



Together on the Way of the Cross

Praying, reflecting and journeying
together during Lent

30 March – 5 April 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, 30 March 2020

Praying Together

Living God,
your Son Jesus Christ is our resurrection and life.
You consoled Martha and Mary in their sorrow.
Dry the tears of all who weep.
Keep us in communion with all your saints
and give us the hope of eternal life,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Reflecting Together

1 Kings 17:17-24

Acts 20:7-12

¹⁰ But Paul went down, and bending over him took him in his arms, and said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him." ¹¹ Then Paul went upstairs, and after he had broken bread and eaten, he continued to converse with them until dawn; then he left.

Journeying Together

Let us pause in the midst of the busyness of daily life or unexpected interruptions and spend time conversing with family, friends, or colleagues about what is important to them.

Tuesday, 31 March 2020

Praying Together

Holy God,
holy and mighty,
holy and immortal God,
we praise the depth of your riches, wisdom
and knowledge.
Give us your life and fill us with joy.
Glory to you, blessed Trinity.

Reflecting Together

2 Kings 4:18-37

Ephesians 2:1-10

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—⁹ not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Journeying Together

Be open to new areas of good works that God might be calling you to venture into in the near future.

Wednesday, 1 April 2020

Praying Together

O mighty God,
you have folded back the mantle of the night
and clothed our land in the golden glory of the day.
Chase from our hearts all gloomy thoughts
and make us glad with the brightness of your Spirit,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Reflecting Together

Jeremiah 32:1-9, 36-41

Matthew 22:23-33

³¹ And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God, ³² 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is God not of the dead, but of the living." ³³ And when the crowd heard it, they were astounded at his teaching.

Journeying Together

Let us pray for those who have lost their loved ones in the past year that God would comfort them with God's presence and peace.

Thursday, 2 April 2020

Praying Together

We give thanks to you, heavenly Father,
through Jesus Christ, your dear Son,
that you have this day so graciously protected us.
We beg you to forgive us all our sins
and the wrong which we have done.
By your great mercy defend us
from all the perils and dangers of this night.
Into your hands we commend our bodies and souls,
and all that is ours.
Let your holy angels be with us,
that the wicked have no power over us.

– *Martin Luther*

Reflecting Together

1 Samuel 16:11-13

Philippians 1:1-11

⁶ I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.

Journeying Together

Let us acknowledge with thanksgiving, areas of growth in our personal and public lives, which have honored God.

Friday, 3 April 2020

Praying Together

Support us, Lord,
all day long,
until the shadows lengthen,
and evening comes,
and the busy world is hushed,
the fever of life is over,
and our work done.
Then Lord, in your mercy,
give us safe lodging,
rest from our labor
and peace at the last.

Reflecting Together

Job 13:13-19

Philippians 1:21-30

²⁷ Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸ and are in no way intimidated by your opponents.

Journeying Together

Send a card, letter, or an email to someone who has encouraged you in your life, service and Christian witness.

Saturday, 4 April 2020

Praying Together

Blessed are you, O Lord our God,
you bring forth bread from the earth,
and you make glad the hearts of your people.
Blessed are you.

Reflecting Together

Lamentations 3:55-66

Mark 10:32-34

³² They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what was to happen to him.

Journeying Together

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

Sunday, 5 April 2020: Liturgy of the Palms

Praying Together

You are my God, and I will give thanks to you;
you are my God, I will extol you.

O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

– *Psalm 118:28-29*

Reflecting Together

Matthew 21:1-11

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; ⁷ they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

¹⁰ When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” ¹¹ The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

There are many ways to understand Jesus’ entry into the city of Jerusalem. Each year that we read again the stories as told in the Gospels, we might hear a different detail. Each detail gives us new insight about the way that Jesus began this final turn towards the cross.

Perhaps the parade reminds us of the words of Zechariah (9:9) and the prophetic nature of Christ’s suffering. Perhaps the cries of “daughter Zion” and “son of David” recall Christ as a priest, whose death is an offering that will bridge the divide between us and God. Perhaps the parade resembles a Roman military parade, and foreshadows Christ’s royal role in confronting the powers and discourses of empire. But as Holy Week

begins with Jesus as Prophet, Priest and Prince heading into the center of political and religious power, there are some details that remind us that this drama unfolds within an even more cosmic setting.

For the children of Abraham, Jerusalem was also the center of the universe. And here, all creation participates in blessing the one who comes in the name of the Lord. The Mount of Olives bears witness. Jesus, the Lord of the donkey, calls her and her little one to participate in this moment. The trees give of their flesh and beauty to frame Christ's approach. And eventually, when we fail to comprehend this cosmic salvation, even the stones will cry out.

The passion of Christ overflows with prophetic words, priestly acts of reconciliation and discourse that expose the powers of this world. But this day is not just about human powers and salvation. Ultimately, this entrance begins the final act of God's will to restore all relationships to righteousness, justice and peace, reconciling all creation. The Lord has need of you and me, the donkey and the tree, to join in praising the one who has come.

Journeying Together

We begin Holy Week in solidarity with all the faithful who have walked this way in every time and space. As we take these steps on the way to the cross, we look in hope to the one who goes before us. Jesus Christ, the firstborn of all creation. Hosanna in the Highest.