



Season of the Spirit

LWF Communion Prayer
for Pentecost 2020



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches

Week 9 – Eighth 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, 26 July 2020

Psalmody

O give thanks to the LORD, call on his name, make known his deeds among the peoples.

Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wonderful works.

Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually.

Remember the wonderful works he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he uttered,

O offspring of his servant Abraham, children of Jacob, his chosen ones.

He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth.

He is mindful of his covenant forever, of the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations,

the covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac,

which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan as your portion for an inheritance."

Praise the LORD!

– *Psalm 105:1-11, 45b*

Word

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

Meditation

The Gospel reading for this Sunday continues Jesus' spiritual teaching about God's reign. As a communion of Lutheran churches, we strive to participate in God's "kingdom come... on Earth as it is in heaven". But how do we recognize it? What is the sign of greatness in God's kingdom? In the parables of the mustard seed and the yeast, two signs stand out. Becoming and Hospitality.

God is always birthing new life, transforming or recreating. Renewal is sustained by a holy synergy of right relationships. When we mix a proper balance of water, yeast and flour, energy is released, and they become something new and life-giving: bread. Our churches are mixing bowls where the Word, sacraments, fellowship and service meet the world to release a dynamism by which the Body of Christ becomes bread for the world. In relationships, social reform, economic justice, ecological renewal—becoming is an icon of the kingdom.

And when do we know we have become great? Do we measure greatness in size, beauty, force? No, none of these. The mustard plant is not very large, even compared to other bushes. The mustard flower is yellow but not particularly known for its beauty. While it is tenacious, it is not particularly strong. Jesus teaches that the mustard plant becomes great when it provides a safe home for the birds of the air. In God's kingdom, every creature has a place to thrive. Diversity is part of this wisdom. People need animals, who need plants, who need soil and sun, who nourish the whole web. While pain and suffering are unavoidable in life, mutual hospitality is a mark of the kingdom. Where we open hospitable sanctuaries for the stranger and marginalized, nurture just relationships between women, men, and children in homes and workplaces, create safe spaces for emotional and physical healing, or cultivate biodiversity in our corner of the garden - mutual hospitality is an icon of the kingdom.

The Word is like a little mustard seed, or a tiny yeast, that is active in you, calling from your baptism, releasing new life. The Kingdom of God is in you. What are you becoming? What life is nurtured in your branches?

Prayer

Gracious God, we thank you for your Word and Wisdom. Open the eyes of our hearts to see your presence. Nurture in us the fruit of your kingdom, so that we may transform injustice, and create safe spaces where all may rest in your love, which you have revealed in 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.

Monday, 27 July 2020

Psalmody

The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders;
where morning dawns, where evening fades,
you call forth songs of joy.

You care for the land and water it;
you enrich it abundantly.

The streams of God are filled with water
to provide the people with grain,
for so you have ordained it.

You drench its furrows and level its ridges;
you soften it with showers and bless its crops.

You crown the year with your bounty,
and your carts overflow with abundance.

The grasslands of the wilderness overflow;
the hills are clothed with gladness.

The meadows are covered with flocks
and the valleys are mantled with grain;
they shout for joy and sing.

– *Psalm 65:8-13*

Word

James 3:13-18

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

Prayer

Gracious God, we thank you for your Word and Wisdom. Open the eyes of our hearts to see your presence. Nurture in us the fruit of your kingdom, so that we may transform injustice, and create safe spaces where all may rest in your love, which you have revealed in 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.

Tuesday, 28 July 2020

Psalmody

The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders;
where morning dawns, where evening fades,
you call forth songs of joy.

You care for the land and water it;
you enrich it abundantly.

The streams of God are filled with water
to provide the people with grain,
for so you have ordained it.

You drench its furrows and level its ridges;
you soften it with showers and bless its crops.

You crown the year with your bounty,
and your carts overflow with abundance.

The grasslands of the wilderness overflow;
the hills are clothed with gladness.

The meadows are covered with flocks
and the valleys are mantled with grain;
they shout for joy and sing.

– *Psalm 65:8-13*

Word

1 Kings 4:29-34

God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. He was wiser than anyone else, including Ethan the Ezrahite—wiser than Heman, Kalkol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. He spoke about plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also spoke about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. From all nations people came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.

Prayer

Gracious God, we thank you for your Word and Wisdom. Open the eyes of our hearts to see your presence. Nurture in us the fruit of your kingdom, so that we may transform injustice, and create safe spaces where all may rest in your love, which you have revealed in 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.

Wednesday, 29 July 2020

Psalmody

The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders;
where morning dawns, where evening fades,
you call forth songs of joy.

You care for the land and water it;
you enrich it abundantly.

The streams of God are filled with water
to provide the people with grain,
for so you have ordained it.

You drench its furrows and level its ridges;
you soften it with showers and bless its crops.

You crown the year with your bounty,
and your carts overflow with abundance.

The grasslands of the wilderness overflow;
the hills are clothed with gladness.

The meadows are covered with flocks
and the valleys are mantled with grain;
they shout for joy and sing.

– *Psalm 65:8-13*

Word

Proverbs 1:1-7

The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:

for gaining wisdom and instruction;
for understanding words of insight;
for receiving instruction in prudent behavior,
doing what is right and just and fair;
for giving prudence to those who are simple,
knowledge and discretion to the young—
let the wise listen and add to their learning,
and let the discerning get guidance—
for understanding proverbs and parables,
the sayings and riddles of the wise.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,
but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Prayer

Gracious God, we thank you for your Word and Wisdom. Open the eyes of our hearts to see your presence. Nurture in us the fruit of your kingdom, so that we may transform injustice, and create safe spaces where all may rest in your love, which you have revealed in 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.

Thursday, 30 July 2020

Psalmody

Hear me, LORD, my plea is just;

listen to my cry.

Hear my prayer—

it does not rise from deceitful lips.

Let my vindication come from you;

may your eyes see what is right.

Though you probe my heart,

though you examine me at night and test me,

you will find that I have planned no evil;

my mouth has not transgressed.

Though people tried to bribe me,

I have kept myself from the ways of the violent

through what your lips have commanded.

My steps have held to your paths;

my feet have not stumbled.

I call on you, my God, for you will answer me;

turn your ear to me and hear my prayer.

Show me the wonders of your great love,

you who save by your right hand

those who take refuge in you from their foes.

– *Psalm 17:1-7*

Word

Philippians 4:10-15

I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength. Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only.

Prayer

Gracious God, the eyes of all look to you to satisfy our needs. When we are fed and well, help us to be content. Where others are in want, create in us a hunger for justice. We ask this in gratitude for the bread of life, 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, 31 July 2020

Psalmody

Hear me, LORD, my plea is just;
listen to my cry.
Hear my prayer—
it does not rise from deceitful lips.
Let my vindication come from you;
may your eyes see what is right.

Though you probe my heart,
though you examine me at night and test me,
you will find that I have planned no evil;
my mouth has not transgressed.
Though people tried to bribe me,
I have kept myself from the ways of the violent
through what your lips have commanded.
My steps have held to your paths;
my feet have not stumbled.

I call on you, my God, for you will answer me;
turn your ear to me and hear my prayer.
Show me the wonders of your great love,
you who save by your right hand
those who take refuge in you from their foes.

– *Psalm 17:1-7*

Word

Psalm 145:14-21

The LORD upholds all who fall
and lifts up all who are bowed down.
The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food at the proper time.
You open your hand
and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

The LORD is righteous in all his ways
and faithful in all he does.
The LORD is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.
He fulfills the desires of those who fear him;
he hears their cry and saves them.
The LORD watches over all who love him,
but all the wicked he will destroy.

My mouth will speak in praise of the LORD.
Let every creature praise his holy name
for ever and ever.

Prayer

Gracious God, the eyes of all look to you to satisfy our needs. When we are fed and well, help us to be content. Where others are in want, create in us a hunger for justice. We ask this in gratitude for the bread of life, 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.

Saturday, 1 August 2020

Psalmody

Hear me, LORD, my plea is just;
listen to my cry.

Hear my prayer—
it does not rise from deceitful lips.

Let my vindication come from you;
may your eyes see what is right.

Though you probe my heart,
though you examine me at night and test me,
you will find that I have planned no evil;
my mouth has not transgressed.

Though people tried to bribe me,
I have kept myself from the ways of the violent
through what your lips have commanded.

My steps have held to your paths;
my feet have not stumbled.

I call on you, my God, for you will answer me;
turn your ear to me and hear my prayer.

Show me the wonders of your great love,
you who save by your right hand
those who take refuge in you from their foes.

– *Psalm 17:1-7*

Word

Matthew 7:7-11

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Prayer

Gracious God, the eyes of all look to you to satisfy our needs. When we are fed and well, help us to be content. Where others are in want, create in us a hunger for justice. We ask this in gratitude for the bread of life, 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.