

Ruth C. Duck and Maren C. Tirabassi, eds. *Touch Holiness: Resources for Worship, Updated*. Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim, 2012. 292 pages. \$22.

Prayer is a bold and faithful act. Liturgies written for public prayer display heightened courage as the writer attempts to offer the words that will speak the hearts of unknown persons to an even greater mystery we call “God.” This updated version of *Touch Holiness* is a profound, pastoral resource for preachers and worship designers. It contains worship resources useful to congregations that follow a more traditional worship *ordo* as well as those that utilize contemporary and emergent worship genres.

This book contains liturgical texts designated for the Sundays and seasonal observances of the Christian Year, along with liturgies written for thematic worship. Both of these sections offer the following: Calls to Worship, Invocations, Prayers of Confession, Assurances of Grace, Unison Prayers/Collects, Offertory resources, Responsive Readings, Commissions, and Benedictions. It provides diverse resources for the weekly work of creating worship. It also contains new rituals addressing natural disaster, acts of violence, rituals for life transitions, prayers for the sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism, and fresh lyrics for service music.

The aim of this updated version is two-fold. First, the editors revised half of the entries in the first edition so to incorporate more current language without changing the original intent of the writing. Secondly, they include additional material that addresses the needs of a Church in decline, an increasingly erosive consumerism, and a sea of humanity searching for meaning. The editors’ format continues to include material from over sixty practitioners in worship from across denominational lines and contexts for worship. With the guidance of Duck and Tirabassi, these poets, preachers, lyricists and prophets offer the means for re-traditioning Christian rituals into vibrant worship.

For the preacher, this text is an excellent resource for worship planning and sermon preparation. Over three hundred of the entries reference scripture used in the Revised Common Lectionary. The non-scripturally identified texts carry seasonal and theological themes. These themes offer a myriad of possibilities for constructing worship that embodies consistent threads of theological meaning. Just reading through some of the entries can wake up the preacher’s imagination with rich illustrative language. The intentions of the prayers focus words of gratitude as well as urgent petitions toward human need within and beyond the worshipping community. These liturgies address a cacophony of global and social concerns. They also acknowledge the explosion of social media and technological dependence. If you are the one who puts the service together, you will find multiple ways to incorporate prayerful acts of praise, invocation, petition, confession, and intercession. If these prayers do not fit your context, you will likely be inspired to find your own words for leading your congregation. Though varied in purpose and content, the careful designs of these liturgies demonstrate well-constructed liturgies.

Among the newer rituals you will find an evening service for Epiphany. This service points the congregation beyond the day of Christmas, reframing the Christmas festival that so often ends abruptly on Christmas night. Another useful addition includes prayers focused on issues of sexual conduct. Given this text is a required reading for most clergy in most judicatories, these liturgies can help the participants find a spiritual focus for such sensitive discussions. The liturgies for Pentecost and the weeks following capture the narrative of the Holy Spirit’s infusion of the body of believers who become the Church. These entries move the

congregation from celebration of the Spirit's power to embodying new disciplines producing new fruit.

An important aspect of this resource is the manner in which gender language is carefully scripted to offer non-sexist and inclusive language and imagery for humanity and for God. References to humans strive to resist patriarchal constructs of power and attribute. References to the divine give life to traditional non-patriarchal names for the Triune God, employing maternal and paternal names, as well as non-anthropomorphic and scriptural names. This poetic language invites the worshipper to engage in more expansive names for God. It is also delivered with artistry that resists giving preferential treatment to one linguistic symbol over another.

The new edition of *Touch Holiness* continues the work Duck and Tirabassi began more than a decade ago. This work honors the scriptural foundation of worship while giving a new voice to the formation and sound of public prayer. As the words from these pages take flight in your worship community, they will lay claim to the power of the gospel and the promise of the reign of God.

Carol A. Cook Moore, Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C.