

"Here is a genuinely Lutheran and genuinely ecumenical voice. More: here is a voice we need to hear. I urge you to join me in listening. Indeed, listening to Maxwell Johnson is always enlivening. You do not have to agree with every detail in his arguments to recognize the huge importance of his proposals and to know that these urgent insights root in both a magisterial historical scholarship and a faithful confessional theology. Each of the studies in this volume has the vision of a renewed liturgical ecclesiology at its heart. We need exactly this renewal."

—**Gordon W. Lathrop**

Emeritus, The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia

"Those who persist in thinking that liturgical studies are of little relevance beyond a footnote in Christian theology need to read these essays. Maxwell Johnson illustrates time and again that liturgy is at the interface of ecumenical theology and dialogue. These essays have implications far beyond Johnson's own Lutheran perspectives."

—**Bryan D. Spinks**

Yale Institute of Sacred Music and Yale Divinity School

"It is a great gift to have these noteworthy essays updated and collected in one place. Maxwell Johnson informs and instructs, critiques and prods us (and not only Lutherans!) on a wide range of issues in contemporary liturgical practice. The gift is great, however, for the thread that runs through the whole: the church of Christ realized in its assembly for worship. Gospel and sacraments are fundamentally things done, practiced—the church in act. Lutheran readers will find their ritual practice and its confessional foundations set within the large frame of liturgical history and a broad ecumenical conversation about matters of worship. Readers from all traditions will find challenge and encouragement toward the liturgical ecclesiology for ecumenical Christians that lies at the heart of these essays."

—**Thomas H. Schattauer**

Wartburg Theological Seminary

"*The Church in Act's* liturgical theology from an ecumenical perspective is especially welcome as Lutherans commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in dialogue with multiple ecumenical partners. Johnson shows that the church is most itself when engaged in its public prayer. Written by a scholar who is also a pastor, I highly recommend this book to couples in interchurch marriages, congregations and parishes, and university professors looking for a classroom text. Johnson offers us once again a satisfying integration of spirituality, theology, and liturgical history."

—**Susan K. Wood, SCL**

Marquette University