



Rejoice Now All the Earth!

LWF Communion Prayer
for the Easter Season 2020



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches

5th week of Easter

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^{^p}

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).

Fifth Sunday of Easter, 10 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 14:1-7

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

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

The gospel is gift and promise. The final chapters of the gospel according to John record Jesus’ words on the meaning of his death, a prayer for the abiding unity in all creation, and the promise of God’s Spirit to guide us on the way. But Christ does not speak this promise into a timeless void. Jesus speaks to the hearts of real people with real anxieties. So he begins, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God...”

Belief implies faith. Faith means “trust.” It can be difficult to entrust our lives to Jesus’ way of love and non-violence when we feel out of control or that our bodies and livelihoods are at risk. Even if our hearts feel free, our minds and bodies stay captive to familiar ways of securing life through material and economic means. Like Thomas, it can be difficult to let go and trust a promise if the way is unknown.

The North African Saint Augustine understood this when he wrote: we love what we know. In psychological terms, we know that a child who experiences sustained trauma or violence may have difficulty entrusting their bodies and hearts to others. While a child who knows the love of a significant other may have an easier time trusting in times of stress. Knowing helps us trust that we are loved. Jesus liberates us to trust, saying: “from now on you know God.”

In baptism you receive the gift of knowing God in Christ Jesus; in knowing, loving; and in loving, trusting. Even in today's troubles, you are free to entrust your life, mind, body and soul to this loving Way.

Let us pray...

God of all goodness, we are grateful that you have made yourself known through Jesus Christ. Comfort our fears, and encourage our hearts to entrust our lives to the loving way that is truth and 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.

Monday, 11 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

Acts 7:55-60

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Stephen gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. “Look,” he said, “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he died.

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

Let us pray...

Creator and ever-living God, we give you thanks for Stephen and all the faithful women and men who have born witness to your love through their words and service. Strengthen us in this faith, to nurture our gifts of service, that Christ may be praised, and your love made known in the way we care for all creation. 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, 12 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 31:1-4

In you, O LORD, I seek refuge; do not let me ever be put to shame;
in your righteousness deliver me.

Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily.

Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me.

You are indeed my rock and my fortress;

for your name's sake lead me and guide me,

take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my refuge.

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

Let us pray...

Almighty God, who gives us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, strengthen us with the gift of faith who is Jesus Christ, our rock and our refuge in all times. 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, 13 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

1 Peter 2:2-3

Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation - if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

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

Let us pray...

God, we give thanks for the many ways in which we taste your goodness every day. Nurture us with the life-giving breath of your Holy Spirit, that our faith may mature, and we may grow into our salvation, which you have begun in Christ Jesus. 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, 14 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

1 Peter 2:4-5

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

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, 15 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

1 Peter 2:10

Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

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

Let us pray...

God of mercy, we thank you for the resurrection dawn, bringing the glory of our risen Lord, who makes every day new. We thank you for the sustaining goodness of your creation, for all gifts of healing and forgiveness, for the gifts of relationship with others, and for the communion of faith in your church. 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, 16 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 14:8-10

Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works.

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

Let us pray...

Merciful God, renew this world by the image of your loving heart, which you have revealed to all in Jesus Christ, 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.