

Where Two or Three Are Gathered Worship for Small Assemblies

Easter Season — Year A

Easter Day, Second, Third and Fourth Sundays of Easter

Prepared by Gail Berg, ABT Synod

NOTES for Worship Planners

Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Much like Mary Magdalene at the tomb, we marvel at the Resurrection. The despair of only a few days ago has disappeared. Jesus has risen from the grave? Yes, he has. And the joy of this moment is contagious! Mary Magdalene shares the news of the resurrected Jesus with the disciples. We, too, must share the news of the Resurrection, the joy of a living and loving God, with everyone around us.

The purple of Lent does not last forever. Easter arrives, dressed in **white and gold**, and with a **flurry of Alleluias!** We celebrate with the disciples that Jesus is alive in a new way, and we move toward Pentecost when we welcome the Holy Spirit.

The experience of Easter and the days that follow are at the same time personal and communal. Jesus has individual encounters with some of his disciples (Mary Magdalene, Thomas) after the Resurrection, but he encourages them – and all of his disciples – to go and share his message of love, justice, and peace with the whole world. As the disciples go about laying the foundation of the early church, Jesus urges them to remember his commandments, gather in unity, and lean on the Holy Spirit as a guide.

Love does not die, Alleluia!

Life is continually made new, Alleluia!

Signs of Love alive are all around us, Alleluia!

Dressing the Space for Easter

“Alleluia” posters around the church, Butterflies, Easter Lilies, Large stone leaning against the baptismal font or altar, Balloons

Using **gathered stones**, create a reflection space. Pick stones from your backyard, local park or gardens, and assemble them on a plate or placemat or in a basket or small bowl. Let them be a reminder of Jesus’ death and resurrection and our call to be living stones and witnesses to the story of love overcoming death. Each week, pick a different stone and carry it with you as a reminder of Resurrection love. Reflect on the ways God might be calling you to be a living stone.

Color for Easter Season - WHITE

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Holy Communion

- ***The Holy Communion liturgy is for use when an Ordained Pastor or Authorized Lay Minister is present to preside***

Call to Worship (optional)

Thanksgiving for Baptism OR Confession & Forgiveness

Gathering Hymn

Prayer of the Day

Word - First Reading, Psalm, Second Reading, Gospel

Sermon/Reflection

Hymn of the Day

Apostles' Creed or Affirmation of Faith

Prayers of Intercession

Sharing of the Peace

Offering

Great Thanksgiving / Lord's Prayer

Distribution of Communion

Blessing

Sending Hymn

Dismissal (ELW p.222)

Service of the Word

Call to Worship (optional)

Thanksgiving for Baptism, pg.97 ELW

OR Confession & Forgiveness pg.94/94 ELW

Gathering Hymn

Prayer of the Day

Word - First Reading, Psalm, Second Reading, Gospel

Sermon/Reflection

Hymn

Apostles' Creed or Affirmation of Faith

Prayers of Intercession

Sharing the Peace

Thanksgiving for the Word (form I or II) —ELW p.220

OR

Thanksgiving for the Word (Psalm 25:1-2a, 4-5, 10)

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame.

Show me your ways, O LORD, and teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.

All your paths, O LORD, are steadfast love and faithfulness to those who keep your covenant and your testimonies.

Lord's Prayer

Blessing

Leader: Let us bless the Lord. All: Thanks be to God.

Sending Hymn / Dismissal

ELW Worship Resources

Confession & Forgiveness – pp. 94-96

Prayer of the Day – pp. 31-36

See below for *Prayers for a Pandemic*

Apostles' Creed – p. 105

Great Thanksgiving – pp. 107-109, Form I or II OR p. 111

Prayers for a Pandemic

May we who are merely inconvenienced remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close remember those that have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips remember those who have no safe place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country, let us choose love during this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other, let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbor. Amen

*Cameron Wiggins Bellm

- Alternate Easter resources are provided below, which may be used only for Easter Sunday, or as you choose throughout the Easter season

APRIL 12, 2020 – Resurrection of our Lord – Easter Sunday

Readings

Acts 10:34-43 or Jeremiah 31:1-6
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
Colossians 3:1-4 or Acts 10:34-43
Matthew 28:1-10

Hymn Suggestions

365 ELW Jesus Christ Is Risen Today
377 ELW Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen!
384 ELW That Easter Day with Joy Was Bright
364 ELW Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia
380 ELW Hallelujah! Jesus Lives!
671 WOV Alleluia, Give Thanks

Call to Worship

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

All: Christ is risen! Alleluia!

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

All: Christ is risen! Alleluia!

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

All: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

ONE: When we are all despairing; when the world is full of grief; when we see no way ahead, and hope has gone away:

ALL: God of hope, Roll back the stone

ONE: Although we fear change; although we are not ready; although we'd rather weep and run away:

ALL: You are with us, O God. Roll back the stone.

ONE: Because we're seeking with the women; because we hope where hope is vain; because you call us from the grave and show us the way:

ALL: God of life, Roll back the stone.

ONE: When we have forgotten, when our heart is sealed like a darkened tomb:

ALL: God of resurrection, Roll back the stone.

ONE: And teach us to remember! Remember what he said.

ALL: He is not here. He is risen! Jesus is risen from the dead! AMEN

*Janet Morley/adapted by Kathy Calkins

Confession and Absolution

ONE: In the name of the Father, +Son, and Holy Spirit.

ALL: AMEN.

ONE: Our God is a God of resurrection and life, calling forth life from the tombs of death, rumbling the foundations of the world, filling the sky with colour and light, until death and darkness will be no more. Trusting God's promises of life even in us, we confess our sin:

ALL: There are times in this world when all the earth seems to come to life: the tender crocus pushes through the crusts of ice and snow; the blades of fresh green grass rise up and sing, the birds dance; entombed creation springs forth in bold colour; our hearts awash in hope. Yet sometimes life is hard for us to see, resurrection hard for us to believe. We wonder who will roll the stone away from our sin that yet entombs us. With blinded eyes we turn away from your life in sadness, confusion, disillusionment and fear, wondering where you are. Forgive us. Renew us. Raise us to new life, to new hope, to new promise in you.

ONE: People of God, chosen by God as witness, from the lips of angels, from the women at the tomb, from the disciples who have gone before, we hear this Good News! Jesus Christ is risen from the dead and goes before us into the world, so that everyone who believes in him might receive forgiveness of sin through his name. Rising with Christ from the tomb, we are called from death to life, to grace and forgiveness of sin, in the name of the Father, +Son, and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

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Prayer of the Day

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray. Gracious and merciful God,

C: We come this Easter day to hear once again the words we so long and need to hear, that "Jesus is risen, just as he said!" Resurrect in us the joy of new life in Christ, that chosen by you as witnesses, we might proclaim your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

God of resurrection, from the very beginning you give the church the gift of women as your witnesses: as preachers, teachers, and leaders (*especially*). Open our ears to their proclamation this day and always. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

All your creation praises you—the earth hums, the seas pulse, the stars shine, and the galaxies whirl in glorious harmonies to honor you. Let us hear and blend our voices in the song. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

The countries of the world experience disunity and conflict; we set our minds on fear and greed rather than on your rule of justice and steadfast love. Build up all countries on your cornerstone of peace. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We still weep with those who weep, and mourn with those who mourn. Cradle the fearful, the suffering, and the dying, assuring them of your loving presence (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Bless the creative and helpful service of worship leaders this day: musicians, ushers, greeters, worship assistants, preachers, readers, and all others who provide welcome and hospitality in our midst. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Risen Lord, you went ahead of us into the grave and defeated the powers of evil. We remember those who have died (*especially*). Inspire us to live our lives in this resurrection hope and draw us to you in our final days. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord.

Amen *Sundays & Seasons, Augsburg Fortress <https://members.sundaysandseasons.com>

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in God, who made the sun and the sky, the stars and the sea, who calls us to live responsibly.

We believe in Jesus Christ, who became human, who healed the sick, who talked to children, who made friends with sinners.

He burned brightly and offended many. His journey was one of life and death and resurrection. His light continues to shine in darkness.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who inspires the scriptures and whose breath we breathe. We believe that God calls us to be a community, committed to one another, offering a welcome to everyone, old and young, rich and poor, strong and weak. We believe that God calls us to be peacemakers, workers for justice, brothers and sisters, a light for our world. Amen

**Iona Community*

Great Thanksgiving

L: Friends, hear the good news.

All: **Christ is risen, Alleluia!**

L: A day begun in mourning and fear has turned to joy and witness.

All: **Christ is risen, Alleluia!**

L: A table left for the shadows of the garden has become a table drenched in the light of One mistaken for a gardener

All: **Christ is risen, Alleluia!**

L: Come from the north and the south, the east and the west,
Come from your fears and your grieving, your lost hopes and forgotten dreams-
and come to a table set with grace and power that will not be deterred.

All: **For Christ is risen. Alleluia**

L: We come with joy, into the brightness of this new day and season,
to celebrate the presence of the risen Christ.

We remember how at the Last Supper Jesus said, "I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in God's realm."

We remember too how some disciples recognized him on that first Easter Sunday when he broke bread at a meal in Emmaus.

And we remember:

Words of Institution ELW pg.108 Form II

L: And so we too break bread this day,
and celebrate the presence of the risen Christ,
here in our very midst.

Come, Resurrecting God, you who brought forth life
from the earth in grain and grape,
and who brought forth life from the tomb
in our risen Savior. Bless these gifts we bring to this table,
that as we share them we might know
the presence of Christ
in our hearts and minds,
in our church and in the world,
and that we might be your people to take
the Christ-light into our community.

Amen **Used by Permission from Wood Lake Publishing*

L: Living in joy of the resurrection, we pray as Jesus taught us - **The Lord's Prayer**

Prayer after Communion

L: Life-giving God,

All: **in the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection
you send light to conquer darkness,
water to give new life,
and the bread of heaven to nourish your people.
Send us forth as witnesses to Jesus' resurrection**

**that we may show your glory to all the world;
through the same Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.**

Amen. **Sundays & Seasons, Augsburg Fortress*

Sending

Blessing

Go to proclaim to the world that Christ is risen!

Go to declare that death is not the final word!

Go to affirm that God says “Yes!” to all that is good!

Go and be Easter people, in the name of the Father, and of the +Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Sending

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Thanks be to God

APRIL 19, 2020 - 2nd Sunday of Easter

In today's Gospel the risen Christ appears to the disciples and offers them the gift of peace. Even amid doubts and questions, we experience the resurrection in our Sunday gathering around word and meal, and in our everyday lives. Throughout the coming Sundays of Easter the first two readings will be from the Acts of the Apostles and the first letter of Peter. Even as the early Christians proclaimed the resurrection, we rejoice in the new birth and living hope we receive in baptism.

**Sundays & Seasons, Augsburg Fortress*

Scripture Readings

Acts 2:14a, 22-32

Psalm 16

1 Peter 1:3-9

Gospel - John 20:19-31

Suggested hymns

385 ELW Good Christian Friends, Rejoice and Sing

388 ELW Be Not Afraid

635 ELW We Walk by Faith

376 ELW Thine Is the Glory

809 ELW Send Me, Lord

Call to worship

Voice 1: We are gathered to remember whose we are.

All: **We come as we are, with questions and doubts.**

Voice 2: We are gathered to be reminded who it is that makes our hearts glad.

All: **We come, seeking paths of life and fullness of joy.**

Voice 3: We are gathered as part of God's people, aware of those who are no longer living and those missing.

All: **We come in hope, for in God's presence there is fullness of joy!**

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Prayer of the Day

Almighty and eternal God, the strength of those who believe and the hope of those who doubt, may we, who have not seen, have faith in you and receive the fullness of Christ's blessing, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Open the doors we close, O God, when we fear those who worship you in different ways. Guide us to unity and harmony so that we may come to respect and cherish our commonalities. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Open the paths we ignore, O God, when we prioritize financial gain and convenience over listening to the groaning of the earth. Inspire all to care for the world you have made so that living things might thrive. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Open the rooms we lock, O God, to those who live without a homeland or place of safety. We pray that generous nations offer refuge and peace for all. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Open the hearts we close, O God, to the cries of those in pain. We pray for those isolated physically or emotionally through incarceration, addiction, mental illness, chronic suffering, grief, COVID-19, and all in need (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Open the ways of love, O God, in the pursuit of peace throughout the world, and bless the efforts of missionaries, healthcare professionals, activists for women and children, and relief workers, especially those who find themselves in harm's way. (*Here other worldwide ministries may be named.*) Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Open the way to eternal life, O God, as we remember those who have died in faith (*especially Olavus Petri and Laurentius Petri, renewers of the church*). Free us from the fear of death, that we embrace the peace you have promised. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

**Sundays & Seasons, Augsburg Fortress*

Blessing

May the One who brought forth Jesus from the dead
raise you to new life, fill you with hope,
and turn your mourning into dancing.
Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.

Amen.

Sending

Christ is risen, just as he said.
Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

Dramatized reading of the Gospel, John 20:19-31 (based on NRSV)

A narrator and two other readers – Jesus and Thomas – plus the disciples.
Review with the congregation that their role in the reading is as the disciples (have the words in the bulletin or projected).

Narrator: It was evening on that day that we call the day of resurrection, the first day of the week. The doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Judeans. Jesus came and stood among them.

Jesus: Peace be with you.

Narrator: After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side.

Jesus shows his hands and side to the congregation by holding them out and pointing.
Then the disciples rejoiced.

The Disciples: *shout words such as “Praise be to God” “Hallelujah” “Wow”*
The narrator holds up hands to signal when to stop.

Jesus: Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you. And as I breathe on you, receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.

Narrator: But Thomas, who was called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the disciples told him,

The Disciples: We have seen the Lord!

Thomas: *(speaking to the disciples)* Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.

Narrator: A week later, Jesus’ disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them.

Jesus : *(speaking to the disciples)* Peace be with you. *(Now speaking to Thomas)* Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe. *(Extends hand, gestures to side.)*

Thomas: *(speaking to Jesus)* My Lord and my God!

Jesus: *(speaking to Thomas)* Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.

Narrator: Now, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

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APRIL 26, 2020 - 3rd Sunday of Easter

Today's gospel begins with two disciples walking to Emmaus, overcome with sadness, loss, and disappointment. They had hoped Jesus, who was crucified, would be the one to redeem Israel! Yet the risen Christ walks with them and then opens their eyes in the breaking of the bread. Each Sunday our hearts burn within us as the scriptures are proclaimed and Christ appears to us as bread is broken and wine is poured. The story of Emmaus becomes the pattern of our worship each Lord's day.

**Sundays & Seasons, Augsburg Fortress*

Scripture Readings

Acts 2:14a, 36-41

Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19

1 Peter 1:17-23

Gospel - Luke 24:13-35

Suggested hymns

364 ELW Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia

367 ELW Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds

389 ELW Christ is Alive! Let Christians Sing

451 ELW We Are Baptized in Christ Jesus

Prayer of the Day

O God, your Son makes himself known to all his disciples in the breaking of bread. Open the eyes of our faith, that we may see him in his redeeming work, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen

Prayers of Intercession

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

For those whose hearts are fervent with love for your gospel, that they are empowered to tell the story of your love in their lives and to show hospitality in response to this love. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

For the diverse natural world: for jungles, prairies, forests, valleys, mountains, and for all the wild and endangered animals who call these spaces home, that they are nurtured and protected. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

For broken systems we have inherited and that we continue to perpetuate, forgive us. Restrain the nations from fighting over limited resources. Redeem us from the cycles of scarcity and violence. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

For all who call upon your healing name, give rest. Stay with us, and walk with all those who are hungry, friendless, despairing, and desiring healing in body and spirit (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

For the faith forming ministries of this church. For those preparing for baptism, first communion, confirmation, and membership (*especially*). For those who participate in Sunday school and adult education; guide and inspire learners of every age and ability. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Create in our hearts a yearning to rest in your promise of eternal and resurrected life. Give us thankful hearts for those who have died, even as we look forward to the hope of new life with you. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

**Sundays & Seasons, Augsburg Fortress*

MAY 3, 2020 - 4th Sunday of Easter

Today is sometimes called “Good Shepherd Sunday.” Jesus is called the “gate” of the sheep in today’s gospel. The risen Christ opens the way to abundant life. He anoints our heads with oil and guides us beside the still waters of our baptism. Each Sunday he spreads a feast before us amid the world’s violence and war. We go forth to be signs of the resurrection and extend God’s tender care to all creation.

**Sundays & Seasons, Augsburg Fortress*

Scripture Readings

Acts 2:42-47

Psalm 23

1 Peter 2:19-25

Gospel - John 10:1-10

Suggested Hymns

They’ll Know We Are Christians by Our Love

641 ELW All Are Welcome

778 ELW The Lord’s My Shepherd

764 ELW Have No Fear, Little Flock

502 ELW The King of Love My Shepherd Is

883 ELW All People That on Earth Do Dwell

Call to worship

One: We gather here, listening for the voice of the giver and guardian of our lives.

All: **God comes to us as a good shepherd, calling us by name.**

One: We gather here, longing to follow in just paths of life.

All: **God comes to us as a good shepherd, leading us in right ways.**

One: We gather here to follow and praise God,

All: **whose good and steadfast love abounds in all of our lives.**

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Prayer of the Day

O God our shepherd, you know your sheep by name and lead us to safety through the valleys of death. Guide us by your voice, that we may walk in certainty and security to the joyous feast prepared in your house, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Shepherding God, we thank you for the educational ministries of your church. Enrich the work of teachers, professors, mentors, advisors, and faculty at colleges, seminaries, and learning sites (*local colleges and seminaries may be named*). Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Creating God, we praise you for those who maintain and operate farm equipment, for those who plant and harvest crops, for local farmers' markets, and for those involved in agriculture of any kind. Strengthen their hands as they feed the world. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Guiding God, no one should be in want. Bid the nations to return to your paths of righteousness and inspire our leaders to walk in your ways, so that all may have the opportunity to live abundantly and sustainably. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Comforting God, you carry us tenderly. We pray for those who walk through dark valleys overshadowed by anxiety and overwhelmed with suffering (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Nurturing God, you desire justice for the hungry. Bless advocacy work, food pantries, and feeding ministries in our congregations (*local ministries may be named*). May none of our neighbors lack for basic needs. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Everlasting God, your beloved have heard your voice; you have called them by name and guided them to your side in death. We thank you for their lives of faithful witness. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

**Sundays & Seasons, Augsburg Fortress*

MAY 10, 2020 - 5th Sunday of Easter

As we continue to celebrate the fifty days of Easter, today's gospel includes Jesus' promise that he goes to prepare a place for his followers in his Father's house. Our baptism commissions us to share Jesus' mission in the world. As 1 Peter reminds us, we are a holy people, called to proclaim the one who called us out of darkness into light. In words and deeds we bear witness to the risen Christ—our way, our truth, our life.

**Sundays & Seasons, Augsburg Fortress*

Scripture readings

Acts 7:55-60

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

1 Peter 2:2-10

John 14:1-14

Suggested hymns

377 ELW Alleluia! Jesus is Risen!

379 ELW Now the Green Blade Rises

504 ELW A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

654 ELW The Church's One Foundation

619 ELW I Know That my Redeemer Lives!

Call to worship

One: Come and know that God is good!

All: **We come seeking God's shelter.**

One: Come and know God's mercy.

All: **We come seeking wholeness and God's peace.**

One: Come and abide in God's steadfast love.

All: **Receive us as we are, as we come to worship you, O God.**

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Opening prayer

Merciful God, our hearts are troubled. We long for a world free of hate and destruction. We yearn to know your presence in our daily lives; as we awaken and sleep, as we play and work, as we eat and pray, in moments mundane and profound. Receive us, shelter us, and nurture us as your beloved people, for your purposes and to your glory. Amen.

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Prayers of Intercession

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Build us up, mothering God, as living stones united in your spiritual house. Continually strengthen your church as it is sent forth to proclaim your love. We pray especially for new congregations and those in redevelopment. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Humble us, creator God, as part of your creation. Fill us with respect and awe for the world you have made, including volcanoes, ocean currents, tropical rainstorms, glaciers, and other forces that both destroy and create. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Align our ways to your love, O God. We pray for countries, leaders, and other organizations as they prepare places for those seeking refuge and safety (*aid organizations may be named*). Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of healing and rest, help those whose hearts are heavy and weighed down by many troubles. Comfort their suffering, ease their distress, and carry their burdens (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Nurturing God, we pray for those who tend and teach young children, for the safe pregnancies of expectant parents, and for families who struggle with infertility and miscarriage. We give thanks for all who have shown mothering care, and we remember all for whom this day is difficult. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Generous God, you call into your brilliant light all who have died. Give us faith to take hold of the promise of your eternal life. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

**Sundays & Seasons, Augsburg Fortress*

Blessing

Whatever this earthly life bestows on us, remember that God remains faithfully present. For as Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled, trust in God." So, as we scatter from this time of worship, go forth committing your life into God's hands. Go forth knowing that you are God's people. Go forth knowing that God's mercy abounds and that you are precious in God's sight. Go, knowing God's face shines upon us and that God's love for us is ever true. **Amen.** ***Used by Permission from Wood Lake Publishing*

MAY 17, 2020 - 6th Sunday of Easter

Jesus does not abandon his followers. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus comes to abide with his disciples of every generation. As Pentecost draws near, we are reminded that the risen Christ dwells in us as the Spirit of truth. We receive this Spirit in baptism and pray that in our gathering around the Lord's table the Spirit will transform us to be the body of the risen Christ in the world. **Sundays & Seasons, Augsburg Fortress*

Scripture readings

Acts 17:22-31

Psalm 66: 8-20

1 Peter 3:13-22

John 14:15-21

Suggested hymns

389 ELW Christ is Alive! Let Christians Sing

360 ELW Love Consecrates the Humblest Act (sing to tune 359, or just read)

595 ELW Jesus Loves Me!

708 ELW Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love

631 ELW Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Call to worship

One: Come, let us gather in praise of the one who shows us the way:

All: **The way of Christ is love.**

One: Let us gather in thanksgiving for the one who teaches the truth:

All: **That we were all made in God's image and called good.**

One: Let us worship the one who gives us life.

All: **Blessed be our God, source of all creation.**

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Prayer of the Day

Almighty and ever-living God, you hold together all things in heaven and on earth. In your great mercy receive the prayers of all your children, and give to all the world the Spirit of your truth and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

**Sundays & Seasons, Augsburg Fortress*

Prayers of Intercession

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Abiding God, you have revealed yourself to us in the form of your Son, Jesus Christ. Embolden your church, as your followers, to reveal your love to everyone in our speaking and in our living. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You are the creator of heaven and earth. Revitalize the health of oceans, rivers, lakes, springs, glaciers, and other bodies of water that give life to your creatures (*local bodies of water may be named*). Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You call all people of the world your children. Judge the nations justly, show mercy to the oppressed, and speak truth to power through your prophets. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You come near to us when we are lost, and you hear our distress. We pray for those who suffer in any way (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Your commands are good and merciful. Give us courage to take hold of our baptismal promises to work for justice, advocate for the voiceless, and free the oppressed and imprisoned in body, mind, or spirit. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You remain with us always, O God, and your kingdom has no end. We remember the saints who have gone before us (*especially*). Unite us forever in your final victory over death. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord.

Amen. **Sundays & Seasons, Augsburg Fortress*

MAY 24, 2020 - 7th Sunday of Easter

In these days between Ascension and Pentecost, we gather with the disciples in the upper room, waiting for the Spirit to transform the church around the world. In today's gospel Jesus prays for his followers and for their mission in his name. Amid religious, social, and economic divisions, we seek the unity that Jesus had with his Father. Made one in baptism, we go forth to live our faith in the world, eager for the unity that God intends for the whole human family. **Sundays & Seasons, Augsburg Fortress*

Scripture readings

Acts 1: 6-14

Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35

1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11

John 17:1-11

Suggested hymns

671 WOV Alleluia, Give Thanks

650 ELW In Christ There Is No East or West

581 ELW You Are Mine

478 ELW Father, We Thank You (could be a sung or spoken Offering Prayer)

744 ELW Lord, Be Glorified

656 ELW Blest Be the Tie That Binds

Call to worship

One: Here we gather, each from our individual lives.

We carry into this place the joys and the worries of our week,
the weight of our personal experience,
the anxieties of all that the future may hold.

All: **Here we gather, in prayer and preparation.**

Here we knit ourselves into a community,

here we hold one another in compassion,

here we remember that the work you have called us to do, we do not do it alone.

One: Come let us worship.

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Prayer of the Day

O God of glory, your Son Jesus Christ suffered for us and ascended to your right hand. Unite us with Christ and each other in suffering and in joy, that all the world may be drawn into your bountiful presence, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

O God, call your people to be one, as you are one. Unite your church in the truth of your gospel, the love of our neighbor, and the call to proclaim your reign to all people. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Breathe life into your creation. Guide your people as we explore the mysteries of the universe. We pray for the work of scientists and mathematicians whose skill enriches our understanding (*like Nicholas Copernicus and Leonard Euler, whom the church commemorates today*). Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Make your justice known among the nations of the earth. Protect the vulnerable (*especially in nations currently in crisis*). Redirect those who use violence and greed as weapons. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Come to the aid of your children. We pray for those engulfed in grief, those without supportive families, and for all who are isolated, powerless, or afraid, that all may rest their anxieties in your care. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Give courage to all who embark on new ventures. We especially remember this day those who risked their lives to serve in our armed forces. Grant safety to those serving at home or abroad, and assure them of your never-failing strength. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Raise all your saints to eternal life. Until that day, we give you thanks for the faithful examples of those who have listened to your voice and now rest in you. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord.

Amen. **Sundays & Seasons, Augsburg Fortress*

Blessing

Go out from this place full of the tenderness of Jesus' care for each one of us. Go out into the world, carrying with you the abundance of God's grace and love, and letting it overflow as blessings to the world. Go; for Christ is out in the world, still calling us to life and love.

May the grace of Christ Jesus, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you, today and always. Alleluia! **Amen.**

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May 31, 2020 - Day of Pentecost

Pentecost derives its name from the Jewish festival celebrating the harvest and the giving of the law on Mount Sinai fifty days after Passover. Fifty days after Easter, we celebrate the Holy Spirit as God's presence within and among us. In Acts the Spirit arrives in rushing wind and flame, bringing God's presence to all people. Paul reminds us that though we each have different capacities, we are unified in the Spirit that equips us with these gifts. Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit on his disciples, empowering them to forgive sin. We celebrate that we too are given the breath of the Holy Spirit and sent out to proclaim God's redeeming love to all the world.

**Sundays & Seasons, Augsburg Fortress*

Dressing the space for Pentecost

There are many ways to create the illusion of fire or light coming down from above: long stretches of flame-colored fabrics might be stretched from one side of the worship space to another or hung from the ceiling. Lengths of ribbon might be secured to the center of a ceiling fan so that the ribbons move with the air currents. Another option is to hang wind chimes in places where they are likely to jingle during worship; in open windows or near fans.

Color: RED

Scripture readings

Acts 2:1-21

Psalms 104:24-34, 35b

1 Corinthians 12:3b-13

John 20:19-33

Suggested hymns

401 ELW Gracious Spirit, Heed Our Pleading

396 ELW Spirit of Gentleness

399 ELW O Holy Spirit, Root of Life

551 ELW The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve

Call to worship

L: Something was happening!

The whole church was in one place, all together. There was a rush of wind

All: **There was fire coming down from the sky!**

L: Each voice spoke another language.

All: **We all understood each other!**

L: What was happening?

All: **The church was born!**

L: The Holy Spirit was given

All: **The church came alive in love!**

L: Come, let us worship God. **Used by Permission from Wood Lake Publishing*

Prayer of the Day

God of rushing wind and chaos, we celebrate the gift of your Holy Spirit today. We welcome the birth of your church. From a small household to today's global village, we celebrate your church. May we be mindful today of the ways your winds of change blow through us all. May we be inspired by your spirit to hear you and to follow you. Amen. **Used by Permission from Wood Lake Publishing*

Prayer of confession & Words of Affirmation

All: Loving God, your Spirit is all around us, refreshing us, giving us energy and hope. And yet too often we do not see it, being caught up in our day-to-day affairs. Hear us as we come to you in a moment of confession. Hear the honesty of our hearts as we tell you we are sorry for the times we ignore you. Come to us again – filling us always with your Spirit of newness. Challenge and equip us to live our lives with your Spirit at the center, and to share your Spirit with others. Amen.

L: Friends, hear this good news from scripture: All who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. Know that, as adopted children of God, you have new and everlasting life. **Used by Permission from Wood Lake Publishing*

This Pentecost Litany can be used at any time during the service.

Sing the refrain of: *Spirit of Gentleness* #396 ELW

L: God of new life and new beginnings, you created this earth and all that is in it, and we are not faithful stewards of what you have given us. You called to us to care for your creation, and our lives are lived in ways that ignore that call. You called us through the power of your Holy Spirit to open our eyes from the slumber of denial about our actions and fly to new heights with your power, and we ignored your request.

Sing verse 1: *Spirit of Gentleness*

L: God, we have worshipped those things that are not holy. We worship money, power, self-sufficiency, technology, power, and fame. We ignored the prophets you sent who told us to worship only you. We still ignore the voices that try to pull us to you and away from sin.

Sing verse 2: *Spirit of Gentleness*

L: Jesus came to redeem us; to bring us back into right relationship with you. He came as a baby, and as an adult gave us your teachings. He was born in a stable, died on a cross, and rose to new life. In you, in Christ, we are made right with you. We are forgiven.

Sing verse 3: *Spirit of Gentleness*

L: You blew through your people, and inspired us to move forward as the forgiven people of Christ who we are. We pray that inspired by your spirit we may live a different kind of life than we may have otherwise. That through the breath of your spirit, we may respond to the call to repent and return to you. Through the Spirit, may we see the

visions, dream the dreams, and live the lives as God's forgiven that Christ calls us to live. Amen.

Sing verse 4 & refrain: *Spirit of Gentleness*

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts | of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love. *Alleluia.*

Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray, God of promise and of promise fulfilled,

C: we give you thanks for your Spirit of life poured out in blessing and abundant life for all. As you have blessed us with the riches of your grace, multiply these gifts in us and through us, that all people might come to know you. Through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need. Holy One, **through the power of your spirit, shape us into a people who give witness to your love.**

A brief silence.

We call on your spirit of unity, giving thanks for our different vocations. Activate and utilize the diverse gifts present in your church, that they reveal your love for all. Holy One, **through the power of your spirit, shape us into a people who give witness to your love.**

We call on your spirit of life, present in air, wind, humidity, storms, and oxygen in our atmosphere, breathing energy into all things. Heal with your breath the whole creation, especially those who struggle to breathe due to air pollution. Holy One, **through the power of your spirit, shape us into a people who give witness to your love.**

We call on your spirit of righteousness. Wherever we as a people are divided, unite us. Wherever we are prideful, humble us. Give each one of us a heart for justice and empathy. Holy One, **through the power of your spirit, shape us into a people who give witness to your love.**

We call on your spirit of healing. Bless nurses, doctors, midwives, chaplains, counselors, and hospice workers as they care for those in need. We pray for all who long for comfort (*especially*). Holy One, **through the power of your spirit, shape us into a people who give witness to your love.**

We call on your spirit of friendship. As Elizabeth welcomed Mary to her home, give us a spirit of welcome to those whom we meet in this congregation and outside these doors. Surprise us daily with unexpected grace, that we rejoice in every blessing you send. Holy One, **through the power of your spirit, shape us into a people who give witness to your love.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We call on your spirit of hope. As you have led your saints in all times and places, stir in us the desire to follow their example, leading us from death to new life in you. Holy One, **through the power of your spirit, shape us into a people who give witness to your love.**

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

**Sundays & Seasons, Augsburg Fortress*

Blessing

L: Who are you?

All: **We are a people who never give up, because the spirit of God fills us with a vision for the future.**

L: Who are you?

All: **We are a people who welcome young and old, a rich tapestry of humanity with a multitude of differences.**

L: Who are you?

All: **We are a people who will never fall back into fear because we know the power of the peace Christ gives**

L: Go forth living into your identity as Children of God, trusting that through you the Spirit will do even greater works of love and justice.

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