



Season of Creation

LWF Communion Prayer for Pentecost 2020

Week 16 – Fifteenth Week after Pentecost



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches



SEASON OF
CREATION

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. Though it is called ordinary the season of Pentecost is 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. 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.

Within this green time, [the weeks from 1 September-4 October mark the Season of Creation](#). This is a season to give thanks for all creation, and the Holy Spirit who renews the face of the earth, and our human vocation to till and keep the garden in a just sustainable peace.

During the Season of Creation, [the LWF joins our ecumenical family in preparing the 2020 Celebration Guide, which includes the ecumenical liturgy that shapes our prayers during these five weeks](#). The 2020 theme, ***Jubilee for the Earth***, invites you to consider the integral relationship between rest for the earth and ecological, economic, social and political ways of living. This particular year, the need for just and sustainable systems has been revealed by the far-reaching effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

We offer this resource to our global Lutheran communion, as a way to be in the solidarity of prayer during this Season of Creation. 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 these weeks include meditations on themes related to the Season of Creation.

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, 13 September 2020

Psalmody

God made the moon to mark the seasons,
and the sun knows when to go down.

You bring darkness, it becomes night,
and all the beasts of the forest prowl.

The lions roar for their prey
and seek their food from God.

The sun rises, and they steal away;
they return and lie down in their dens.

Then people go out to their work,
to their labor until evening.

How many are your works, Lord!
In wisdom you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.

All creatures look to you
to give them their food at the proper time.

When you give it to them,
they gather it up;

when you open your hand,
they are satisfied with good things.

When you hide your face,
they are terrified;

when you take away their breath,
they die and return to the dust.

When you send your Spirit,
they are created
and you renew the face of the ground.

May the glory of the Lord endure forever;
may the Lord rejoice in his works
– *Psalm 104*

Word

Romans 14:1-12

Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand. One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written:

“As surely as I live,’ says the Lord,
‘every knee will bow before me;
every tongue will acknowledge God.’”

So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

Meditation

Liberty is a cornerstone of the Lutheran tradition. In 1520, Martin Luther wrote an essay called, *On the Freedom of a Christian*. As Lutherans, we celebrate the good news that we are liberated by God's grace. It is always tempting to use our freedom to do whatever we desire. But Luther's essay reminded us that while we are "perfectly free, subject to none", love compels us to always remain "perfectly bound, servant to all". We are bound to love our neighbour, not out of compulsion, but as a result of our perfect freedom. This paradox is recorded in Paul's letter to the Galatians when he writes, "For freedom, Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and never again put on the yolk of slavery." In other words, we are freed for the freedom to do that which is loving. In today's passage from Romans, Paul actually works out what that looks like in some very practical situations.

Paul acknowledges that the gospel frees us from all of the constraints of the law, including social and religious restrictions such as dietary laws, liturgical or religious requirements for purity, or social and gender related exclusions. However, Paul is clear that our liberty to disregard those restrictions should not cause offense to others, because in doing so, we can exclude others from the inclusive, life giving community that the gospel of liberty aims to establish. For instance, we are free from needing to cover our heads or remove our shoes in worship, however, if we visit a Christian, Muslim, Jewish or Buddhist home or house of worship who has this practice, we are certainly free to observe unharmful restrictions, in order to demonstrate our love for them. In the same way, while some of us may be free to gather in small assemblies for worship during the COVID-19 pandemic, we refrain from doing so, as a way to protect the most vulnerable in our community (particularly the aged or those with co-morbidities). A Christian gladly balances their liberties for the well-being and just sustainability of our neighbours. That is the law of love in action.

The Season of Creation provides us with another context to apply this paradox of Christian liberty. Many people interpret the Genesis account of creation as a license for human beings to exploit the earth and its creatures for human consumption and enjoyment. Theologically, we need to critique this idea on the three accounts. (1) This is not the nature of Divine dominion, in the Hebrew sense of the word from Genesis 1:26. (2) Genesis 2:15 is clear that the human vocation is to till and to keep God's garden by safeguarding conditions that sustain life. (3) The notion of dominion is distorted as domination by the philosophical idea of the Great Chain of Being, where humans can use everything deemed below them, and worship God who is the only being above them on the chain. This idea is contrary to the Biblical wisdom that portrays a web of life sustained by just, righteous relationships with one another and all creatures. But there is one more reason that Christians must not exploit creation that is found in today's reading – Christian liberty.

The Earth is a commons. The air, the rivers and oceans, the plants and minerals are held in common with every animal and people in all lands, and by every generation throughout each generation. The concepts of the Sabbath and the Jubilee remind us that we do not have the right to consume or use more than our share of this commons, for our own wellbeing, and for the wellbeing of the Earth and next generations. But even if you think you are so free that these restrictions do not apply to you, Paul reminds us, “none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone”. As Luther says it, we are perfectly free, but in our freedom, we are perfectly bound to live in a way that safeguards the life of our neighbour, be they human, non-human, or yet to be born.

Creation is a gift, not a given. May our freedom in Christ be shown by the way we freely care for the Earth, so that our living “will give an account of ourselves to God”.

Prayer

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. Creative Spirit, enlighten our hearts and remain with your world.

(from the 2020 Season of Creation Celebration Guide)

Our Father in heaven ...

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

May God who established the dance of creation,
Who marveled at the lilies of the field,
Who transforms chaos to order,
Lead us to transform our lives and the Church
To reflect God's glory in creation.

(CTBI Eco-Congregation Programme)

Amen.

Monday, 14 September 2020

Psalmody

God made the moon to mark the seasons,
and the sun knows when to go down.

You bring darkness, it becomes night,
and all the beasts of the forest prowl.

The lions roar for their prey
and seek their food from God.

The sun rises, and they steal away;
they return and lie down in their dens.

Then people go out to their work,
to their labor until evening.

How many are your works, Lord!
In wisdom you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.

All creatures look to you
to give them their food at the proper time.

When you give it to them,
they gather it up;

when you open your hand,
they are satisfied with good things.

When you hide your face,
they are terrified;

when you take away their breath,
they die and return to the dust.

When you send your Spirit,
they are created,
and you renew the face of the ground.

May the glory of the Lord endure forever;
may the Lord rejoice in his works
– *Psalm 104*

Word

Hebrews 11:23-29

By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel. By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

Prayer

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. Creative Spirit, enlighten our hearts and remain with your world.

(from the 2020 Season of Creation Celebration Guide)

Our Father in heaven ...

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

May God who established the dance of creation,
Who marveled at the lilies of the field,
Who transforms chaos to order,
Lead us to transform our lives and the Church
To reflect God's glory in creation.

(CTBI Eco-Congregation Programme)

Amen.

Tuesday, 15 September 2020

Psalmody

God made the moon to mark the seasons,
and the sun knows when to go down.

You bring darkness, it becomes night,
and all the beasts of the forest prowl.

The lions roar for their prey
and seek their food from God.

The sun rises, and they steal away;
they return and lie down in their dens.

Then people go out to their work,
to their labor until evening.

How many are your works, Lord!
In wisdom you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.

All creatures look to you
to give them their food at the proper time.

When you give it to them,
they gather it up;
when you open your hand,
they are satisfied with good things.

When you hide your face,
they are terrified;
when you take away their breath,
they die and return to the dust.

When you send your Spirit,
they are created,
and you renew the face of the ground.

May the glory of the Lord endure forever;
may the Lord rejoice in his works
– *Psalms 104*

Word

Nehemiah 9:9-15

“You saw the suffering of our ancestors in Egypt; you heard their cry at the Red Sea. You sent signs and wonders against Pharaoh, against all his officials and all the people of his land, for you knew how arrogantly the Egyptians treated them. You made a name for yourself, which remains to this day. You divided the sea before them, so that they passed through it on dry ground, but you hurled their pursuers into the depths, like a stone into mighty waters. By day you led them with a pillar of cloud, and by night with a pillar of fire to give them light on the way they were to take. “You came down on Mount Sinai; you spoke to them from heaven. You gave them regulations and laws that are just and right, and decrees and commands that are good. You made known to them your holy Sabbath and gave them commands, decrees and laws through your servant Moses. In their hunger you gave them bread from heaven and in their thirst you brought them water from the rock; you told them to go in and take possession of the land you had sworn with uplifted hand to give them.

Prayer

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. Creative Spirit, enlighten our hearts and remain with your world.

(from the 2020 Season of Creation Celebration Guide)

Our Father in heaven ...

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

May God who established the dance of creation,
Who marveled at the lilies of the field,
Who transforms chaos to order,
Lead us to transform our lives and the Church
To reflect God's glory in creation.

(CTBI Eco-Congregation Programme)

Amen.

Wednesday, 16 September 2020

Psalmody

God made the moon to mark the seasons,
and the sun knows when to go down.

You bring darkness, it becomes night,
and all the beasts of the forest prowl.

The lions roar for their prey
and seek their food from God.

The sun rises, and they steal away;
they return and lie down in their dens.

Then people go out to their work,
to their labor until evening.

How many are your works, Lord!
In wisdom you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.

All creatures look to you
to give them their food at the proper time.

When you give it to them,
they gather it up;
when you open your hand,
they are satisfied with good things.

When you hide your face,
they are terrified;
when you take away their breath,
they die and return to the dust.

When you send your Spirit,
they are created,
and you renew the face of the ground.

May the glory of the Lord endure forever;
may the Lord rejoice in his works
– *Psalm 104*

Word

Mark 11:20-25

In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. Peter remembered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!” “Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. “Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”

Prayer

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. Creative Spirit, enlighten our hearts and remain with your world.

(from the 2020 Season of Creation Celebration Guide)

Our Father in heaven ...

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

May God who established the dance of creation,
Who marveled at the lilies of the field,
Who transforms chaos to order,
Lead us to transform our lives and the Church
To reflect God's glory in creation.

(CTBI Eco-Congregation Programme)

Amen.

Thursday, 17 September 2020

Psalmody

Does not wisdom call out?
Does not understanding raise her voice?

“The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works,
before his deeds of old;

I was formed long ages ago,
at the very beginning, when the world came to be.

When there were no watery depths, I was given birth,
when there were no springs overflowing with water;
before the mountains were settled in place,
before the hills, I was given birth,
before he made the world or its fields
or any of the dust of the earth.

I was there when he set the heavens in place,
when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep,
when he established the clouds above
and fixed securely the fountains of the deep,
when he gave the sea its boundary
so the waters would not overstep his command,
and when he marked out the foundations of the earth.
Then I was constantly at his side.

I was filled with delight day after day,
rejoicing always in his presence,
rejoicing in his whole world
and delighting in humankind.

– *Proverbs 8*

Word

2 Corinthians 13:1-4

This will be my third visit to you. “Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” I already gave you a warning when I was with you the second time. I now repeat it while absent: On my return I will not spare those who sinned earlier or any of the others, since you are demanding proof that Christ is speaking through me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God’s power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God’s power we will live with him in our dealing with you.

Prayer

We give thanks for Mother Earth in whom all life is rooted, Brother Sun whose energy radiates life, Sister Water who nurtures and revives us, and co-creatures with whom we live, and for whom we are called to till and keep this garden. Creative Spirit, enlighten our hearts and remain with your world.
(from the 2020 Season of Creation Celebration Guide)

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

May God who established the dance of creation,
Who marveled at the lilies of the field,
Who transforms chaos to order,
Lead us to transform our lives and the Church
To reflect God’s glory in creation.
(CTBI Eco-Congregation Programme)

Amen.

Friday, 18 September 2020

Psalmody

Does not wisdom call out?
Does not understanding raise her voice?

“The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works,
before his deeds of old;

I was formed long ages ago,
at the very beginning, when the world came to be.

When there were no watery depths, I was given birth,
when there were no springs overflowing with water;
before the mountains were settled in place,
before the hills, I was given birth,
before he made the world or its fields
or any of the dust of the earth.

I was there when he set the heavens in place,
when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep,
when he established the clouds above
and fixed securely the fountains of the deep,
when he gave the sea its boundary
so the waters would not overstep his command,
and when he marked out the foundations of the earth.
Then I was constantly at his side.

I was filled with delight day after day,
rejoicing always in his presence,
rejoicing in his whole world
and delighting in humankind.

– *Proverbs 8*

Word

2 Corinthians 13:5-10

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test? And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test. Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong—not so that people will see that we have stood the test but so that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed. For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is that you may be fully restored. This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority—the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down.

Prayer

We give thanks for Mother Earth in whom all life is rooted, Brother Sun whose energy radiates life, Sister Water who nurtures and revives us, and co-creatures with whom we live, and for whom we are called to till and keep this garden. Creative Spirit, enlighten our hearts and remain with your world.

(from the 2020 Season of Creation Celebration Guide)

Our Father in heaven ...

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

May God who established the dance of creation,
Who marveled at the lilies of the field,
Who transforms chaos to order,
Lead us to transform our lives and the Church
To reflect God's glory in creation.

(CTBI Eco-Congregation Programme)

Amen.

Saturday, 19 September 2020

Psalmody

Does not wisdom call out?
Does not understanding raise her voice?

“The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works,
before his deeds of old;

I was formed long ages ago,
at the very beginning, when the world came to be.

When there were no watery depths, I was given birth,
when there were no springs overflowing with water;
before the mountains were settled in place,
before the hills, I was given birth,
before he made the world or its fields
or any of the dust of the earth.

I was there when he set the heavens in place,
when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep,
when he established the clouds above
and fixed securely the fountains of the deep,
when he gave the sea its boundary
so the waters would not overstep his command,
and when he marked out the foundations of the earth.
Then I was constantly at his side.

I was filled with delight day after day,
rejoicing always in his presence,
rejoicing in his whole world
and delighting in humankind.

– *Proverbs 8*

Word

Matthew 19:23-30

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife[a] or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

Prayer

We give thanks for Mother Earth in whom all life is rooted, Brother Sun whose energy radiates life, Sister Water who nurtures and revives us, and co-creatures with whom we live, and for whom we are called to till and keep this garden. Creative Spirit, enlighten our hearts and remain with your world.
(from the 2020 Season of Creation Celebration Guide)

Our Father in heaven ...

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

May God who established the dance of creation,
Who marveled at the lilies of the field,
Who transforms chaos to order,
Lead us to transform our lives and the Church
To reflect God's glory in creation.
(CTBI Eco-Congregation Programme)

Amen.