



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches

Liturgy – 25th Anniversary Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification

31 October 2024
Reformation Day

On Reformation Day, 31 October 2024, The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the Roman Catholic Church, and the World Methodist Council, Anglican Communion, and the World Communion of Reformed Churches will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ), which was signed on that day in 1999 between the LWF and the Roman Catholic Church. This liturgy is offered to LWF member churches as a way of marking the anniversary of this groundbreaking ecumenical consensus document.

This liturgy is also proposed to member churches as a possible way to commemorate this year's Reformation anniversary in an ecumenical manner, as was proposed during the Joint Commemoration of the 500 years of Reformation in Lund Cathedral (31 October 2016) and in the document *From Conflict to Communion* (2013).

As we journey toward 2030 and the 500th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession, we remember that the Augsburg Confession was an ecumenical proposal to the church of its day. It is therefore appropriate that on Reformation Day, we celebrate this ecumenical impulse and seek to deepen its impact.

A note on implementation of this worship service:

1. Hymns and songs

- Music is to be chosen according to your context, therefore no suggestions have been made. Every region of the LWF has its rich heritage of songs. Every context and language, every time and place, will find hymns, chants, and songs that fulfill the particular assigned role in the prayer.
- The songs of the ecumenical community of Taizé are always helpful as responses and in moments of ritual action such as the lighting of vigil candles, for example, "Ubi caritas." In the English-speaking world, a song such as "Christ, Be Our Light" (Farrell, Roman Catholic) is also very appropriate at this ritual moment. There are of course many hymns that are appropriate

for opening and closing including, "Praise to the Lord" ("Lobe den Herren") or "To Be Your Presence Is Our Mission Here" (Dufner, Roman Catholic) or "Laudate Dominum" (Taizé).

- If more ecumenical participants are present besides Lutheran and Roman Catholic, choosing hymns from other traditions is encouraged such as "Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing" (Wesley, Methodist), "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" (Old Hundredth, Geneva Psalter, Reformed), or "Praise, My Soul" (Lyte, Anglican).
- Another resource is the *Global Lutheran Songbook* which is in development and can be found at this link: www.globalsongbook2024.net

2. Roles in worship

- The proposed worship requires presider(s) and readers. If there is an ecumenical participation, presiding can be shared among those present.
- There is a section of readings after the sermon that can involve ecumenical participation.
- The involvement of young people is encouraged in the various roles.
- Different languages present in the gathered assembly can also be heard.

3. Ritual action

- At the beginning, a thanksgiving for baptism is proposed. During this thanksgiving, water may be poured into the baptismal font in an audible manner.
- Before the intercessory prayers, vigil candles may be lit, which people may take with them out into the street and back home.

Prayer for the 25th Anniversary of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification¹

REFORMATION DAY 2024

OPENING

♫ Organ Prelude

‣ *[Small vigil candles may be distributed to everyone as they arrive.]*

‣ *[Where possible, the liturgy may begin at the baptismal font. Everyone faces the font.]*

Trinitarian Greeting

In the name of the Father, and of the (+) Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen!

The Lord be with you!

And also with you!

Thanksgiving for baptism

We gather around the font remembering that in baptism we have been incorporated into the one Body of Christ. “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.” (Ephesians 4:4-6)

‣ *[Water may be poured into the font during this prayer.]*

“Blessed are you, O God, maker and ruler of all things. Your voice thundered over the waters at creation. You water the mountains and send springs into the valleys to refresh and satisfy all living things. Through the waters of the flood you carried those in the ark to safety. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery to freedom. Pour out your Holy Spirit; wash away sin in this cleansing water; clothe the baptized with Christ; and claim your daughters and sons, no longer slave and free, no longer male and female, but one with all the baptized in Christ Jesus, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.” **Amen.**

Let us confess our faith together. . .

Do you believe in God the Father?

We believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

¹ The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification is available on the LWF website in 5 languages. <https://lutheranworld.org/resources/publication-joint-declaration-doctrine-justification>

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Opening Hymn

WORD

A reading from Paul's letter to the Romans

Paul writes: "But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed and is attested by the Law and the Prophets, the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; it was to demonstrate at the present time his own righteousness, so that he is righteous and he justifies the one who has the faith of Jesus.

▶ *[During the Opening Hymn, process from the font to the altar]*

Welcome

Today we mark the 25th anniversary of the ground-breaking ecumenical statement, the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. It signifies a major consensus between Lutherans and Catholics on a doctrine that divided the church in the 16th century. Today *the Joint Declaration* continues to challenge us, asking Catholics and Lutherans, as well as those who have associated with it – Methodists, Anglicans, and Reformed – what is the message of justification for the world today? How do we embody its truth in all spiritual and ecclesial practices and in works of justice? The JDDJ pushes us to ask questions about the nature of the church and communion. We rejoice in the achievements made and in the further questions posed.

Now, together, let us listen to the Word of God, pray, and give thanks.

Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. Through what kind of law? That of works? No, rather through the law of faith. For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law." [Romans 3:21-28]

Word of God! Word of life!

Thanks be to God!

Alleluia

A reading from the Gospel according to John

Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that

I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.” [John 15:1-5]

Word of God! Word of life!

Thanks be to God!

Sermon

♪ Hymn

A reading from the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification

We now hear two excerpts from the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification and the Annex to the Official Common Statement.

The doctrine of justification is that measure or touchstone for the Christian faith. No teaching may contradict this criterion. In this sense, the doctrine of justification is an “indispensable criterion that constantly serves to orient all the teaching and practice of our churches to Christ” (JD 18). As such, it has its truth and specific meaning within the overall context of the Church’s fundamental Trinitarian confession of faith. We “share the goal of confessing Christ in all things, who alone is to be trusted above all things as the one Mediator (1 Tim 2:5-6) through whom God in the Holy Spirit gives himself and pours out his renewing gifts” (JD 18).

Our consensus in basic truths of the doctrine of justification must come to influence the life and teachings of our churches. Here it must prove itself. In this respect, there are still questions of varying importance which need further clarification. These include, among other topics, the relationship between the Word of God and church doctrine, as well as ecclesiology, ecclesial authority, church unity, ministry, the

sacraments, and the relation between justification and social ethics. We are convinced that the consensus we have reached offers a solid basis for this clarification. (JD 43)

▶ *[The following passages may be read if representatives of world communions that have joined the JDDJ are present.]*

Methodist: “The deep connection between forgiveness of sins and making righteous, between justification and sanctification, has always been crucial for the Methodist understanding of the biblical doctrine of justification.”

Anglican: “With Lutherans we share a common understanding of God’s justifying grace, that we are accounted righteous and are made righteous before God only by grace through faith (...) and with the Roman Catholics we agree on the essential aspects of the doctrine of salvation and on the Church’s role within it.”

Reformed: “The doctrine of justification cannot be seen in the abstract, divorced from the reality of injustice, oppression and violence in today’s world” (paragraph 56). Justification is, both a “declaring righteous” and a “setting right.” (World Communion of Reformed Churches Statement of Association, §16 and 20).

Presider:

Our prayer continues as the light of Christ is passed among us. We proclaim Christ who calls us to witness to God’s reconciling and resurrecting love as we walk and pray and work together.

♪ Song

▶ *[During this song, children pass the light from the Christ candle to all those gathered.]*

PRAYERS

Intercessory Prayer²

‣ *[May be led by young people]*

Let us bring the needs of the church, the world, and all in need, to God's loving care, singing:

🎵 **Kyrie eleison**

1. Renew the church throughout the world. Strengthen your testimony to unity in truth and love. Let us walk in the communion of all the baptized under the guidance of the gospel. Bless our further dialogue, overcome the division of the church and let us wait, in full communion, the coming of your Kingdom. O God, hear our prayer!

🎵 **Kyrie eleison**

2. Restore the suffering creation. Teach us to limit our freedom and share all resources that we recognize our deep connectedness to all people and all of your good creation. O God, hear our prayer!

🎵 **Kyrie eleison**

3. Reconcile all people that war and violence come to an end. Remember all those who suffer in Ukraine, Palestine and the whole Middle East, South Sudan, Myanmar and so many other places that we now name out loud or in the silence of our hearts. Embolden us to say "no" to all forms of violence. O God, hear our prayer!

🎵 **Kyrie eleison**

4. Protect all refugees and displaced persons. Give us strength and courage to advocate for their dignity and full human rights. O God, hear our prayer!

🎵 **Kyrie eleison**

5. Gather into your embrace all those who call out to you under different names. Bring an end to inter-religious strife, and make us more faithful witnesses of your merciful love. O God, hear our prayer!

🎵 **Kyrie eleison**

6. Sustain all those who do not call upon you. Open doors for dialogue and collaboration with all peoples of good will. Fill us with peace, that we may live as one human family. O God, hear our prayer!

🎵 **Kyrie eleison**

7. Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live. O God, hear our prayer!

🎵 **Kyrie eleison**

8. Accompany and protect those who are persecuted for faith in you and those of other faiths who suffer persecution. Give us the courage to confess. O God, hear our prayer!

🎵 **Kyrie eleison**

² Prayer 5 is inspired by *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, Good Friday Bidding Prayers and Prayer 7 is inspired by Pope Francis' Encyclical, *Laudato si'* (2015).

The Lord's Prayer

In confidence that you O God hear our prayers for the needs of this world and for

the unity of all Christians in their witness, let us pray in our many languages as Jesus taught us...

Our Father in heaven...

BLESSING AND SENDING

God be gracious to us and bless us!

Amen!

O God, make your face shine upon us, make your ways be known upon the earth, your saving power among all peoples.

Amen!

God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit (+), bless us and all creation. Keep us in your way together in hope.

Amen!

♪ Closing Hymn

Go in peace in common witness and service!

Thanks be to God!

‣ *[A sign of peace may be shared as people depart.]*



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches