

May 24th 2020 Rogation Sun. Service Lect A

Preparing for worship:

Good morning – welcome to worship

I hope you are able to gather everyone in your household together this morning. If you are not alone - assign parts of this beforehand. If you don't have a Bible you can google the scripture readings and print them out too. Perhaps print out copies of this for everyone present. This Liturgy is from the Lutheran Book of Worship and the prayers are based on those from Sundays & Seasons. Shut off all the distractions in your home. Sit in the quiet for a bit – take some deep breaths.

Two things to do ahead of time:

1 Have a plant to focus on – flower or vegetable - or these 3 items- a plant, water, and dirt.

Something new!

2 Select on YouTube the hymns: have your laptop or computer ready.

Google: Type in- for example - For the Beauty of the Earth with lyrics on YouTube. Select the one you like best and have it ready to play.

2nd Hymn : We plow the fields and scatter with lyrics on YouTube – I selected the one uploaded by opatriamias Oct 2.2016 – it looks like a Church of England congregation.

Last Hymn: All creatures of our God and King –

SELECT which recording your family likesor if you are blessed with a musician and a piano at home these are the hymns today.

The Gathering

Greeting: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Hymn 561 LBW: For the Beauty of the Earth

Prayer of the day: A Hand Blessing

The leader begins:

Look at your hands. Notice their power and gentleness. Let us bless these hands together. I invite you to say each phrase after the one who leads this.

Blessed be the works of your hands, O Holy One. *echo*
Blessed be these hands that have touched life. *echo*
Blessed be these hands that have nurtured creativity. *echo*
Blessed be these hands that have held pain. *echo*
Blessed be these hands that have embraced with passion. *echo*
Blessed be these hands that have tended gardens. *echo*
Blessed be these hands that have closed in anger. *echo*
Blessed be these hands that have planted new seeds. *echo*
Blessed be these hands that have harvested ripe fields. *echo*
Blessed be these hands that have cleaned, washed, mopped, scrubbed. *echo*
Blessed be these hands that have become knotty with age. *echo*
Blessed be these hands that are wrinkled and scarred from doing justice. *echo*
Blessed be these hands that have reached out and been received. *echo*
Blessed be these hands that hold the promise of the future. *echo*
Blessed be the works of your hands, O Holy One. *echo*

Written by Diann L. Neu, "A Hand Blessing," in *WATERwheel* Vol. 2, no. 1 (Winter 1989). Used by permission.

The word

Acts 1:6-14

Psalms 68:1-10,32-35

I Peter 4:12-14,5:6-11 John 17:1-11

Sermon: based on the Peter text

My Dad used to always say, "We don't plant the garden until May 24th!" My dad was born and raised in the Ottawa Valley so he knew what he was talking about. Even when we moved "south" – to Kingston- it was the same timing – not till May 24th and so we listened to Dad.

There is something very spiritually healing and satisfying about gardening. Slipping your hands into those gardening gloves transforms one into an agent for Mother Earth. We prepare the soil, plant, water, and feed and pray for good weather. Later we can harvest, share and preserve for the winter months. It has always been so and now the next generation is learning the same skills. These days people enjoy getting out of their houses and working on their property.

When I read the assigned Peter text for this morning, I thought I had just heard those same words elsewhere. May 10, Boris Johnson, Prime Minister of the UK started a new slogan "stay alert – control the virus –save lives". This was in

reference to easing the UK's lockdown. He suffered a lot of criticism for this, but he is warning his citizens as some return to work that it is still up to individuals to be careful. Every day there are gov't. changes in the behaviours we need to adapt to.

The disciple Peter, writing to us from a totally different time and circumstance is saying pretty much the same thing. vs8 "discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour." Peter is talking to people who are being persecuted for being Christians. In North America/2020 we rarely have to think about that as according to our constitutions we are allowed to practice our religions without oppression. However forms of religious oppression to non-Christian people do happen from time to time in our own country. We just need to look to our indigenous friends to know that. There are brothers and sisters around the world who indeed are persecuted and involved in showing Christ's suffering in their own lives.

There is an unspoken anxiety prevalent these days. It is different than what Peter experienced. That anxiety increases like blood pressure when certain people hear the word - scarcity. I know that many people have turned to gardening this year especially due to that one little word. We all try to ensure that our families are eating healthy food items. We are not just planting flowers and vegetables. We are planting hope and expectations. Francis Bacon once said "God Almighty first planted a garden. And indeed, it is the purest form of human pleasures." Gardens are spiritual places. They connect us to our senses and introduce us to the whole new world of nature. They require maintenance just as our spiritual lives requires attentiveness.

As we move along on this journey of ours, Peter asks us to do 4 things, vs5 "humble your selves", vs7 "cast all your anxiety on him" vs8 "discipline yourselves, and keep alert". Following Jesus' example, we could also pray for the unity of all people with God, and the reconciling of peoples and all of creation. We pray that what the world rejects God will receive. We pray that what the world divides God will make one. We pray that what the world threatens God will protect. May we be comforted by Jesus' prayer for us, and may we be so emboldened to pray for ourselves and for the blessing of our gardens. Amen.

Hymn 362 LBW We Plow the Fields and Scatter

Prayers of the People

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

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ dignified our labor by sharing our toil. Guide us with your justice in the workplace, so that we may never value things above people, or surrender honor to love of gain or lust for power. Prosper all efforts to put an end to work that brings no joy, and teach us how to govern the ways of business to the harm of none and for the sake of the common good; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 78)

Lord of life, you have given us six days on which to work, and modeled resting in your word on the sabbath. We give thanks for fair labor practices that offer time for rest and leisure as balance to our daily work. We pray for good and productive work in our daily professions and pursuits for the welfare of our neighbors. We pray for just and safe working conditions for all, for living wages, for honor and dignity in our employment. We pray that you work against all forces that steal human dignity or rob communities of the economic support they need from their labors to live sufficiently and well. For all those who defend the dignity of work, and all those who help us discover how to connect our faith to work, we give you thanks; Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, the heavens declare your glory and tell of your work in creation. From you come the gifts of our bodies and minds, our skills and abilities, and the opportunities to use these gifts in sustaining our lives and in helping our neighbors. We pray for those whose livelihood is insecure; for those who are bearing heavy burdens and stressful times at work; for those whose work is tedious or dangerous; for those who have experienced failures at work; for those who have lost a job; and for all who face any difficulty in their lives of labor. Surround them with your never-failing love; free them from restlessness and anxiety; keep them in every perplexity and distress; and renew them in facing the opportunities and challenges of daily life and work; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen. (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship Occasional Services for the Assembly*, p. 407)

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 . 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 as frontline workers. Grant safety to those serving at home or abroad, and assure them of your never-failing strength. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

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.

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn LBW 527 (verse 1-4 or all) All Creatures of Our God and King

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.

DISMISSAL

Go and share the good news,
Plant gardens in peace and share with all !
Thanks be to God. Alleluia!