



Rejoice Now All the Earth!

LWF Communion Prayer
for the Easter Season 2020

2nd week of Easter



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches

Introduction

Easter is a season that lasts for 50 days. It begins with the celebration of Easter Sunday, and continues until the festival of Pentecost. The Easter Exultet reminds us that this is a time for all the earth to rejoice! We rejoice in the good news that God speaks the first and the last Word, and that Word is life. This particular Easter season (2020) we are experiencing a global pandemic that reminds us of our common human nature, and all of the vulnerabilities and limits of being a creature. In this context, the good news of Easter reminds us that, even though we live in the shadow of the cross where death and suffering are part of our condition, God continually renews life. These 50 days give us a time to contemplate that good news, which Jesus calls us to proclaim to all creation.

We offer this resource to our global Lutheran communion, as a way to be in the solidarity of prayer during this season of Easter. The daily prayers follow an order: Opening, Psalmody, Bible text, meditation and prayer. This order of prayer can be adapted in any way, such as singing songs, adding your own prayers, or any liturgical acts that are meaningful in your context. In addition to the texts, which follow the Revised Common Lectionary, you will notice that the Sunday meditations relate to a common theme of Baptism. Baptism is a sacrament where we receive the promise of this good news. And the Small Catechism encourages us to remember our baptism daily, as a way to be renewed by this promise each day.

We commend these prayers to your use, whether alone in your home, as a family, or as your community is able to virtually gather from a distance during the season of Easter. And as you pray in solidarity with the Lutheran communion across the globe, and the communion of saints in all times and places, be encouraged by the counsel that Luther offers in his letter, *A Simple Way to Pray*:

Never think that you are kneeling or standing alone, rather think that the whole of the Church...are standing there beside you and you are standing among them in a common, united petition which God cannot disdain. There we find God the Creator, God the Redeemer, God the Holy Spirit, that is, God who daily sanctifies us.

Rejoice, in the good news that all creation shares in this season! Christ is risen! And with it, all creation sings hope in the promise of new life.

Prayers are from *Koinonia, Services and Prayers*, LWF, 2004 and *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, Augsburg Fortress, 2006. Lectionary readings are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

Second Sunday of Easter, 19 April 2020

Opening

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Alleluia!

Psalmody

Come, let us sing to the LORD;
let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come before God's presence with thanksgiving and raise a loud shout to the LORD with psalms.
For the LORD is a great God, and a great Sovereign above all gods

The LORD holds the caverns of the earth, and sustains the heights of the hills.
The sea belongs to God, who made it, whose hands have molded the dry land.

Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, and kneel before the LORD our Maker.
For the LORD is our God, and we are the people of God's pasture and the sheep of God's hand.

Oh, that today you would hearken to God's voice!
— *Psalm 95*

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, is and will be for-e-ver. Amen.

Reflecting Together

John 20:19-23

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!

There is a Native American proverb that teaches fear is a door in the heart through which death-dealing powers can pass. When we are isolated by fear we may let in blame, despair, thoughts of self-preservation. Following the death of Jesus "the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear..." Had they stayed long behind the door of fear who knows what they may have let in? However, with Divine Love that unlocks fear, Christ stood among them to breathe peace.

Many are locked behind doors of fear, and not just fear of viral death. Financial fears lock people into exploitative work. Women are locked behind cultural barriers for constant fear of violence. Nations lock themselves behind walls for fear of a stranger. When we feel alone, many dare not open the door for fear of something more sinister entering in. But the Creator does not require trust. As a gift of faith, Christ enters to dwell with us.

Luther describes three ways that God is present to us. The first is Jesus' physical body in history. Secondly, God is present in, with and under matter – such as in bread or passing through locked doors. This definitive presence of Christ is a grace that points us to the third, replete presence of the Holy Spirit in all creation. The Spirit in which we live and have our being is the same breath that moved over the waters to create. It is the Peace that Christ breathes upon all who are locked in fear. Feel the breath. Receive the Spirit. Unlock the doors. Peace be with you.

Let us pray...

God of grace, you enter into our locked places with a liberating word of Peace. Breathe your Spirit upon us, restore us in with the gift of your Love, and free us to embrace the world with renewed hope in the good news of the risen Christ. Amen.

Our Father in heaven ...

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Lord bless us and direct our days and our deeds in peace.

Amen.

Monday, 20 April 2020

Opening

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Alleluia!

Psalmody

Praise the Lord.
Praise God in the sanctuary;
praise God in the mighty heavens.
Praise God for acts of power;
praise God for surpassing greatness.
Praise God with the sounding of the trumpet,
praise God with the harp and lyre,
Praise God with timbrel and dancing,
praise God with the strings and pipe,
Praise God with the clash of cymbals,
praise God with resounding cymbals.
Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.
Praise the Lord.

— *Psalm 150*

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, is and will be for-e-ver. Amen.

Reflecting Together

John 20:24-29

Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!

Let us pray...

God of compassion, you invite us to touch your wounds so that we may believe. Help us to believe that you feel our wounds, and the suffering of all creation. As we take hold of you in faith, take hold of us in love so that we may trust in the healing that is given through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our Father in heaven ...

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Lord bless us and direct our days and our deeds in peace.

Amen.

Tuesday, 21 April 2020

Opening

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Alleluia!

Psalmody

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth,
burst into jubilant song with music;

make music to the LORD with the harp,
with the harp and the sound of singing,

with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn—
shout for joy before the LORD, the King.

Let the sea resound, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it.

Let the rivers clap their hands,
let the mountains sing together for joy;

let them sing before the LORD,
for God comes to judge the earth.

— Psalm 98:4-9

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, is and will be for-e-ver. Amen.

Reflecting Together

1 Peter 1:6-9

In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith--being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire--may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!

Let us pray...

God of indescribable joy, nurture the seed of faith in us, so that even in the midst of trials we can rejoice in the gift that is more precious than gold – the love we share through your son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our Father in heaven ...

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Lord bless us and direct our days and our deeds in peace.

Amen.

Wednesday, 22 April 2020

Opening

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Alleluia!

Psalmody

Praise the Lord.
How good it is to sing praises to our God,

how pleasant and fitting to praise God!
The Lord builds up Jerusalem;
God gathers the exiles of Israel.
God heals the brokenhearted

and binds up their wounds.
God determines the number of the stars

and calls them each by name.
Great is our Lord and mighty in power;

God's understanding has no limit.
The Lord sustains the humble
but casts the wicked to the ground.

Sing to the Lord with grateful praise;
make music to our God on the harp.
— *Psalm 147:1-7*

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, is and will be for-e-ver. Amen.

Reflecting Together

Psalm 16:7-11

I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.
I keep the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure.
For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit.
You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!

Let us pray...

Lord, the giver of Life, in this good news of Easter time, strengthen our hearts to be glad, inspire our souls to rejoice, and help our bodies rest secure in your path to life. Amen.

Our Father in heaven ...

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Lord bless us and direct our days and our deeds in peace.

Amen.

Thursday, 23 April 2020

Opening

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Alleluia!

Psalmody

Sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord, praise his name;
proclaim his salvation day after day.

Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

— *Psalm 96:1-3*

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, is and will be for-e-ver. Amen.

Reflecting Together

Acts 2:24-28

God raised Jesus up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. For David says concerning him, 'I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will live in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'

As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!

Let us pray...

Almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us in safety to this new day. Preserve us with your power, that we may not fall into sin nor be overcome in adversity. In all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Our Father in heaven ...

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Lord bless us and direct our days and our deeds in peace.

Amen.

Friday, 24 April 2020

Opening

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Alleluia!

Psalmody

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
let the sea resound, and all that is in it.

Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them;
let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.

Let all creation rejoice before the Lord, for he comes,
he comes to judge the earth.

He will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples in his faithfulness.

— *Psalm 96:11-13*

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, the and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, is and will be for-e-ver. Amen.

Reflecting Together

Psalm 16: 1-5

Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge.

I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you."

As for the holy ones in the land, they are the noble, in whom is all my delight.

Those who choose another god multiply their sorrows; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names upon my lips.

The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.

As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!

Let us pray...

God of mercy, inspire our hearts to speak your name, and take refuge in the shelter of your wings. During this Easter season, help us to trust in your never failing love, so that we can share this love with your creation every day. In the name of your beloved, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our Father in heaven ...

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Lord bless us and direct our days and our deeds in peace.

Amen.

Saturday, 25 April 2020

Opening

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Alleluia!

Psalmody

It is good to praise the Lord
And make music to your name, O Most High,
proclaiming your love in the morning
and your faithfulness at night,

to the music of the ten-stringed lyre
and the melody of the harp.

For you make me glad by your deeds, Lord;
I sing for joy at what your hands have done.

How great are your works, Lord,
how profound your thoughts!

— Psalm 92:1-5

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, is and will be for-e-ver. Amen.

Reflecting Together

1 Peter 1:3-9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!

Let us pray...

Gracious God, we praise you for the gift of water, that washes, renews and restores creation. We thank you that in baptism, water is joined with your promise to renew us each day, in the name of the Risen One, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our Father in heaven ...

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Lord bless us and direct our days and our deeds in peace.

Amen.