



Season of the Spirit

LWF Communion Prayer
for Pentecost 2020

**Week 26 – Twenty-Fifth
Week after Pentecost**



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches

Introduction

Welcome to ordinary time! The liturgical season of Pentecost is called “ordinary” because the weeks are ordered, or numbered. Some of our churches order these weeks according to the Sundays after Pentecost, some after Trinity Sunday, and others, until the start of Advent, and a new liturgical year. This season is replete with stories of the early church, and the ways in which the Holy Spirit calls, enlightens and equips the Church to participate in the ministry of reconciliation begun in Jesus Christ. Though it is called ordinary, the season of Pentecost is rather extraordinary!

Pentecost is a Season of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit descends upon the disciples like tongues of fire, giving the ability to be understood in diverse languages. In a great reversal of the Tower of Babel story (Genesis 11) the story of Pentecost reminds us that the Holy Spirit equips illuminates a diversity of gifts. As a priesthood of all believers, each of us is uniquely gifted to live out our baptismal vocation. During this season, there are also a diversity of church festivals, such as Trinity Sunday, Holy Cross Day, All Saints and All Souls, and the Reign of Christ. The Pentecost season also leads into the 16 Days of Action against Gender Based Violence, where we profess the image of God and the breath of the Spirit in each human being.

Pentecost is a green time. The prominent liturgical color of this season is green, which signifies growth in many cultures. In some parts of the globe this is the growing season. But regardless of what hemisphere in which we live, Pentecost is a season to focus on the work of the Spirit who nurtures our gifts to bear fruit. In these weeks we mark the Season of Creation (1 September – 4 October). This is a time to give thanks for all creation, and the Holy Spirit who renews the face of the earth, and our vocation to till and keep this garden in a sustainable and just peace.

The ongoing experience of a global pandemic reminds us of our common nature, and the vulnerabilities and limits of being a creature. May Pentecost be for us a hopeful season to remember the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We offer this resource to our global Lutheran communion, as a way to be in the solidarity of prayer during this Season of the Spirit. Daily prayer follows a simple order: psalmody and prayer. Prayers can be adapted for use in your practice of prayer: singing songs, adding your 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 each week contains a meditation on the Sunday text.

We commend these prayers to your use, whether alone in your home, as a family, or as your community is able to gather at a distance. As you pray in solidarity with the

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.”

And throughout this green time, may the Spirit of God bring forth new growth in you.

Prayers are from Evangelical Lutheran Worship, Augsburg Fortress, 2006 and Revised Common Lectionary Prayers, Augsburg Fortress, 2002. All scriptural texts are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). The daily lectionary of the Revised Common Lectionary is followed.

Sunday, 22 November 2020

Psalmody

O Lord my God, in you I take refuge;
save me from all my pursuers, and deliver me,

God is my shield,
who saves the upright in heart.

God is a righteous judge,
and a God who has indignation every day.

If one does not repent, God will whet his sword;
he has bent and strung his bow;
he has prepared his deadly weapons,
making his arrows fiery shafts.

See how they conceive evil,
and are pregnant with mischief,
and bring forth lies.

They make a pit, digging it out,
and fall into the hole that they have made.

Their mischief returns upon their own heads,
and on their own heads their violence descends

I will give to the Lord the thanks due to his righteousness,
and sing praise to the name of the Lord, the Most High.

– *Psalm 7:1, 10-17*

Word

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

For thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice. Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

Meditation

The prophecy of Ezekiel is the voice of one who seeks justice in the midst of the experience of exile. It is written from a context of multiple displacements – geographical, political, religious, economic and social. The Babylonian empire had led to the breakdown of those institutions that offered people a sense of safety, meaning and identity. As a result, those meant to be shepherds of the flock had abdicated their responsibility and turned abusers of the sheep for their personal gain. The shepherds had become those who eat the fat, clothe themselves with the wool of the sheep and slaughter the fatlings; but do not feed the sheep. (Ezekiel 34:3)

Amidst this turbulence Ezekiel embraces his prophetic vocation of speaking truth to power.

His prophecy exposes the different layers at which the abuse of power happens. There is the abuse of power by the political and religious leadership – the ‘shepherds’ who rule with force and harshness because of whom the sheep were scattered (34:2-4). Then there is also the economic dimension, which almost resembles a ‘widening gap’ between the fat sheep and the lean sheep (34:20) because the weaker ones have been pushed and butted, far and wide into the margins.

It is in this context that the promise of restoration is proclaimed using the language of justice and compassion. We can find compassion in the act of seeking the lost, bringing back the strayed, binding up the injured and strengthening the weak (v.16). This is the same language that is used for Jesus’ work of proclaiming the kingdom in the gospel of Matthew 9. 36, “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”

But there is also the language of justice, God comes as one who will judge between sheep and sheep. The Lord God says “the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.” The weak ones that were so far forced to eat what other sheep have trodden with their feet, and drink what the other sheep have fouled with their feet, “shall no longer be ravaged.” God is the one who is compassionate about the lost and wounded ones and God is the one who wants to feed the broken ones.

What is also significant about this passage is that though God is the author of justice, the agency for this justice lies with humans. Though God says, “I will be their shepherd, I will feed them justice.” God also says, “I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd.” The vision of justice that God sees as appropriate for the times is one that has to be established through human partnership. God needs the servant leadership of David to be the hands and feet of the restorative task.

There are several aspects of Ezekiel's prophecy that can be relevant to our own contexts – especially as many face the turbulence and the displacement brought about by our neo-colonial empires. The task of restorative justice today needs to go hand in hand with compassion so that healing and wholeness replace despair and destruction. But more importantly, God's task of restoration is one that demands the partnership of servant leaders. As we enter into 16 days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence the challenge is to combine justice with compassion as we courageously submit ourselves to become instruments of God's kingdom of justice, peace and love.

Prayer

God our shepherd, come find us in the dark or cloudy places where we are scattered this day. Feed us from the springs and pastures of your Love, so that we can do the work of justice and peace that belongs to those who dwell in your pasture. In Christ's name we pray. 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, 23 November 2020

Psalmody

O Lord my God, in you I take refuge;
save me from all my pursuers, and deliver me,

God is my shield,
who saves the upright in heart.

God is a righteous judge,
and a God who has indignation every day.

If one does not repent, God will whet his sword;
he has bent and strung his bow;
he has prepared his deadly weapons,
making his arrows fiery shafts.

See how they conceive evil,
and are pregnant with mischief,
and bring forth lies.

They make a pit, digging it out,
and fall into the hole that they have made.

Their mischief returns upon their own heads,
and on their own heads their violence descends

I will give to the Lord the thanks due to his righteousness,
and sing praise to the name of the Lord, the Most High.

– *Psalm 7:1, 10-17*

Word

2 Timothy 2:8-13

Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David—that is my gospel, for which I suffer hardship, even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained. Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. The saying is sure:

If we have died with him, we will also live with him;
if we endure, we will also reign with him;
if we deny him, he will also deny us;
if we are faithless, he remains faithful—
for he cannot deny himself.

Prayer

God our shepherd, come find us in the dark or cloudy places where we are scattered this day. Feed us from the springs and pastures of your Love, so that we can do the work of justice and peace that belongs to those who dwell in your pasture. In Christ's name we pray. 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, 24 November 2020

Psalmody

O Lord my God, in you I take refuge;
save me from all my pursuers, and deliver me,

God is my shield,
who saves the upright in heart.

God is a righteous judge,
and a God who has indignation every day.

If one does not repent, God will whet his sword;
he has bent and strung his bow;
he has prepared his deadly weapons,
making his arrows fiery shafts.

See how they conceive evil,
and are pregnant with mischief,
and bring forth lies.

They make a pit, digging it out,
and fall into the hole that they have made.

Their mischief returns upon their own heads,
and on their own heads their violence descends

I will give to the Lord the thanks due to his righteousness,
and sing praise to the name of the Lord, the Most High.

– *Psalm 7:1, 10-17*

Word

Revelation 19:1-9

After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying,

“Hallelujah!

Salvation and glory and power to our God,
for his judgments are true and just;
he has judged the great whore
who corrupted the earth with her fornication,
and he has avenged on her the blood of his servants.”

Once more they said,

“Hallelujah!

The smoke goes up from her forever and ever.”

And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who is seated on the throne, saying,

“Amen. Hallelujah!”

And from the throne came a voice saying,

“Praise our God,
all you his servants,
and all who fear him,
small and great.”

Prayer

God our shepherd, come find us in the dark or cloudy places where we are scattered this day. Feed us from the springs and pastures of your Love, so that we can do the work of justice and peace that belongs to those who dwell in your pasture. In Christ's name we pray. 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, 25 November 2020

Psalmody

O Lord my God, in you I take refuge;
save me from all my pursuers, and deliver me,

God is my shield,
who saves the upright in heart.

God is a righteous judge,
and a God who has indignation every day.

If one does not repent, God will whet his sword;
he has bent and strung his bow;
he has prepared his deadly weapons,
making his arrows fiery shafts.

See how they conceive evil,
and are pregnant with mischief,
and bring forth lies.

They make a pit, digging it out,
and fall into the hole that they have made.

Their mischief returns upon their own heads,
and on their own heads their violence descends

I will give to the Lord the thanks due to his righteousness,
and sing praise to the name of the Lord, the Most High.

– *Psalm 7:1, 10-17*

Word

John 5:19-29

Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father[a] does, the Son does likewise. The Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing; and he will show him greater works than these, so that you will be astonished. Indeed, just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whomever he wishes. The Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son, so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life.

“Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself; and he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not be astonished at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and will come out—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

Prayer

God our shepherd, come find us in the dark or cloudy places where we are scattered this day. Feed us from the springs and pastures of your Love, so that we can do the work of justice and peace that belongs to those who dwell in your pasture. In Christ’s name we pray. 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, 26 November 2020

Psalmody

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph like a flock!
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth

before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh.
Stir up your might,
and come to save us!

Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.

O Lord God of hosts,
how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?

You have fed them with the bread of tears,
and given them tears to drink in full measure.

You make us the scorn of our neighbors;
our enemies laugh among themselves.

Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.

– *Psalm 80:1-7*

Word

Revelation 14:6-13

Then I saw another angel flying in midheaven, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation and tribe and language and people. He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come; and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

Prayer

God of hosts, we are grateful that you give your ear to us. Shine your face on us today, so that your glory would restore us, and stir us to follow your way. Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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

Amen.

Friday, 27 November 2020

Psalmody

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph like a flock!
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth

before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh.
Stir up your might,
and come to save us!

Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.

O Lord God of hosts,
how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?

You have fed them with the bread of tears,
and given them tears to drink in full measure.

You make us the scorn of our neighbors;
our enemies laugh among themselves.

Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.

– *Psalm 80:1-7*

Word

1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

Finally, brothers and sisters, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus that, as you learned from us how you ought to live and to please God (as, in fact, you are doing), you should do

so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication; that each one of you know how to control your own body in holiness and honor, not with lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one wrong or exploit a brother or sister in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, just as we have already told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God did not call us to impurity but in holiness. Therefore, whoever rejects this rejects not human authority but God, who also gives his Holy Spirit to you. Now concerning love of the brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anyone write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another; and indeed you do love all the brothers and sisters throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, beloved, to do so more and more, to aspire to live quietly, to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we directed you, so that you may behave properly toward outsiders and be dependent on no one.

Prayer

God of hosts, we are grateful that you give your ear to us. Shine your face on us today, so that your glory would restore us, and stir us to follow your way. 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, 28 November 2020

Psalmody

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
 you who lead Joseph like a flock!
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth

before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh.
Stir up your might,
 and come to save us!

Restore us, O God;
 let your face shine, that we may be saved.

O Lord God of hosts,
 how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?

You have fed them with the bread of tears,
 and given them tears to drink in full measure.

You make us the scorn of our neighbors;
 our enemies laugh among themselves.

Restore us, O God of hosts;
 let your face shine, that we may be saved.

– *Psalm 80:1-7*

Word

Matthew 24:15-30

“So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place, as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains; the one on the housetop must not go down to take what is in the house; the one in the field must not turn back to get a coat. Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a sabbath. For at that time there will be great suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been cut short, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look! Here is the Messiah!’ or ‘There he is!’—do not believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce great signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Take note, I have told you beforehand. So, if they say to you, ‘Look! He is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. If they say, ‘Look! He is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

“Immediately after the suffering of those days
the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
the stars will fall from heaven,
and the powers of heaven will be shaken.

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see ‘the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven’ with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Prayer

God of hosts, we are grateful that you give your ear to us. Shine your face on us today, so that your glory would restore us, and stir us to follow your way. 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.