



Rejoice Now All the Earth!

LWF Communion Prayer
for the Easter Season 2020

4th 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).

Fourth Sunday of Easter, 3 May 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 10:1-5

Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.”

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

Many voices cry out in this time of pandemic. Some voices blame various ethnic groups for the virus. Other voices see the virus as punishment by an angry God because of sinful humanity (*and sin is defined in moralistic terms*). Yet other voices claim to know of God’s imminent arrival even though Scripture clearly states that no one knows the hour. These voices lead many people far from the gate, far from the fold, and far into the unsafe territory of either self-reliance or naïve trust in superstition and conspiracy theories.

None of these voices, of course, is the voice of the good shepherd. The voice of the good shepherd is one that resonates in the whole being of the faithful, that “strikes the heart” (*Apology of the Augsburg Confession* 13) with comfort and certainty, not with fear and anxiety. A gospel voice resounds in the room behind locked doors: Peace be with you.

This voice of peace is the voice of the One who is with us in all dangers and trials and death. “I am the gate...” Our whole life passes in and through Jesus who takes upon himself all our fears and anxieties and in exchange gives us a life abundant. This life abundant is one lived together in community (yes, even when we are physically distant one from another) and in prayer. And this life abundant is lived together with all creation, which is also restored as it hears God’s voice.

Let us pray...

God of all goodness, the good news of Easter strikes our heart with comfort and hope. We are grateful that in Christ, we hear your voice in compelling tones of grace. Let your call be heard. Inspire us with the trust to follow, so that resting confidently in your presence, we can cultivate the gift of new life that is ours through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

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, 4 May 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

1 Peter 2:22-23

“He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly.

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

Let us pray...

Ever-living God, author of creation, in Christ you show us that your way to peace is through non-violence. Help us to follow this way in faith, entrusting our lives to this good news, so that we can know the fullness of this new life that is ours 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, 5 May 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

Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff-- they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

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

Let us pray...

Almighty God, whose grace overflows by water and the Holy Spirit, lead us along right paths for the sake of our Good Shepherd. May goodness and mercy follow us this day. 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, 6 May 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

Acts 2:42

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

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

Let us pray...

God, in our prayer, in our learning, and in our living, be present with us today. Enlighten us by your Holy Spirit who is our teacher and source of all wisdom. 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, 7 May 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 2:44-45

All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.

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

Let us pray...

Almighty and everlasting God, your reign is justice and peace. Help us to live this new life of mutuality, just distribution and sustainable sharing. And 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, 8 May 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, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, is and will be for-e-ver. Amen.

Reflecting Together

Acts 2:46-47

Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.

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

Let us pray...

God of mercy, by our baptism inspire us to praise you and share goodwill for all creation. Whether today finds us breaking bread in fellowship with others or eating alone, encourage us in the knowledge that your Spirit binds us with the whole communion of saints. Day by day, nourish us with the gifts of the earth and the fruit of your Spirit. 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, 9 May 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

John 10:9

I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture.

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

Let us pray...

Merciful God, renew this weary world, heal the hurts of all your children, and bring us to pastures of rest through the gate of our Good Shepherd, Christ Jesus, the living 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.