



Season of the Spirit

LWF Communion Prayer
for Pentecost 2020

Week 20 – Nineteenth Week after Pentecost



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches

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, 11 October 2020

Psalmody

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long.

– *Psalm 23:1-6*

Word

Philippians 4:1-9

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Meditation

What would make today great? What would make the year 2020 great again? With less than three months before we step into 2021, it is hard to feel “great” about the year. We are still distracted by the ups and downs from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our social media feeds are often dominated by divisive rhetoric and fake news. The news of violence erupting in different parts of the world reminds us our joint effort in shaping peace together is a long and winding road. But rather than focusing on *greatness*, maybe we can shift our focus toward *goodness*: What would make today *good*? How can we live in a way that would make 2020 *good* again?

The letter to the Philippians highlights a number of themes that would enhance this “goodness” we desperately need. First, we are invited to “be of the same mind” and strengthen the togetherness among us (4:2). In our struggle to stand firm during times of hardship, we need to guard against divisions that are harmful and ultimately hurts our common work and witness for the gospel. The “same mind” here echoes the call to imitate Christ’s humility in Philippians 2:1-11 in how we relate to one another and “look to the interests of others” (2:4). Second, the road to shape peace together involves learning to show gentleness to those around us without neglecting the firmness of our convictions. The place of prayer is a safe space for us to bring before God all our concerns and complaints while counting our blessings (4:5-6). We can practice loving God and loving our neighbors together confidently in renewed ways. Finally, the kind of mindset that can contribute to making our days “good” involves disciplined thinking about all that is “true, ... honorable... pure ... pleasing ... commendable”, “any excellence” and “worthy of praise”. We reject shallow forms of “positive thinking” that ignores reality, but we draw inspiration from the wisdom, the examples, and practices of our faith both past and present. In our deeper engagement with the “the peace of God that surpasses all understanding”, ultimately, we are even more closely connected with “the God of peace” (4:7,9).

As we continue to address distraction and fragmentation in our lives and society, may we realign our hearts and minds with Christ’s humility. As we yearn for the peace of God during times of conflict within us and around us, may the God of peace intervene at the right moment. May we pay attention, highlight, and give thanks for all the humble contributions that would make today good — and ultimately make 2020 good again!

Prayer

God of all who wander in the wilderness,
you go before us as beacon and guide.
Lead us through all danger,
sustain us through all desolation,
and bring us home to the land
you have prepared for us. 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, 12 October 2020

Psalmody

The Lord is king! Let the earth rejoice;
let the many coastlands be glad!
Clouds and thick darkness are all around him;
righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.
Fire goes before him,
and consumes his adversaries on every side.
His lightnings light up the world;
the earth sees and trembles.
The mountains melt like wax before the Lord,
before the Lord of all the earth.

The heavens proclaim his righteousness;
and all the peoples behold his glory.
All worshipers of images are put to shame,
those who make their boast in worthless idols;
all gods bow down before him.
Zion hears and is glad,
and the towns of Judah rejoice,
because of your judgments, O God.
For you, O Lord, are most high over all the earth;
you are exalted far above all gods.

The Lord loves those who hate evil;
he guards the lives of his faithful;
he rescues them from the hand of the wicked.
Light dawns for the righteous,
and joy for the upright in heart.
Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous,
and give thanks to his holy name!

– *Psalm 97:1-12*

Word

Jude 17-25

But you, beloved, must remember the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; for they said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, indulging their own ungodly lusts." It is these worldly people, devoid of the Spirit, who are causing divisions. But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God; look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to [a] eternal life. And have mercy on some who are wavering; save others by snatching them out of the fire; and have mercy on still others with fear, hating even the tunic defiled by their bodies

Now to him who is able to keep you from falling, and to make you stand without blemish in the presence of his glory with rejoicing, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Prayer

God of Aaron, Miriam, and Moses,
you stayed the hand of your wrath
when we fell into idolatry and discord;
and when we forgot our deliverance,
your love for us remained unchanging.
Transform us and our world
into a place of justice, love, and peace.
Welcome us to your wedding feast
where all are invited to be gathered in. 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, 13 October 2020

Psalmody

The Lord is king! Let the earth rejoice;
let the many coastlands be glad!
Clouds and thick darkness are all around him;
righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.
Fire goes before him,
and consumes his adversaries on every side.
His lightnings light up the world;
the earth sees and trembles.
The mountains melt like wax before the Lord,
before the Lord of all the earth.

The heavens proclaim his righteousness;
and all the peoples behold his glory.
All worshipers of images are put to shame,
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he rescues them from the hand of the wicked.
Light dawns for the righteous,
and joy for the upright in heart.
Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous,
and give thanks to his holy name!

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Word

Philippians 3:13-4:1

Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind; and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you. Only let us hold fast to what we have attained.

Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation[f] that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

Prayer

God of Aaron, Miriam, and Moses,
you stayed the hand of your wrath
when we fell into idolatry and discord;
and when we forgot our deliverance,
your love for us remained unchanging.
Transform us and our world
into a place of justice, love, and peace.
Welcome us to your wedding feast
where all are invited to be gathered in. 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, 14 October 2020

Psalmody

The Lord is king! Let the earth rejoice;
let the many coastlands be glad!
Clouds and thick darkness are all around him;
righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.
Fire goes before him,
and consumes his adversaries on every side.
His lightnings light up the world;
the earth sees and trembles.
The mountains melt like wax before the Lord,
before the Lord of all the earth.

The heavens proclaim his righteousness;
and all the peoples behold his glory.
All worshipers of images are put to shame,
those who make their boast in worthless idols;
all gods bow down before him.
Zion hears and is glad,
and the towns of Judah rejoice,
because of your judgments, O God.
For you, O Lord, are most high over all the earth;
you are exalted far above all gods.

The Lord loves those who hate evil;
he guards the lives of his faithful;
he rescues them from the hand of the wicked.
Light dawns for the righteous,
and joy for the upright in heart.
Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous,
and give thanks to his holy name!

– *Psalm 97:1-12*

Word

John 6:25-35

When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.” Then they said to him, “What must we do to perform the works of God?” Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” So they said to him, “What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” Then Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which[a] comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

Prayer

God of Aaron, Miriam, and Moses,
you stayed the hand of your wrath
when we fell into idolatry and discord;
and when we forgot our deliverance,
your love for us remained unchanging.
Transform us and our world
into a place of justice, love, and peace.
Welcome us to your wedding feast
where all are invited to be gathered in. 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, 15 October 2020

Psalmody

The Lord is king; let the peoples tremble!

He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!

The Lord is great in Zion;

he is exalted over all the peoples.

Let them praise your great and awesome name.

Holy is he!

Mighty King, lover of justice,

you have established equity;

you have executed justice

and righteousness in Jacob.

Extol the Lord our God;

worship at his footstool.

Holy is he!

Moses and Aaron were among his priests,

Samuel also was among those who called on his name.

They cried to the Lord, and he answered them.

He spoke to them in the pillar of cloud;

they kept his decrees,

and the statutes that he gave them.

O Lord our God, you answered them;

you were a forgiving God to them,

but an avenger of their wrongdoings.

Extol the Lord our God,

and worship at his holy mountain;

for the Lord our God is holy.

– *Psalm 99:1-9*

Word

3 John:9-12

I have written something to the church; but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority. So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing in spreading false charges against us. And not content with those charges, he refuses to welcome the friends, and even prevents those who want to do so and expels them from the church.

Beloved, do not imitate what is evil but imitate what is good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God. Everyone has testified favorably about Demetrius, and so has the truth itself. We also testify for him, and you know that our testimony is true.

Prayer

Lord of the feast,
you have prepared a table before all peoples
and poured out life with such abundance
that death cannot claim the triumph over your universe.
Call us again to your banquet where we may receive your holy food,
and strengthened by what is honorable, just, and pure,
be transformed into a people of righteousness and peace. Amen.

Thanks be to God.

The Lord bless us and direct our days and our deeds in peace.

Amen.

Friday, 16 October 2020

Psalmody

The Lord is king; let the peoples tremble!

He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!

The Lord is great in Zion;

he is exalted over all the peoples.

Let them praise your great and awesome name.

Holy is he!

Mighty King, lover of justice,

you have established equity;

you have executed justice

and righteousness in Jacob.

Extol the Lord our God;

worship at his footstool.

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He spoke to them in the pillar of cloud;

they kept his decrees,

and the statutes that he gave them.

O Lord our God, you answered them;

you were a forgiving God to them,

but an avenger of their wrongdoings.

Extol the Lord our God,

and worship at his holy mountain;

for the Lord our God is holy.

– *Psalm 99:1-9*

Word

1 Peter 5:1-5

Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it—not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away. In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for

“God opposes the proud,
but gives grace to the humble.”

Prayer

Lord of the feast,
you have prepared a table before all peoples
and poured out life with such abundance
that death cannot claim the triumph over your universe.
Call us again to your banquet where we may receive your holy food,
and strengthened by what is honorable, just, and pure,
be transformed into a people of righteousness and peace. 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, 17 October 2020

Psalmody

The Lord is king; let the peoples tremble!

He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!

The Lord is great in Zion;

he is exalted over all the peoples.

Let them praise your great and awesome name.

Holy is he!

Mighty King, lover of justice,

you have established equity;

you have executed justice

and righteousness in Jacob.

Extol the Lord our God;

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He spoke to them in the pillar of cloud;

they kept his decrees,

and the statutes that he gave them.

O Lord our God, you answered them;

you were a forgiving God to them,

but an avenger of their wrongdoings.

Extol the Lord our God,

and worship at his holy mountain;

for the Lord our God is holy.

– *Psalm 99:1-9*

Word

Matthew 14:1-12

At that time Herod the ruler heard reports about Jesus; and he said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he has been raised from the dead, and for this reason these powers are at work in him." For Herod had arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; because John had been telling him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." Though Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded him as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company, and she pleased Herod so much that he promised on oath to grant her whatever she might ask. Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter." The king was grieved, yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he commanded it to be given; he sent and had John beheaded in the prison. The head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, who brought it to her mother. His disciples came and took the body and buried it; then they went and told Jesus.

Prayer

Lord of the feast,
you have prepared a table before all peoples
and poured out life with such abundance
that death cannot claim the triumph over your universe.
Call us again to your banquet where we may receive your holy food,
and strengthened by what is honorable, just, and pure,
be transformed into a people of righteousness and peace. 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.