



Season of the Spirit

LWF Communion Prayer
for Pentecost 2020



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches

**Week 25 – Twenty-Fourth
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, 15 November 2020

Psalmody

Lord, you have been our dwelling place
in all generations.

Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

You turn us back to dust,
and say, "Turn back, you mortals."

For a thousand years in your sight
are like yesterday when it is past,
or like a watch in the night.

You sweep them away; they are like a dream,
like grass that is renewed in the morning;

In the morning it flourishes and is renewed;
in the evening it fades and withers.

For we are consumed by your anger;
by your wrath we are overwhelmed.

You have set our iniquities before you,
our secret sins in the light of your countenance.

So teach us to count our days
that we may gain a wise heart.

– *Psalm 90:1-8, 12*

Word

Matthew 25:14-30

“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

Meditation

“Enter the joy of your master” (v.21). This phrase, perhaps, more than any other verse serves as a leitmotiv for interpreting the parable. Other motifs are, of course, possible and have been amply used in the history of interpretation especially for a rather simplistic justification of small venture capitalism. This parable has also been a favorite text for stewardship campaigns. However, when we use the parable of the talents to this end, we may miss the profounder implications that it proposes for both grace and judgment.

In order to move beyond initial fears concerning the apparently harsh characterization of the master, it is important to highlight certain unusual elements in the parable. What is initially striking in this parable is the superabundance of gifts. A talent is a vast sum of money and generously distributed to the servants though in different amounts. The master entrusts his wealth to his servants and he does so for a long period of time. Our culture, which places so much value on things happening immediately, has become unaccustomed to waiting. Yet, here another gift is the gift of time, a “long time,” allowing the servants to live faithfully in this superabundance. The servants already participate, in a yet incomplete fashion, in the life of their master.

Already in giving the talent, the master is inviting his servants to share in his joy. When the first two are finally invited to “enter the joy of their master,” they are perhaps not entering a greater fullness than before but rather are now able to recognize the dynamics of joy that undergird the gift of faith. The joy of the master is the joy of the feast that is self-giving, sharing, being distributed into the world. In this sense the interest gained on the talents is like the hundred-fold that the disciple receives when he or she gives everything away to follow Jesus (Matthew 19:29).

And what about the third servant? The judgment still appears to be very harsh. However, if we consider the parable as a parable of invitation, perhaps his plight takes on a different perspective. If the master is continually inviting into a superabundance, into joy, then a conclusion that can be drawn: the third servant is not able to hear or accept the invitation. The third servant has not only hidden the talent, he has buried himself. The third servant is not so much condemned as he condemns himself to a place – a life – that knows not joy, that knows only darkness and wailing and grinding of teeth. This place, as such a life, is self-created.

Prayer

Righteous God, our merciful master, you own the earth and all its peoples, and you give us all that we have. Inspire us to serve you with justice and wisdom, and prepare us for the joy of the day of your coming, through 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, 16 November 2020

Psalmody

The Lord sits enthroned forever,
You, O God, have established your throne for judgment.

May we rejoice in your deliverance!

You judge the world with righteousness;
You judge the peoples with equity.

May we rejoice in your deliverance!

The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed,
a stronghold in times of trouble.

May we rejoice in your deliverance!

And those who know your name put their trust in you,
for you have not forsaken those who seek you.

May we rejoice in your deliverance!

Sing praises to the Lord, who dwells in Zion.
Declare God's deeds among the peoples.

May we rejoice in your deliverance!

– *Psalm 9:7-11*

Word

Zechariah 1: 12-17

Then the angel of the Lord said, “O Lord of hosts, how long will you withhold mercy from Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which you have been angry these seventy years?” Then the Lord replied with gracious and comforting words to the angel who talked with me. So the angel who talked with me said to me, Proclaim this message: Thus says the Lord of hosts; I am very jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion. And I am extremely angry with the nations that are at ease; for while I was only a little angry, they made the disaster worse. Therefore, thus says the Lord, I have returned to Jerusalem with compassion; my house shall be built in it, says the Lord of hosts, and the measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem. Proclaim further: Thus says the Lord of hosts: My cities shall again overflow with prosperity; the Lord will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.

Prayer

Righteous God, our compassionate ruler, you own the earth and all its peoples, and you desire that all peoples and creation prosper. Inspire us to restore peace and justice in the world. Prepare us for the joy of the day of your coming, through 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, 17 November 2020

Psalmody

The Lord sits enthroned forever,
You, O God, have established your throne for judgment.

May we rejoice in your deliverance!

You judge the world with righteousness;
You judge the peoples with equity.

May we rejoice in your deliverance!

The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed,
a stronghold in times of trouble.

May we rejoice in your deliverance!

And those who know your name put their trust in you,
for you have not forsaken those who seek you.

May we rejoice in your deliverance!

Sing praises to the Lord, who dwells in Zion.
Declare God's deeds among the peoples.

May we rejoice in your deliverance!

– *Psalm 9:7-11*

Word

1 Thessalonians 5:12-18

Paul writes, We appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Prayer

Righteous God, your love is for all, without preference or prejudice. Awaken that joy and thanksgiving within us that we live our lives as a ceaseless prayer. We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Spirit. 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, 18 November 2020

Psalmody

The Lord sits enthroned forever,
You, O God, have established your throne for judgment.

May we rejoice in your deliverance!

You judge the world with righteousness;
You judge the peoples with equity.

May we rejoice in your deliverance!

The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed,
a stronghold in times of trouble.

May we rejoice in your deliverance!

And those who know your name put their trust in you,
for you have not forsaken those who seek you.

May we rejoice in your deliverance!

Sing praises to the Lord, who dwells in Zion.
Declare God's deeds among the peoples.

May we rejoice in your deliverance!

– *Psalm 9:7-11*

Word

Matthew 24:45-47

Who then is the faithful and wise slave, whom his master has put in charge of his household, to give the other slaves their allowance of food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master will find at work when he arrives. Truly I tell you, he will put that one in charge of all his possessions.

Prayer

Righteous God, our compassionate ruler, you own the earth and all its peoples, and you desire that all peoples and creation prosper. Inspire us to work continually for your reign of peace and justice. Prepare us for the joy of the day of your coming, through 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, 19 November 2020

Psalmody

O come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!
For the Lord is a great God,
and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are the depths of the earth;
the heights of the mountains are his also.
The sea is his, for he made it,
and the dry land, which his hands have formed.

O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!
For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.

O that today you would listen to his voice!
– *Psalm 95:1-7*

Word

Revelation 14:6-7

Then I saw another angel flying in midheaven, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation and tribe and language and people. He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come; and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

Prayer

O God of power and might, your Son shows us the way of service, and in him we inherit the riches of your grace. Give us the wisdom to know what is right and the strength to serve the world you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. 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, 20 November 2020

Psalmody

O come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!
For the Lord is a great God,
and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are the depths of the earth;
the heights of the mountains are his also.
The sea is his, for he made it,
and the dry land, which his hands have formed.

O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!
For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.

O that today you would listen to his voice!
– *Psalm 95:1-7*

Word

Revelation 22: 1-7

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there anymore. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true, for the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place." "See, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

Prayer

Stay with us, Lord, in the uncertain moments. With your Holy Spirit raise us from our hopelessness, wipe away our disbelief and strengthen our faith, so that our hearts will burn to proclaim your resurrection, the water of life springing forth and bringing hope. (© 2005 Ester Pudjo Widiasih, Jakarta Theological Seminary, Jakarta, Indonesia)

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, 21 November 2020

Psalmody

O come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!
For the Lord is a great God,
and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are the depths of the earth;
the heights of the mountains are his also.
The sea is his, for he made it,
and the dry land, which his hands have formed.

O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!
For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.

O that today you would listen to his voice!
– *Psalm 95:1-7*

Word

Matthew 12: 46-50

While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers were standing outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, “Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.” But to the one who had told him this, Jesus replied, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” And pointing to his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

Prayer

Stay with us, Lord, in the uncertain moments. With your Holy Spirit raise us from our hopelessness, wipe away our disbelief and strengthen our faith, so that our hearts will burn to proclaim your resurrection, the water of life springing forth and bringing hope. (© 2005 Ester Pudjo Widiasih, Jakarta Theological Seminary, Jakarta, Indonesia)

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.