news of your love and compassion in this world tainted by the system of sexual exploitation, but we have often felt fear or awkwardness.

**All:** Give us, Lord, the sense of urgency that will take your Spirit's healing light and words to those who live in sexual confusion and bondage.

Leader: Lord, give us courage to share the light of your love and compassion with others.

**All:** Grant us, O Lord, the courage to speak and act against the evil of commercial sexual exploitation that has taken women, teenagers, children, and men

captive. May we bring your day of light into the lives of those so held in the darkness of oppression, especially those whom we now name, both aloud and in our hearts.

Leader: Gracious God, may the light of your presence empower us to become beacons that make a difference in this world. Grant us, O Lord, the joy of living as your people, each and every day in your light.

**All:** Amen.

## Prayer of Light

Leader: Let us pray,

**All:** God of Light, from whom comes all holy desires, all good counsels, and all works of light, give to us your people both the desire and will to work toward the elimination of the system of sexual exploitation that we may be those who shine with the light of your grace and holy intention. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Hymn Suggestions

### *Renewing Worship*

When Pain of the World Surrounds Us #R237  
Christ, Be Our Light #R127  
This Little Light of Mine #R128  
Light Shone In Darkness #R124

### *This Far By Faith*

This Little Light of Mine #65  
We Are Marching in the Light of God #63  
Shine, Jesus, Shine #64  
We Shall Overcome #213

### *With One Voice*

Arise, Your Light Has Come! #652  
I, the Lord of Sea and Sky #752  
Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love #765  
We All Are One in Mission #755

### *Lutheran Book of Worship*

Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart #486  
I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say #497  
Lift High the Cross #377  
Rise Up, O Saints of God! #383

## When to use

Day Full of Light Sunday can be at any time of the year. It would make an excellent service during the Easter season or the long green season of Pentecost.





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