

1-1-2002

In the Beginning: A Worship Service

Lee Magness
jlmagness@milligan.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven>



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#), [Christianity Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Magness, Lee (2002) "In the Beginning: A Worship Service," *Leaven*: Vol. 10: Iss. 4, Article 10.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven/vol10/iss4/10>

This Liturgical Readings is brought to you for free and open access by the Religion at Pepperdine Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Leaven by an authorized editor of Pepperdine Digital Commons. For more information, please contact bailey.berry@pepperdine.edu.



In the Beginning

LEE MAGNESS

This service of worship and the reading at the core of it are intended as a celebration of how the God who said, "I am the Alpha," brings us through our beginnings, is with us in our beginnings, and in some wonderful way, is our beginning. The readings interweave the two great beginnings of scripture, creation, and incarnation. With slight modifications, the service could be used at New Year's, at the beginning of a school year, at Pentecost, or at any other important point of departure in the life of a congregation. As printed, the reading is for two voices (1 and 2) and a presider to lead unison readings. Worship leaders should feel free to accommodate the reading to their particular needs and personnel.

Invocation Be in *this* beginning, O God.
Be in *all* our beginnings, O God.
Be our beginning, O God.

Hymn: *Morning Has Broken*

READING 1

1 In the beginning...
2 *In the beginning was the Word...*
1 In the beginning...
2 *In the beginning... the Word was with God...*
1 In the beginning...
2 *In the beginning... the Word was God.*
1, 2 In the beginning...
2 *was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was...*
1, 2 God!

1 In the beginning... God... created...
2 *When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son...*
God handed him over...
God raised him up...
God exalted him...
1 God created the heavens and the earth.
2 *God made him both Lord and Christ.*

1, 2 In the beginning God!

UNISON RESPONSE Be in *this* beginning, O God.
Be in *all* our beginnings, O God.
Be our beginning, O God.

READING 2

1 And the earth was without form and empty...
2 *... though he was in the very form of God, ... he emptied himself...*
1 *... and darkness...*
2 *... the people who sat in darkness,*

- 1 ...and darkness covered...
 2 ...for once you were darkness...
 1 ...and darkness covered the face...
 2 ... we see through a glass darkly...
 1 ...and darkness covered the face of the deep...
 2 ... while it was yet dark...
- 1 ...and the spirit-wind of God swept over the face of the waters.
 2 *The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
 and the power of the most High will overshadow you.*
 1 ...and the spirit-wind of God swept over the face of the waters.
 2 *You must be born of the water and the Spirit.*
- 1 Then God said, Let there be light...
 2 *The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.*
 1 Let there be light...
 2 *I am the light of the world.*
 1 Let there be light...
 2 *Awake, O sleeper, arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.
 For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light.*
- 1 Then God said, Let there be light...
 1, 2 ...and there was light!

UNISON RESPONSE: Fill us, O God.
 Form us, O Christ.
 Overshadow us, O Spirit.
 Enlighten us, O God.
 Be our light, O Christ.
 Make us light, O Spirit.

READING 3

- 1 And God said, "Let there be an atmosphere in the midst of the waters...
 2 *And as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart.*
 1 And God called the dome Heaven.
 2 *And a voice came from heaven, You are my Son, the Beloved.*
 1 And God said, "Let the dry land appear. Let the earth put forth vegetation:
 2 *... and some seed fell on the good soil, and brought forth grain,
 growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.*
 1 plants yielding seed,
 2 *The kingdom is as if someone scattered seed on the ground.
 The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain.*
 1 and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit.
 2 *I am the vine and you are the branches.
 Those who abide in me, and I in them, bear much fruit.*
- 1 And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky;
 2 *We have seen his star in the east...*
 1 and let them be for signs...
 2 *And this shall be a sign unto you...*
 1 So God made the two great lights—the greater to rule the day and the lesser to rule the night—and
 the stars.
 2 *I am the Bright and Morning Star.*
 1 And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures,

2 *And just as he was coming up out of the water,*
1 and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.”
2 *he saw the Spirit descending on him like a dove.*
1 And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind:
2 *Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah has conquered.*
 Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.

UNISON RESPONSE: Breathe on us, O Spirit.
 Bear fruit in us and through us, O God.
 Be our Light, and our Lion, and our Lamb, O Christ.

READING 4

1 Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image,
according to our likeness;
2 *He is the image of the invisible God... being born in human likeness.*
1 and let them have dominion over everything that creeps upon the earth.”
2 *... so that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,*
 in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is
 Lord to the glory of God the father.

UNISON RESPONSE: Remake us, O God, in the only image you ever intended, yours.
 Reshape us, O Christ, according to the likeness of our Lord.
 Renew us, O Spirit, as we begin anew, begin again.

Prayers of the church for the beginnings we face
(led by the presider or offered by various congregants)

THE LORD'S SUPPER

1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished.
2 *It is finished.*
1 Take, eat, this is my body.
2 *This is my blood of the covenant, that is poured out for many.*

Communion Hymn: *O Love How Deep*

Communion

Hymn: *All Creatures of our God and King*

BENEDICTION

Let us begin, O God.
Let us begin this day what you, O God, O Christ, O Spirit, have finished,
In the beginning, in our beginning, in this beginning.
Amen.

LEE MAGNESS

Dr. Lee Magness teaches New Testament at Milligan College, Milligan College, Tennessee.

