



# Season of the Spirit

LWF Communion Prayer  
for Pentecost 2020



THE  
LUTHERAN  
WORLD  
FEDERATION

A Communion  
of Churches

**Week 8 – Seventh Week after Pentecost**

# 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. All scriptural texts are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). The daily lectionary of the Revised Common Lectionary is followed.*

# Sunday, 19 July 2020

## Psalmody

Teach me your way, Lord,  
that I may rely on your faithfulness;  
give me an undivided heart,  
that I may fear your name.  
I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart;  
I will glorify your name forever.  
For great is your love toward me;  
you have delivered me from the depths,  
from the realm of the dead.  
– *Psalm 86:11-13*

## Word

### **Matthew 13:24-30, 26-43**

Jesus put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?’ He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The slaves said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ But he replied, ‘No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is

the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

## Meditation

In Matthew chapter 13, Jesus describes the fullness of God in a series of parables. This parable of the wheat and the weeds can be uncomfortable. God sows wheat. The devil sows weeds. God will keep the wheat and burn the weeds. Read in a binary way, these words are bad news for some, and create anxiety for all who wonder, am I wheat or weed? Thankfully, the gospel is not as simple as that.

Firstly, this parable is about the problem of evil in the world. It poses the perennial problem of good and evil. If God is good, what causes suffering? The easy answer is that there are bad people - weeds. Luther's theology was rooted in the idea that we are simultaneously saint and sinner (*simul justus et peccator*). There is no dividing line between righteous people and sinners. Each of us struggles with our egocentrism, while Christ's righteousness cultivates life in us. This is the gift and promise of the gospel for each of us. Each one of us is a field, in which the righteousness of Christ grows wheat among the weeds.

Secondly, this parable is about vocation. The disciples are confused about their role, but Jesus is sure. Even with lingering questions about the presence of weeds in the wheat, your vocation is clear. You are neither the Sower, nor reapers. What is collected or burned is not your call. You are called to cultivate the field between the sowing and reaping.

The next time you pass a wheat field, stop and look at the plants growing at the edge of that field. You will notice a mixture of at least two types of grass that look very similar. They have the same leaves, the same tillers, similar blades with similar florets. In the early stages of growth, before the full grain appears, can you tell the difference between wheat and weed?

Wisdom knows the true difference. In God's wisdom there can even be symbiosis among different kinds of plants. While we are tempted to maximize production through uniformity and monoculture, indigenous traditions have always known that growing different types of plants together increases health and maturity of the harvest. Growing a mature harvest requires workers with a mature faith that tends with mercy.

We are called to do justice, and participate in the transformation of society. But Jesus reminds us that a self-righteous zeal to judge between wheat and weeds will inevitably harm the grain. God calls the baptized to tend the garden with the grace. Cultivate life. Love mercy, and trust the Lord of the harvest.

## Prayer

Faithful God, most merciful judge, you care for your children with firmness and compassion. By your Spirit nurture us who live in your kingdom, that we may be rooted in the way of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and 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.***

# Monday, 20 July 2020

## Psalmody

We give thanks to you, O God;  
we give thanks; your name is near.  
People tell of your wondrous deeds.

At the set time that I appoint  
I will judge with equity.  
When the earth totters, with all its inhabitants,  
it is I who keep its pillars steady.  
I say to the boastful, "Do not boast,"  
and to the wicked, "Do not lift up your horn;  
do not lift up your horn on high,  
or speak with insolent neck."

For not from the east or from the west  
and not from the wilderness comes lifting up;  
but it is God who executes judgment,  
putting down one and lifting up another.  
For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup  
with foaming wine, well mixed;  
he will pour a draught from it,  
and all the wicked of the earth  
shall drain it down to the dregs.  
But I will rejoice forever;  
I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

All the horns of the wicked I will cut off,  
but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

– *Psalm 75*

## Word

### Revelation 14:12-13

Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and hold fast to the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them."

## Prayer

Faithful God, most merciful judge, you care for your children with firmness and compassion. By your Spirit nurture us who live in your kingdom, that we may be rooted in the way of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and 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.***

# Tuesday, 21 July 2020

## Psalmody

We give thanks to you, O God;  
we give thanks; your name is near.  
People tell of your wondrous deeds.

At the set time that I appoint  
I will judge with equity.  
When the earth totters, with all its inhabitants,  
it is I who keep its pillars steady.  
I say to the boastful, "Do not boast,"  
and to the wicked, "Do not lift up your horn;  
do not lift up your horn on high,  
or speak with insolent neck."

For not from the east or from the west  
and not from the wilderness comes lifting up;  
but it is God who executes judgment,  
putting down one and lifting up another.  
For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup  
with foaming wine, well mixed;  
he will pour a draught from it,  
and all the wicked of the earth  
shall drain it down to the dregs.  
But I will rejoice forever;  
I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

All the horns of the wicked I will cut off,  
but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

– *Psalm 75*

## Word

### **Galatians 5:1**

For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

## Prayer

Faithful God, most merciful judge, you care for your children with firmness and compassion. By your Spirit nurture us who live in your kingdom, that we may be rooted in the way of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and 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.***

# Wednesday, 22 July 2020

## Psalmody

We give thanks to you, O God;  
we give thanks; your name is near.  
People tell of your wondrous deeds.

At the set time that I appoint  
I will judge with equity.  
When the earth totters, with all its inhabitants,  
it is I who keep its pillars steady.  
I say to the boastful, "Do not boast,"  
and to the wicked, "Do not lift up your horn;  
do not lift up your horn on high,  
or speak with insolent neck."

For not from the east or from the west  
and not from the wilderness comes lifting up;  
but it is God who executes judgment,  
putting down one and lifting up another.  
For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup  
with foaming wine, well mixed;  
he will pour a draught from it,  
and all the wicked of the earth  
shall drain it down to the dregs.  
But I will rejoice forever;  
I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

All the horns of the wicked I will cut off,  
but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

– *Psalm 75*

## Word

### **Matthew 12:15-21**

When Jesus became aware of this, he departed. Many crowds followed him, and he cured all of them, and he ordered them not to make him known. This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

“Here is my servant, whom I have chosen,  
my beloved, with whom my soul is well pleased.  
I will put my Spirit upon him,  
and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.  
He will not wrangle or cry aloud,  
nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets.  
He will not break a bruised reed  
or quench a smoldering wick  
until he brings justice to victory.  
And in his name the Gentiles will hope.”

## Prayer

Faithful God, most merciful judge, you care for your children with firmness and compassion. By your Spirit nurture us who live in your kingdom, that we may be rooted in the way of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and 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.***

# Thursday, 23 July 2020

## Psalmody

Your decrees are wonderful;  
therefore my soul keeps them.  
The unfolding of your words gives light;  
it imparts understanding to the simple.  
With open mouth I pant,  
because I long for your commandments.  
Turn to me and be gracious to me,  
as is your custom toward those who love your name.  
Keep my steps steady according to your promise,  
and never let iniquity have dominion over me.  
Redeem me from human oppression,  
that I may keep your precepts.  
Make your face shine upon your servant,  
and teach me your statutes.  
My eyes shed streams of tears  
– *Psalm 119:129-136*

## Word

### **1 Corinthians 4:15-20**

Paul writes, “For though you might have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. I appeal to you, then, be imitators of me. For this reason I sent you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ Jesus, as I teach them everywhere in every church. But some of you, thinking that I am not coming to you, have become arrogant. But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. For the kingdom of God depends not on talk but on power.

# Prayer

Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and 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, 24 July 2020

## Psalmody

Your decrees are wonderful;  
    therefore my soul keeps them.  
The unfolding of your words gives light;  
    it imparts understanding to the simple.  
With open mouth I pant,  
    because I long for your commandments.  
Turn to me and be gracious to me,  
    as is your custom toward those who love your name.  
Keep my steps steady according to your promise,  
    and never let iniquity have dominion over me.  
Redeem me from human oppression,  
    that I may keep your precepts.  
Make your face shine upon your servant,  
    and teach me your statutes.  
My eyes shed streams of tears

– *Psalm 119:129-136*

## Word

### Acts 7:44-50

Our ancestors had the tent of testimony in the wilderness, as God directed when he spoke to Moses, ordering him to make it according to the pattern he had seen. Our ancestors in turn brought it in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before our ancestors. And it was there until the time of David, who found favor with God and asked that he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob. But it was Solomon who built a house for him. Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with human hands; as the prophet says,

‘Heaven is my throne,

and the earth is my footstool.

What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord,

or what is the place of my rest?

Did not my hand make all these things?’

## Prayer

Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and 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.***

# Saturday, 25 July 2020

## Psalmody

Your decrees are wonderful;  
    therefore my soul keeps them.  
The unfolding of your words gives light;  
    it imparts understanding to the simple.  
With open mouth I pant,  
    because I long for your commandments.  
Turn to me and be gracious to me,  
    as is your custom toward those who love your name.  
Keep my steps steady according to your promise,  
    and never let iniquity have dominion over me.  
Redeem me from human oppression,  
    that I may keep your precepts.  
Make your face shine upon your servant,  
    and teach me your statutes.  
My eyes shed streams of tears  
– *Psalm 119:129-136*

## Word

### **Matthew 12:38-42**

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Jesus, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth. The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here! The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and see, something greater than Solomon is here!

## Prayer

Gracious God, we remember before you today your servant and apostle James, the first among the twelve to be martyred for the name of Jesus Christ. Pour out on the leaders of your church that spirit of self-denying service which is the true mark of authority among your people, through Jesus Christ our servant, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. 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.***