



Rejoice Now All the Earth!

LWF Communion Prayer
for the Easter Season 2020

6th week of Easter



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches

Introduction

Easter is a season that lasts for 50 days. It begins with the celebration of Easter Sunday, and continues until the festival of Pentecost. The Easter Exultet reminds us that this is a time for all the earth to rejoice! We rejoice in the good news that God speaks the first and the last Word, and that Word is life. This particular Easter season (2020) we are experiencing a global pandemic that reminds us of our common human nature, and all of the vulnerabilities and limits of being a creature. In this context, the good news of Easter reminds us that, even though we live in the shadow of the cross where death and suffering are part of our condition, God continually renews life. These 50 days give us a time to contemplate that good news, which Jesus calls us to proclaim to all creation.

We offer this resource to our global Lutheran communion, as a way to be in the solidarity of prayer during this season of Easter. The daily prayers follow an order: Opening, Psalmody, Bible text, meditation and prayer. This order of prayer can be adapted in any way, such as singing songs, adding your own 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 the Sunday meditations relate to a common theme of Baptism. Baptism is a sacrament where we receive the promise of this good news. And the Small Catechism encourages us to remember our baptism daily, as a way to be renewed by this promise each day.

We commend these prayers to your use, whether alone in your home, as a family, or as your community is able to virtually gather from a distance during the season of Easter. And as you pray in solidarity with the Lutheran 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.”

Rejoice, in the good news that all creation shares in this season! Christ is risen! And with it, all creation sings hope in the promise of new life.

Prayers are from *Koinonia, Services and Prayers*, LWF, 2004 and Evangelical Lutheran Worship, Augsburg Fortress, 2006. Lectionary readings are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

Sixth Sunday of Easter

17 May 2020

Opening

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Alleluia!

Psalmody

Come, let us sing to the LORD;
let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come before God's presence with thanksgiving and raise a loud shout to the LORD with psalms.
For the LORD is a great God, and a great Sovereign above all gods

The LORD holds the caverns of the earth, and sustains the heights of the hills.
The sea belongs to God, who made it, whose hands have molded the dry land.

Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, and kneel before the LORD our Maker.
For the LORD is our God, and we are the people of God's pasture and the sheep of God's hand.

Oh, that today you would hearken to God's voice!
– *Psalm 95*

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, is and will be for-e-ver. Amen.

Reflecting Together

John 14:15-17

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.”

As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!

Many different words have been used to translate the Greek word *paráklētos* in this text: Helper, Counselor, Comforter, Strengthener and Advocate. The original emphasis of “someone who comes alongside” remains central regardless of which word we use. Jesus was well aware of the troubled hearts of the disciples who will soon confront not only the reality of his crucifixion but also the reality of his departure after his resurrection. The promise of *another Advocate* — the Holy Spirit — was necessary for the disciples to be ready to face a hostile world ahead of them.

During this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, we might be overwhelmed by feelings of loneliness and deep anxieties within us in the midst of so many uncertainties. We yearn to hear afresh the promise of the Spirit who will come alongside us to comfort and strengthen us. But more than offering us comfort, a significant characteristic of the Spirit promised by Jesus is ‘Truth’ — the kind of truth that will make us free (John 8:38). This Spirit of Truth later empowered Paul as he spoke out in the public sphere before Greek philosophers the Areopagus (Acts 17:22-31); this is the same Spirit who enabled the early church to give reasons for the hope that is in them before the watchful eyes of their neighbors (1 Peter 3:15). The promise of this Spirit is for us too.

In times of crisis, we might be particularly vulnerable not only physically, but also mentally and spiritually especially when we are bombarded by depressing news and views from the media. Many voices are ready to promise quick-fix solutions while conspiracy theories pop up on our social media feeds. Many of us are tempted to click on and share links to ‘fake news’; we must remain vigilant against the spread of disinformation and falsehood. Christ promises us today not only that the Spirit will come alongside us

to accompany us through our troubles, but more importantly, the Spirit of Truth will help us to discern truth from falsehood. This Spirit of Truth is within us now.

Let us pray...

God of all goodness, in our baptism, we hear the promise of an advocate, your Spirit that will accompany us in this life. By this gift, grant us the grace to know you, and your love abiding in us, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

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, 18 May 2020

Opening

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Alleluia!

Psalmody

Praise the Lord.
Praise God in the sanctuary;
praise God in the mighty heavens.
Praise God for acts of power;
praise God for surpassing greatness.
Praise God with the sounding of the trumpet,
praise God with the harp and lyre,
Praise God with timbrel and dancing,
praise God with the strings and pipe,
Praise God with the clash of cymbals,
praise God with resounding cymbals.
Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.
Praise the Lord.

– *Psalm 150*

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, is and will be for-e-ver. Amen.

Reflecting Together

Acts 17:22-23

Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you."

As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!

Let us pray...

Ever-living God, author of creation, we are grateful for the many ways you are known throughout creation. We are most grateful that in Jesus Christ, we know your presence as gift, promise, and the source of all healing 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.

Tuesday, 19 May 2020

Opening

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Alleluia!

Psalmody

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth,
burst into jubilant song with music;

make music to the LORD with the harp,
with the harp and the sound of singing,

with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn—
shout for joy before the LORD, the King.

Let the sea resound, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it.

Let the rivers clap their hands,
let the mountains sing together for joy;

let them sing before the LORD,
for God comes to judge the earth.

– Psalm 98:4-9

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, is and will be for-e-ver. Amen.

Reflecting Together

Acts 17:24-28

The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him--though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring.'

As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!

Let us pray...

Almighty God, who made the world and everything in it, by water and the Holy Spirit, strengthen us in all 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.

Wednesday, 20 May 2020

Opening

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Alleluia!

Psalmody

Praise the Lord.
How good it is to sing praises to our God,

how pleasant and fitting to praise God!
The Lord builds up Jerusalem;
God gathers the exiles of Israel.
God heals the brokenhearted

and binds up their wounds.
God determines the number of the stars

and calls them each by name.
Great is our Lord and mighty in power;

God's understanding has no limit.
The Lord sustains the humble
but casts the wicked to the ground.
Sing to the Lord with grateful praise;

make music to our God on the harp.
– *Psalm 147:1-7*

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, is and will be for-e-ver. Amen.

Reflecting Together

1 Peter 3:13-16

Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame.

As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!

Let us pray...

God, grant us the words and the deeds to gently and reverently bear witness to the hope that is in us, Jesus Christ. 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, 21 May 2020

Ascension of the Lord

Opening

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Alleluia! Christ the Lord ascends.
Oh come, let us worship God. Alleluia!

Psalmody

Sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord, praise his name;
proclaim his salvation day after day.

Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

– Psalm 96:1-3

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, is and will be for-e-ver. Amen.

Reflecting Together

Luke 24:44-53

Then Jesus said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!

Let us pray...

Almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us in safety to this new day. Preserve us with your power, that we may not fall into sin nor be overcome in adversity. In all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Our Father in heaven ...

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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

Amen.

Friday, 22 May 2020

Opening

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Alleluia!

Psalmody

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
let the sea resound, and all that is in it.

Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them;
let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.

Let all creation rejoice before the Lord, for he comes,
he comes to judge the earth.

He will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples in his faithfulness.

– Psalm 96:11-13

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, is and will be for-e-ver. Amen.

Reflecting Together

1 Peter 3:17-22

It is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. And baptism, which this pre-figured, now saves you--not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!

Let us pray...

God of mercy, we praise you for waiting patiently on us, and graciously working to birth new life in us, through water and your 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.

Saturday, 23 May 2020

Opening

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Alleluia!

Psalmody

It is good to praise the Lord
And make music to your name, O Most High,
proclaiming your love in the morning
and your faithfulness at night,

to the music of the ten-stringed lyre
and the melody of the harp.

For you make me glad by your deeds, Lord;
I sing for joy at what your hands have done.

How great are your works, Lord,
how profound your thoughts!

– Psalm 92:1-5

Glory to the Father, and to the + Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, is and will be for-e-ver. Amen.

Reflecting Together

John 14:18-21

“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!

Let us pray...

Merciful God, we love you, and know that you love each one of your children. We are grateful that we are not alone. By your ever-present Spirit, heal the hurts of all your children and bring to life the peace of our living 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.