



Together on the Way of the Cross

Praying, reflecting and journeying
together during Lent

2–8 March 2020



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches

Introduction

The season of Lent is a time for introspection, prayer, fasting, and sharing. While many believers will embark on their own individual journey of spiritual renewal, Christian life goes beyond the privatized individualistic endeavor. Our pilgrimage on earth is both personal, communal, and even global. It is about our life together, and the call to mutually encourage one another during trying times.

We offer this guide to accompany fellow believers in affirming ‘togetherness’ within the communion of Lutheran churches worldwide. It is organized in a threefold format based on Luther’s guide for doing theology through *Oratio* (prayer), *Meditatio* (meditation), and *Tentatio* (trial/struggle). This season, in particular, offers an opportunity to immerse ourselves in a world where:

there is the *tentatio*, testing (Anfechtung). This is the touchstone. It teaches you not only to know and understand but also to experience how right, how true, how sweet, how lovely, how mighty, how comforting God’s word is: it is wisdom supreme. (Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works: Career of the Reformer*. Vol. 34, 286-87.)

Inspired by Luther, let us cultivate the art of praying and reflecting together as a communion in Christ. As we discern God’s wisdom through agonizing struggles in our world today, often wounded and marred by division, disappointment, and despair, our faith gives us hope to persevere by journeying together no matter what.

Indeed, God accompanies each of us step by step together on the way of the cross.

Note: All prayers are cited from *Koinonia: Services and Prayers* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 2004). All scriptural texts are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

Monday, 2 March 2020

Praying Together

God, in the middle of this day we center ourselves.

We meditate on you.

At midday we hunger.

Feed us with your strength.

As we work we thirst.

Refresh us with your presence.

Our eyes look to you, and you give us our food in due season.

You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing.

Come, Christ, sit at our table, break bread with us.

Fill us with thankfulness for food and drink, community and conversation. Amen.

Reflecting Together

1 Kings 19:1-8;

Hebrews 2:10-18

¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Journeying Together

We are thankful because when we cry for help, we can turn to one who not only is able to help but comes alongside us and shows us mercy.

Tuesday, 3 March 2020

Praying Together

God, our creator and protector,
you illumine the world
and breathe life into us.
You heal the world with your outstretched arms.
You rescue creation and inspire your church.
We thank you for this day.
Let us remember your gifts and your promises
in our thoughts and actions,
in our communities and churches.

Amen.

Reflecting Together

Genesis 4:1-16;

Hebrews 4:14-5:10

¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Journeying Together

Although we might be weak and fragile at different stages of our pilgrimage on earth, we can always turn to God with boldness—there is “help in time of need.”

Wednesday, 4 March 2020

Praying Together

On our hearts and on our houses,
the blessing of God.

In our coming and our going,
the peace of God.

In our life and our believing,
the love of God.

At our end and new beginning,
***the arms of God to welcome us
and bring us home. Amen***

Reflecting Together

Exodus 34:1-9, 27-28;
Matthew 18:10-14

¹³ And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. ¹⁴ So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost.

Journeying Together

Let us reach out to someone who is considered 'lost' and offer them hospitality and kindness. May we rejoice over those gone astray who have now 'come home'.

Thursday, 5 March 2020

Praying Together

The night is the cover of your peace, O God,
the rhythm of your rest for all your people.

The darkness is the cloak of your gentleness, O God,
the warmth of your hand around the earth.

In its blackness is the sign of your eternity,
the never-ending living of your love.

In faith we go to sleep and leave our life to you.
In childlike trust we end our efforts of this day.

In our sleeping, be our company.
In our waking, be the gift of our new day.

Reflecting Together

Isaiah 51:1-3;
2 Timothy 1:3-7

⁷ for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

Journeying Together

May we support each other in nurturing godly qualities of courage, compassion, and consistency that overcomes cowardice within our communities.

Friday, 6 March 2020

Praying Together

We adore you, Lord Jesus Christ,
in all your churches throughout the world,
and we bless you,
for through your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.
– *Francis of Assisi*

Reflecting Together

Micah 7:18-20;
Romans 3:21-31

For there is no distinction, ²³ since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; ²⁴ they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith.

Journeying Together

We humble ourselves during this season confessing that we are not more superior in our piety than anyone else. Rather, we are all sinners in need of God's grace.

Saturday, 7 March 2020

Praying Together

God of all compassion,
we confess that we are violent and destructive,
cruel and haughty,
in ways that we premeditate,
in ways that we can rationalize,
and in ways that we are unaware.
We are captives to our own selfishness,
and prisoners of our own broken heartedness.
For Jesus' sake, grant us your compassion
and make us whole
so that we may be instruments of your peace

Reflecting Together

Isaiah 51:4-8;

Luke 7:1-10

⁹ When Jesus heard this he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, he said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith."

Journeying Together

Let us pause to take note of who might amaze us with their faith and celebrate their presence in our midst.

Second Sunday in Lent, 8 March 2020

Praying Together

I lift up my eyes to the mountains—
where does my help come from?
My help comes from the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth.
– *Psalm 121:1-2*

Reflecting Together

Genesis 12:1-4a

¹ Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ² I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

⁴ So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him.

What is the purpose of being blessed? The Bible reminds us that a blessing is not an end to itself. A blessing is always a gift and a calling. In God’s economy, every gift given is meant to be shared, not owned. Abram was asked to leave his home so that he could be a blessing not only to his people group but to all nations of the earth. At a time when humans were tempted to separate themselves from creation and other nations, God blessed Abram with the task of blessing all nations in the knowledge that we are all children of the Creator.

There are many voices in the public space today that tempt us with the same ideas of separation. There are economic voices that tempt us with the idea that humans are above creation, and blessing means we can exploit the earth for economic growth and

social progress. There are political voices that tempt us with the idea that if we focus on our own people group, we can exclude those “others” who threaten the blessings of our way of life.

But the story of Abram reminds us that God’s intention in blessing, was to send us out to reconcile all nations to participate in the blessing. During Lent, we remember that Jesus was faithful to this calling to cross all social and political boundaries, even the boundary between God and creation, life and death, to share this blessing with all of creation.

Journeying Together

Remember that in living you have been blessed by the Creator. And like Abram you are called from your people and freed from all that would separate you, to share this good news to the whole inhabited earth.