



Season of the Spirit

LWF Communion Prayer
for Pentecost 2020



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches

Week 14 – Thirteenth 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 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, 30 August 2020

Psalmody

Vindicate me, O Lord,
for I have walked in my integrity,
and I have trusted in the Lord without wavering.

Prove me, O Lord, and try me;
test my heart and mind.
For your steadfast love is before my eyes,
and I walk in faithfulness to you.

I do not sit with the worthless,
nor do I consort with hypocrites;
I hate the company of evildoers,
and will not sit with the wicked.

I wash my hands in innocence,
and go around your altar, O Lord,
singing aloud a song of thanksgiving,
and telling all your wondrous deeds.

O Lord, I love the house in which you dwell,
and the place where your glory abides.

– *Psalm 26:1-8*

Word

Romans 12:9-21

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” No, “if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Meditation

“What is the change we want to see?” is a question that is familiar to us. More specifically: What does transformation that expresses God’s will—what is good and acceptable and perfect—look like in our time and in our world? In Romans 12, Paul invites us to “not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds” (12:1); the whole chapter offers us life-shaping material for soul-searching reflection and further inspiration to live our new life in Christ with confidence. Some of us might choose to meditatively and prayerfully dwell on each verse everyday so that we open ourselves to a path of genuine transformation plainly laid out in this chapter.

All that is listed in Romans 12:9-21 seems to be an overall impossible task—especially for the early Christians who do not possess political power and privilege living in Rome ruled under an oppressive empire. If the message in this passage is hard for them, how much more for us today who might feel relatively disempowered during a time of pandemic and global turmoil. Yet, in a world that is still plagued with much suffering and evil, Paul shows us what God’s transformative work in and through us looks like in very practical terms. ‘Transformation’ is unpacked in multiple ways: In a community of genuine love

and service, we find strength in hope, patience in suffering, and perseverance in prayer (v.12); we are also invited to care for the needs of saints and show hospitality to strangers (v.13). Additionally, there is encouragement to live in harmony with one another and peacefully in the face of much hardship, hostility, and evil (vv. 14-18). And finally, when we are confronted with the temptation to take the path of vengeance, we are ushered to another way—the way of the cross that overcomes evil with good (v.21).

While an honest review of history exposes many who changed for the worse by aligning themselves to corrupt power that is unholy and unacceptable to God, we look to the faithful witnesses (and in some cases martyrs) who have embodied the truths in Romans 12 as models to emulate. Rather than reading Romans 12 as a list of burdensome imperatives that we can never fully obey, let us refuse to let evil have the final say in our life time by embracing afresh God’s transformative message toward us. The good news of being liberated by God’s grace enables us to be “more than conquerors”—overcoming evil with good against all odds—rooted in “the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:37-39).

Prayer

Your voice burns within the depths of our being,
O God of our ancestors,
and draws us into your presence and service.
Hear the cries of your people
and speak a word of comfort,
that we may proclaim to all the earth
the glory of your name. 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, 31 August 2020

Psalmody

Hear a just cause, O Lord; attend to my cry;
give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit.
From you let my vindication come;
let your eyes see the right.

If you try my heart, if you visit me by night,
if you test me, you will find no wickedness in me;
my mouth does not transgress.

As for what others do, by the word of your lips
I have avoided the ways of the violent.
My steps have held fast to your paths;
my feet have not slipped.

I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God;
incline your ear to me, hear my words.
Wondrously show your steadfast love,
O savior of those who seek refuge
from their adversaries at your right hand.

Guard me as the apple of the eye;
hide me in the shadow of your wings,
from the wicked who despoil me,
my deadly enemies who surround me.
They close their hearts to pity;
with their mouths they speak arrogantly.
They track me down; now they surround me;
they set their eyes to cast me to the ground.
They are like a lion eager to tear,
like a young lion lurking in ambush.

Rise up, O Lord, confront them, overthrow them!

By your sword deliver my life from the wicked,
from mortals—by your hand, O Lord—

from mortals whose portion in life is in this world.

May their bellies be filled with what you have stored up for them;

may their children have more than enough;

may they leave something over to their little ones.

As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness;

when I awake I shall be satisfied, beholding your likeness.

– *Psalm 17:1-15*

Word

Revelation 3:1-6

“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars:

“I know your works; you have a name of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is on the point of death, for I have not found your works perfect in the sight of my God. Remember then what you received and heard; obey it, and repent. If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you. Yet you have still a few persons in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes; they will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. If you conquer, you will be clothed like them in white robes, and I will not blot your name out of the book of life; I will confess your name before my Father and before his angels. Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

Prayer

In the flaming bush
you promised deliverance to your people, O God,
and in the cross of Jesus
you embraced our suffering and pain.

In times of misery,
show us the transforming power of your love
that we may know the hope of your glory. 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, 1 September 2020

Psalmody

Hear a just cause, O Lord; attend to my cry;
give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit.
From you let my vindication come;
let your eyes see the right.

If you try my heart, if you visit me by night,
if you test me, you will find no wickedness in me;
my mouth does not transgress.

As for what others do, by the word of your lips
I have avoided the ways of the violent.

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

I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God;
incline your ear to me, hear my words.

Wondrously show your steadfast love,
O savior of those who seek refuge
from their adversaries at your right hand.

Guard me as the apple of the eye;
hide me in the shadow of your wings,
from the wicked who despoil me,
my deadly enemies who surround me.

They close their hearts to pity;
with their mouths they speak arrogantly.
They track me down; now they surround me;
they set their eyes to cast me to the ground.
They are like a lion eager to tear,
like a young lion lurking in ambush.

Rise up, O Lord, confront them, overthrow them!
By your sword deliver my life from the wicked,
from mortals—by your hand, O Lord—
from mortals whose portion in life is in this world.
May their bellies be filled with what you have stored up for them;
may their children have more than enough;
may they leave something over to their little ones.

As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness;
when I awake I shall be satisfied, beholding your likeness.
— *Psalm 17:1-15*

Word

Revelation 3:7-13

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

These are the words of the holy one, the true one,
who has the key of David,
who opens and no one will shut,
who shuts and no one opens:

“I know your works. Look, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but are lying—I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. Because you have kept my word of patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. I am coming soon; hold fast to what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. If you conquer, I will make you a pillar in the temple of my God; you will never go out of it. I will write on you the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem that comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

Prayer

In the flaming bush
you promised deliverance to your people, O God,
and in the cross of Jesus
you embraced our suffering and pain.

In times of misery,
show us the transforming power of your love
that we may know the hope of your glory. 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, 2 September 2020

Psalmody

Hear a just cause, O Lord; attend to my cry;
give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit.
From you let my vindication come;
let your eyes see the right.

If you try my heart, if you visit me by night,
if you test me, you will find no wickedness in me;
my mouth does not transgress.

As for what others do, by the word of your lips
I have avoided the ways of the violent.

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

I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God;
incline your ear to me, hear my words.

Wondrously show your steadfast love,
O savior of those who seek refuge
from their adversaries at your right hand.

Guard me as the apple of the eye;
hide me in the shadow of your wings,
from the wicked who despoil me,
my deadly enemies who surround me.

They close their hearts to pity;
with their mouths they speak arrogantly.

They track me down; now they surround me;
they set their eyes to cast me to the ground.

They are like a lion eager to tear,
like a young lion lurking in ambush.

Rise up, O Lord, confront them, overthrow them!

By your sword deliver my life from the wicked,
from mortals—by your hand, O Lord—

from mortals whose portion in life is in this world.

May their bellies be filled with what you have stored up for them;

may their children have more than enough;

may they leave something over to their little ones.

As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness;

when I awake I shall be satisfied, beholding your likeness.

– *Psalm 17:1-15*

Word

Matthew 12:22-32

Then they brought to [Jesus] a demoniac who was blind and mute; and he cured him, so that the one who had been mute could speak and see. All the crowds were amazed and said, “Can this be the Son of David?” But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, “It is only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons, that this fellow casts out the demons.” He knew what they were thinking and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your own exorcists cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you. Or how can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his property, without first tying up the strong man? Then indeed the house can be plundered. Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. Therefore I tell you, people will be forgiven for every sin and blasphemy, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

Prayer

In the flaming bush
you promised deliverance to your people, O God,
and in the cross of Jesus
you embraced our suffering and pain.

In times of misery,
show us the transforming power of your love
that we may know the hope of your glory. 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, 3 September 2020

Psalmody

Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes,
and I will observe it to the end.

Give me understanding, that I may keep your law
and observe it with my whole heart.

Lead me in the path of your commandments,
for I delight in it.

Turn my heart to your decrees,
and not to selfish gain.

Turn my eyes from looking at vanities;
give me life in your ways.

Confirm to your servant your promise,
which is for those who fear you.

Turn away the disgrace that I dread,
for your ordinances are good.

See, I have longed for your precepts;
in your righteousness give me life.

– *Psalm 119:33-40*

Word

2 Corinthians 12:11-21

I have been a fool! You forced me to it. Indeed you should have been the ones commending me, for I am not at all inferior to these super-apostles, even though I am nothing. The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, signs and wonders and mighty works. How have you been worse off than the other churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong!

Here I am, ready to come to you this third time. And I will not be a burden, because I do not want what is yours but you; for children ought not to lay up for their parents, but parents for their children. I will most gladly spend and be spent for you. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? Let it be assumed that I did not burden you. Nevertheless (you say) since I was crafty, I took you in by deceit. Did I take advantage of you through any of those whom I sent to you? I urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Titus did not take advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves with the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps?

Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves before you? We are speaking in Christ before God. Everything we do, beloved, is for the sake of building you up. For I fear that when I come, I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish; I fear that there may perhaps be quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. I fear that when I come again, my God may humble me before you, and that I may have to mourn over many who previously sinned and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and licentiousness that they have practiced.

Prayer

Faithful God,
you are the hope of all the oppressed,
and the source of freedom for those held captive.
Make us strong to witness to your liberating power,
in generosity of life and in humility of spirit,
that all the world may delight in your goodness.

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, 4 September 2020

Psalmody

Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes,
and I will observe it to the end.

Give me understanding, that I may keep your law
and observe it with my whole heart.

Lead me in the path of your commandments,
for I delight in it.

Turn my heart to your decrees,
and not to selfish gain.

Turn my eyes from looking at vanities;
give me life in your ways.

Confirm to your servant your promise,
which is for those who fear you.

Turn away the disgrace that I dread,
for your ordinances are good.

See, I have longed for your precepts;
in your righteousness give me life.

– *Psalm 119:33-40*

Word

Romans 10:15-21

And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” But not all have obeyed the good news; for Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have; for

“Their voice has gone out to all the earth,
and their words to the ends of the world.”

Again I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says,

“I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation;
with a foolish nation I will make you angry.”

Then Isaiah is so bold as to say,

“I have been found by those who did not seek me;
I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me.”

But of Israel he says, “All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people.”

Prayer

Faithful God,
you are the hope of all the oppressed,
and the source of freedom for those held captive.
Make us strong to witness to your liberating power,
in generosity of life and in humility of spirit,
that all the world may delight in your goodness. 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, 5 September 2020

Psalmody

Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes,
and I will observe it to the end.

Give me understanding, that I may keep your law
and observe it with my whole heart.

Lead me in the path of your commandments,
for I delight in it.

Turn my heart to your decrees,
and not to selfish gain.

Turn my eyes from looking at vanities;
give me life in your ways.

Confirm to your servant your promise,
which is for those who fear you.

Turn away the disgrace that I dread,
for your ordinances are good.

See, I have longed for your precepts;
in your righteousness give me life.

– *Psalm 119:33-40*

Word

Matthew 23:29-36

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous, and you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ Thus you testify against yourselves that you are descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your ancestors. You snakes, you brood of vipers! How can you escape being sentenced to hell? Therefore I send you prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town, so that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. Truly I tell you, all this will come upon this generation.

Prayer

Faithful God,
you are the hope of all the oppressed,
and the source of freedom for those held captive.
Make us strong to witness to your liberating power,
in generosity of life and in humility of spirit,
that all the world may delight in your goodness. 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.