

Where Two or Three Are Gathered: Worship for Small Assemblies

Easter Year A, May 7 – June 4, 2023

Fifth Sunday of Easter – Trinity Sunday

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Worship Notes

The Easter celebration continues, culminating with the Day of Pentecost on May 28th. We continue to hear lessons of growth and renewal, reflected in the new growth we witness around us in creation – from the fields to the forests, the sea, and the sky. Throughout these next few weeks, we journey through Ascension, Pentecost and into the Season of Pentecost with Trinity Sunday.

During the Easter season, the first reading is from Acts, instead of the Old Testament. What did the early church experience that connects with what is happening in your community or the world today?

Visuals – During the next few weeks, think about how you can keep that initial excitement of the Easter morning alive. *Christ is Risen! Christ is risen, indeed. Alleluia!* If you used green plants around the baptismal font or through your worship area, what are the other colours you could be adding? Are there plants that could be used in the church gardens over the summer months, or seedlings to be used in a community garden, as a reminder of our mission out in the world? Bring red into the worship space for Pentecost using flowers (geraniums might be a natural choice. Use what is available where you live). If you used white streamers during Easter, reuse them by adding in red streamers. Maybe add a third colour for Trinity, helping us to visualize the Three in One.

Leader Preparation – Pentecost is a wonderful time to remind us that the Good News is for **all** people. How many languages do people in your worshipping community speak? Ask people ahead of time to prepare a prayer of intercession, to be read in a language that is not usually used in your worship times. If you have people who are new to your community, maybe they would like to share their story of how they arrived and how the Holy Spirit guided them. During the reading of Acts 2:1-21, possibly after verse 4, have people shout out words of praise in their language of choice. Can you create the chaos that we read about on the first Pentecost day?

Easter is a season of joy. We also acknowledge that our world is not always a joyful place. Feel free to name the hurts, the wars, the injustices, and the needs of your community during your times of prayer. We are a resurrection people, knowing that the living Christ walks with us, even while people and the world continue to need our prayers. The honesty of our prayers allows people to fully declare “Amen.”

Music – If you have been using the same liturgy for a while, consider starting using a new one for the Season of Pentecost. If you begin in May by introducing one new element each week, you will have most of it learnt by the summer.

Continue singing Easter hymns for the whole season of Easter. It is always good to sing our Alleluia's. "Loaves were broken, words were spoken" (ACS #966) is an appropriate song to use as an offering song or during communion for the rest of the season.

For Pentecost, consider singing songs with words and music from around the world. A cantor or small choir could learn the words in a different language, as printed in ELW. See hymn suggestions below.

Order of Service

The following Orders of Service follow the usual pattern as outlined in Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW). Adapt to meet the needs and usual worship practice of your community. It is appropriate to use the Thanksgiving for Baptism during the Easter season in place of the Confession and Forgiveness, as well as to use the Canticle of Praise

Service of Holy Communion

*For use when an ordained pastor or authorized lay minister is presiding. The **bold** items are central elements of the liturgy. The other elements support the shape of Christian worship.*

GATHERING

Thanksgiving for Baptism

Gathering Song

Canticle of Praise

Greeting

Prayer of the Day

WORD

First Reading

Psalm

Second Reading

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel

Sermon

Hymn of the Day

Creed

Prayers of Intercession

Peace

MEAL

Offering

Setting the Table

Offering Prayer

Great Thanksgiving

Dialogue and Preface

Holy, Holy, Holy

Thanksgiving at the Table with Words of Institution OR

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

Communion

Communion Song

Prayer after Communion

SENDING

Blessing

Sending Song

Dismissal

Service of the Word

GATHERING

Thanksgiving for Baptism

Gathering Song

Canticle of Praise

Greeting

Prayer of the Day

WORD

First Reading

Psalm

Second Reading

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel

Sermon

Hymn of the Day

Creed

Prayers of Intercession

Peace

THANKSGIVING

Offering

Canticle of Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving for the Word

Lord's Prayer

SENDING

Blessing

Sending Song

Dismissal

Weekly Suggestions

ELW – Evangelical Lutheran Worship

ACS – All Creation Sings

Fifth Sunday of Easter – May 7

Colour: White

Idea: Where did you encounter God/see Christ working this week? Have people share during worship.

Acts 7:55-60

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

1 Peter 2:2-10

John 14:1-14

Hymn Suggestions:

Christ is made the sure foundation – ELW 645

Jesus is a rock in a weary land – ELW 333

Come, my way, my truth, my life – ELW 816

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing – ELW 389

Loaves were broken, words were spoken – ACS 966

I know that my Redeemer lives! – ELW 619

Sixth Sunday of Easter – May 14

Colour: White

Idea: “I will not leave you orphaned.” What does this mean to you? Are there people in your congregation distanced from family or loved ones? How does this message that God is with us always reassure us?

Acts 17:22-31

Psalm 66:8-20

1 Peter 3:13-22

John 14:15-21

Hymn Suggestions:

This joyful Eastertide – ELW 391

Come down, O Love divine – ELW 804

Don't be afraid – ACS 1027

Loaves were broken, words were spoken – ACS 966

Thy Holy Wings – ELW 613

Now thank we all our God – ELW 840

Seventh Sunday of Easter/ Ascension of Our Lord– May 21

Ascension of our Lord is Thursday, May 18th. Many congregations will recognize this day on the following Sunday, May 21.

Colour: White (for both Ascension and the Seventh Sunday of Easter)

Idea: As the disciples returned to Jerusalem, they continued to pray and to feel blessed. How can we express our gratitude this week?

Acts 1:6-14 (As the lesson for Ascension is Acts 1:1-11, consider reading Acts 1:1-14)

Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35

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

John 17:1-11

Hymn Suggestions

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus – ELW 392

I come with joy – ELW 482

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing – ELW 389

Like the murmur of the dove's song – ELW 403

Loaves were broken, words were spoken – ACS 966

Christ, our peace – ACS 1037

Go to the world – ACS 991

Day of Pentecost – May 28

Colour: Red

Idea: Do you present a candle to the newly baptized in your congregation? How is this the same or different than receiving the 'flame' of the Holy Spirit? You might provide each person with a red votive candle as a remembrance of their baptism and how the Holy Spirit, the Advocate is with us always.

Acts 2:1-21

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b

1 Corinthians 12:3b-13

John 20:19-23

Hymn Suggestions

O Holy Spirit, enter in – ELW 786

Gracious Spirit, heed our pleading – ELW 401

O living breath of God – ELW 407

As the wind song – ACS 943

Loaves were broken, words were spoken – ACS 966

God of tempest, God of whirlwind – ELW 400

The Holy Trinity – June 4

Colour: White

Idea: God, the Three in One, is in relationship with us, and all the places we play, live, work and breathe, renewing us with each and every breath. How does our worship renew and re-create our relationship with God and each other?

Genesis 1:1-2:4a

Psalm 8

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Matthew 28:16-20

Hymn Suggestions

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty – ELW 413

Rise, shine, you people – ELW 665

Womb of life and source of being – ACS 948

To God our thanks we give – ELW 682

When long before time – ELW 861

Come, join the dance of Trinity – ELW 412