



PRONOUNS FOR GOD

- Avoid capitalizing pronouns for God since it is not literarily necessary.
- It's preferred to not use a pronoun for God but instead use a name for God, such as "God" or "Creator" etc. For example, "We believe that God loves us and that **God** (instead of He) cares for us."
- If using a pronoun, consider switching back and forth between genders.
- It is also appropriate, since God is Trinitarian, to use the term "they."



GOD'S PEOPLE

Language matters for God's people; especially around disability, race, or socio-economic status.

Careful thought needs to be given around words such as "walk, stand, blind, see, mute, hear, black, white."

We do not want our language to assume that identifying as disabled or having a disability is a negative. And associating "white" with purity and black" with sinfulness" subtly encourages racial superiority/inferiority.

Language matters.

Recommended Reading & Sources:

"Language for God: A Lutheran Perspective"
Mary J. Streufert, Fortress Press, 2022.

ELCA Social Statement: "Faith, Sexism
and Justice: A Call to Action:"

RENEWING WORSHIP 2, Principles for Worship
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"Well Chosen Words," a guide to understanding and
using inclusive language, developed by the Racial
Ethnic and Women's Ministries, PC USA



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

ELCA recommended:

LANGUAGE MATTERS: LANGUAGE FOR GOD & GOD'S PEOPLE



Pastor Janelle Rozek Hooper, Churchwide 2024
Part of the **Lutheran Identity Series**



Jesus as Mother Hen
Luke 13:34

WHY LANGUAGE MATTERS

Using **Inclusive Language** pays attention to the diversity of all God's people, seeking to include those historically marginalized.

Using **Expansive Language** acknowledges the importance of drawing from the breadth of scripture to broaden how we refer to God.

God is mystery. Throughout scripture, both testaments speak of God as verbs, as nouns, as inanimate objects, as forces of nature, etc.

As Lutherans we trust God speaks through scripture in a variety of ways including with words and images that are feminine, neutral, and masculine.

For a list, see this website:

ministrylinks.online/language-for-god--people

THREE REASONS WHY "MALE ONLY" LANGUAGE DIMINISHES OUR UNDERSTANDING OF GOD

BY THEOLOGIAN ELIZABETH JOHNSON

- 01 Soley using male images without alternatives, encourages the idea that maleness has more in common with God than femaleness.
- 02 Adopting exclusively masculine images can lead to God only as father, king, lord; forgetting the numerous ways in which scripture and theology talk about God as mother, woman, the one who gives us birth, as well as ways that scripture talks about God outside of gender.
- 03 The wholesale acceptance of patriarchal language for God has powerful social effects, functioning to justify patriarchy in church and society.

GENDER MATTERS

"Gender matters. Gender matters in the text, in the world, in the world of the text, and in the world of the translator. Gender matters to me and to countless numbers of women hearers and readers of the biblical text for whom it is Scripture.

Gender matters significantly to those who have been and are marginalized because of gender, especially when it is done in the name of God, appealing to the Scriptures.

And gender matters to men.
Gender matters to hearers and readers of the Scriptures who are privileged to share the gender of the dominant portrayal of God, the majority of biblical characters, the majority of biblical characters who have speaking parts, the majority of translators of biblical texts, and the majority of interpreters of biblical texts."

Rev. Dr. Wilda Gafney, in her book
"A Women's Lectionary for the
Whole Church: Year A"