



Together on the Way of the Cross

Praying, reflecting and journeying
together during Lent

9–15 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, 9 March 2020

Praying Together

Faithful God,
throughout the ages your grace has given life
to countless women and men
whose names have been forgotten.
May we, like these saints,
persevere through all difficulties
to follow your way
and embody the life of your Son,
our Savior and Lord.

Reflecting Together

Numbers 21:4-9;
Hebrews 3:1-6

⁵ Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that would be spoken later. ⁶ Christ, however, was faithful over God's house as a son, and we are his house if we hold firm the confidence and the pride that belong to hope.

Journeying Together

May God find us faithful not by our own strength but by God's grace that "has given life to countless women and men" so that we too can "persevere through all difficulties."

Tuesday, 10 March 2020

Praying Together

O God, our Creator and Redeemer,
you make streams of water come from the rock,
you cause mighty waters to flow like rivers,
and at the end of time you will bring us
to the river of the water of life.

We thank you for the living waters of Baptism.
Grant that all who have been baptized may live in Christ,
in the communion of the church,
and in witness and service to the world,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Reflecting Together

Isaiah 65:17-25;

Romans 4:6-13

¹³ For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith.

Journeying Together

Empty and broken promises abound these days; but we cling on to God's promises that arise out of God's character, which we can fully trust.

Wednesday, 11 March 2020

Praying Together

Remember, O merciful God, your church,
deliver it from all evil,
perfect it in your love.
Bring it united and holy
from the four corners of the earth,
into your kingdom,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Reflecting Together

Ezekiel 36:22-32;
John 7:53-8:11

¹⁰ Jesus straightened up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” ¹¹ She said, “No one, sir.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.”

Journeying Together

Let us not be preoccupied with self-righteous condemnation of sinners. Rather, as followers of Christ’s example, let us demonstrate God’s love.

Thursday, 12 March 2020

Praying Together

Lord Jesus Christ,
you stretched out your loving arms on the wood of the cross
to bring everyone into your saving embrace.
Stretch out our hands to bring the whole world
into your knowledge and love,
for the honor of your name.

Reflecting Together

Exodus 16:1-8;
Colossians 1:15-23

²¹ And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²² he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him.

Journeying Together

Invite someone who needs to know God's "saving embrace." Be the hands to welcome them today.

Friday, 13 March 2020

Praying Together

O God, our life and our salvation,
you call us to love one another
as you loved us
when you gave us your only Son.
Give us a heart to honor and serve
our sisters and brothers
every day of our life,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord

Reflecting Together

Exodus 16:9-21;

Ephesians 2:11-22

¹⁴ For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. ¹⁵ He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.

Journeying Together

What are the walls of hostility dividing us within and separating people around the world today? May Christ who is our peace lead and guide us in his ongoing creation of one new humanity.

Saturday, 14 March 2020

Praying Together

O God of all goodness,
let your Word be
a lamp to guide us,
a light for our path,
our joy all the days of our life
and our possession for eternity,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Reflecting Together

Exodus 16:27-35

John 4:1-6

⁴ But he had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

Journeying Together

To follow Christ's way means that we would go through places where God can surprise us with new encounters – even when we might feel tired out by our journey thus far.

Third Sunday in Lent: Sunday, 15 March 2020

Praying Together

O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!
For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.
— *Psalm 95:6-7*

Reflecting Together

Exodus 17:1-7

Romans 5:1-11

John 4:5-42

²⁸ Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, ²⁹ “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?” ³⁰ They left the city and were on their way to him.

The Eastern tradition named the Samaritan Woman Saint Photini— “the enlightened one.” The Eastern Orthodox call her “Equal-to-the-Apostles” a martyr honored among apostles because she contributed, as did many women, to the spread of Christianity. Christ’s power transforms her from marginalization into the first preacher of the Christ: “Many Samaritans from that city believed in Jesus because of the woman’s testimony.” (John 4:39)

From her opening question “Who are you?” the dialogue deepens as she articulates tensions between Samaritans and Jews, seeks the meaning of true worship, makes a faith statement—she is a theologian. Jesus recognizes her life situation but does NOT rebuke, judge nor at any time speak of her sinfulness. Instead, Jesus praises her honesty! She is deeply known, loved and transformed.

Since only men had the right to divorce, her various husbands could have been lost through illness, death, war, or, quite likely— each husband successively divorced and “sent her away”— perhaps for the “sin” of infertility. It is to this “Enlightened one” that Jesus first reveals who God is, who HE is and how we are to worship.

The text’s tragedy is that endless speculation regarding her supposed “sexual sinfulness” has invisibilized her witness and robbed the Samaritan woman of her rightful place among the active apostles. Let us not continue to wrongly judge and discard Saint Photini, but lift her up as preacher, teacher and first apostle!

Dialogue with the Christ transforms lives. Do we dare enter into deeper dialogue where the Spirit pours transforming love, grace, forgiveness and peace into our lives today?

Journeying Together

Never underestimate what can happen when Christ’s transforming love touches us. May the encounter of the Samaritan woman with Jesus inspire us to ‘see’ through his eyes and support voices from the margins to testify of his goodness.