



Rejoice Now All the Earth!

LWF Communion Prayer
for the Easter Season 2020

3rd 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).

Third Sunday of Easter, 26 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

Luke 24:13-35

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” They stood still, looking sad.

Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?” He asked them, “What things?” They replied, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.”

Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them.

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking

to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

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

Jesus came alongside two disciples walking the road to Emmaus. These disciples, Cleopas and another, unnamed disciple— (probably female; women in biblical times were often unnamed) did not recognize the risen Christ at first.

The disciples were grieving, disillusioned. Jesus joins them, opens conversation, and then: “They stood still, looking sad.” Full stop. They gradually open their hearts to recount recent events. Their account includes one of the saddest phrases in all of scripture: “we had hoped...” Their hope was gone, vanished, along with their beloved Lord. The risen Christ listens attentively to their outpouring of grief as they resume their walk.

Prior to the pandemic, we had hoped... What is our own account of grief and disillusionment in this unfolding global crisis? Present among God’s people is very real sorrow: for those who are sick, struggling, at risk, dying and dead; for loss of security, jobs, and businesses; for loneliness, anxiety and fear; for health care and other essential workers stressed to the breaking point; for inadequate responses laying bare deep divides and inequalities... the list is long. Are we able to pour out our hurting hearts to fully grieve the present moment? Full stop—to take account of where we’ve been and where we are, in order to hear Christ’s call to new life.

Jesus’ response to the disciples’ and to our own grief can restore hope and heal wintry hearts that can again become “burning” along the way.

“When our hearts are wintry, grieving or in pain, your touch can call us back to life again. Field of our hearts, that dead and bare have been; love is come again like wheat arising green.” *Easter hymn: Now the green blade rises.*

Let us pray...

God of all goodness, we rejoice for the many ways that you reveal your presence as we journey together through this Easter season. Stay with us, open our eyes to the paths that lead to new life, and inspire our hearts to faithfully follow you, 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, 27 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

Acts 2:38-39

Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.”

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

Let us pray...

Ever-living God, author of creation, we give you thanks for your gift of water that brings life and refreshes the earth. Send your Holy Spirit today, that we may be renewed by your loving promise to us, to those who are near and far, and to 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, 28 April 2020

Opening Sentences

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 116:1-2

I love the LORD, because he has heard my voice and my supplications.
Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live.

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

Let us pray...

We love you, Gracious God, and we are grateful that you hear the longings of our bodies and souls. Help us to call upon you in prayer, all the days of our lives, in the name of 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, 29 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

1 Peter 1:21

Through Christ you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

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

Let us pray...

God, we thank you for the gift of Jesus Christ, who is our trust, and the source of our hope. 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, 30 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

1 Peter 17:22-23

Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

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

Let us pray...

Creator of all, you made us to live in mutual love. Bring forth a new birth of love in us, by your Word, 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.

Friday, 1 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

Psalm 116:12-19

What shall I return to the LORD for all his bounty to me?

I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD,

I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people.

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful ones.

O LORD, I am your servant; I am your servant, the child of your serving girl. You have loosed my bonds.

I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the LORD.

I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people,

in the courts of the house of the LORD, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD!

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

Let us pray...

God of mercy, we thank you that in the good news of Easter, we can rest secure in the knowledge that we are precious in your sight, in life and in death. Accept our lives as a living sacrifice, so that we may bear the abundant fruits of your love. 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, 2 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

Luke 24: 29-32

[The disciples] urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?”

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

Let us pray...

Gracious God, come to us by your Holy Spirit. Stay with us. Open our eyes. Light the fires of our hearts with the presence of 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.