

Where Two or Three are Gathered: Worship for Small Assemblies

Aug.6-27, 2023

Ordinary Time: Year A - Lectionary 18 to Lectionary 21
The 10th Sunday after Pentecost to the 13th Sunday after Pentecost
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Planning Notes for Leaders

Season and Lectionary

We are currently in the long season of green which is called “Ordinary Time”. Often this long season is called the second half of the liturgical calendar. The first half begins with Advent and takes us all the way to Pentecost Sunday. Throughout the first half of the year we tell the story of Jesus’ life and ministry. In the second half of the calendar comes the long season of Green where we slow down the pace of the action. Rather than an overarching story of Jesus’ life, we focus on Jesus’ teaching, parables, miracles and other vignettes from his years of ministry.

The season is not ordinary as in boring or average, but rather ordinary refers to ‘ordinal time’ or counting time. We literally count the Sundays after Pentecost and we will continue counting until the final green Sunday on November 19th, the twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost. Almost half a calendar year!

In Lectionary Year A our focus is the Gospel of Matthew, beginning with Jesus’ call to the first disciples. Matthew’s gospel was written to the Hebrew community living in Jerusalem, contending with how to be followers of Jesus living in the heart of the holy city of the Hebrew faith. Throughout the Gospel, Matthew is often trying to demonstrate how Jesus fulfills the messianic prophecies of the Torah and Tanakh (Old Testament).

Another feature of the readings for Ordinary Time is that there is a choice for the First reading and Psalm to be made between the Thematic set of readings and the Semi-Continuous. The official lectionary of the ELCIC is the Semi-Continuous option, but our sibling church to the south the ELCA uses the Thematic readings. Thus the Thematic set is often the default when using Sundays and Seasons planning tools. The Thematic first reading and Psalm are chosen to fit the theme of the Gospel reading thus might jump around from book to book in the Old Testament. The Semi-Continuous usually follows readings connected to one another (this year beginning with the story of the call of Abram and Sarai, and following with the stories of their descendants) but might not obviously fit the themes of the Gospel reading.

Seasonal visuals and music

The colour for Ordinary Time is Green.

Ordinary Time is the chance to choose all the music that isn't particularly connected to other seasons. Often there are hymns and songs that speak to particular Gospel texts or other readings. There also might be other music that connects with the green theme of growing and nature during this time.

Suggested Orders for Holy Communion and Service of the Word:

Order for Holy Communion Service

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

Greeting

Call to Worship (optional)

Thanksgiving at the Font (Optional) p.59-60 ACS

Kyrie (optional)

Gathering Hymn

Prayer of the Day

Word - First Reading, Psalm, Second Reading, Gospel

Sermon/Reflection

Hymn of the Day

Apostles' Creed

Prayers of Intercession

Share the Peace

Offering

Eucharistic Prayer

ELW p. 65-70, choose between forms V-XI, OR ACS p. 56-58

Lord's Prayer (ELW p.221)

Distribution of Communion

Blessing

Sending Hymn

Dismissal/Blessing ELW p.222, or as printed

Order for Service of the Word

Greeting

Call to Worship (optional)

Thanksgiving at the Font (Optional) p.59-60 ACS

Gathering Hymn

Prayer of the Day

Word - First Reading, Psalm, Second Reading, Gospel

Sermon/Reflection

Hymn

Apostles' Creed

Prayers of Intercession

Share the Peace

Canticle of Thanksgiving – ELW #208 *Praise to You, O God of Mercy*

Thanksgiving for the Word (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 (ELW p.221)

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

Sending Hymn / Dismissal

- **There is also a Service of Word & Prayer in ACS, p.42-45**

Resources in ELW and ACS

Prayer of the Day – can be found with the Lectionary readings in ELW, p.44-46

Prayers of the People - ELW p. 105 offers helpful guidelines for crafting prayers from the assembly. Different themed prayers can be found on p. 72-87
OR in ACS p.46-55

Please note – Many of the resources provided below are used with permission from Woodlake Books, Seasons of the Spirit. <https://www.seasonsonline>

Lectionary 18 / 10th Sunday After Pentecost Aug.6, 2023

Lectionary readings:

Isaiah 55:1-5; Genesis 32:22-31(semicontinuous); Psalm 145:8-9,14-21; Psalm 17:1-7, 15 (semicontinuous); Romans 9:1-5; Matthew 14:13-21

Optional Resources: Call to Worship/ Opening Prayer/ Offering Prayer/ Blessing

Call to Worship

Like a hungry crowd, **we come to be fed.** Like an anxious child, **we come to be comforted.** Like a forlorn friend, **we come seeking kindness.** Like an agitated mob, **we come demanding answers.** Like a refugee, **we come needing a home.** Like a joyous bride, **we come to share our joy.**

Like a newborn babe, **we come with hearts and minds open to all life offers.** Like pilgrims of old, **we come looking for truth.** Here we reach out to grasp your hand, striving for your blessing. **Here we come to worship.**

Opening prayer

As you have always been with those who have drawn apart for solitude, for grieving, for prayer, out of fear or out of hope, **be with us now.**

As you have always been with the ones who search or flee, struggle or hunger, **be with us now.** As you have always been in this place of worship, and in every place where those who sought you have encountered you, **be with us now.** O God, find us here in the struggle of this moment.

Help us to find words for the blessing we so need, and ears to hear how others wrestle. We have found your goodness in each other's stories and your steadfast love. Amen.

Offering Prayer

Receive these good gifts, Steadfast God.

Open your arms wide to welcome all Creation with your merciful kindness and share in the abundance of blessings for all who strive. Amen.

Blessing

God never lets us go.

We are eternally held in the loving embrace of God: Creator, Saviour, and Spirit.

Go with this blessing and peace. Amen.

(Resources from Seasons of the Spirit)

Hymn Suggestions:

All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly	ELW 461
The Rice of Life	ACS 965
We Come to the Hungry Feast	ELW 479
Break Now the Bread of Life	ELW 515
When the Poor Ones	ELW 725
Praise and Thanksgiving	ELW 689
Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ	ELW 674
By Your Hand You Feed Your People	ELW 469
We Come Now to Your Table	ACS 970

Lectionary 19 / 11th Sunday After Pentecost Aug.13, 2023

Lectionary:

I Kings 19:9-18; Genesis 37:1-4,12-28 (semicontinuous); Psalm 85:8-13; Psalm 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b (semicontinuous); Romans 10:5-15; Matthew 14:22-33

Optional Resources: Call to Worship/ Opening Prayer/ Offering Prayer/ Blessing

Call to Worship

In a world overwhelmed by waves of bad news, **we feel tossed and turned in the chaos of current events.** Here we are, carrying our dreams in our spirits, **wondering what God dreams in the storms and turmoil.** It is God's dream of abundant life, **and we are stirring to interpret its meaning.**

We come together to listen and wonder, to praise and celebrate. **We come in hopeful anticipation to awaken our hearts to God's dream fulfilled.**

Opening Prayer

God of grace, come to us.

Be among this extravagant gathering.

Be within this miscellaneous cluster of people.

Come to us, we pray, as Jesus came to the disciples in that stormy sea many years ago.

Come to us, as Reuben came to the rescue of his brother, Joseph.

Come to us and bring your calming touch and faithful presence into our awareness.

Enter our boat and be in our midst in ways so tangible that we have no more room for doubt or fear.

Come to us, and anchor our confidence in your grace. Come, God of grace, bring your spirit and the spirit of our ancestors. Amen.

Offering Prayer

Gracious God, along with our time, talent and resources, we offer our visions and hopes for the possibilities of new life in all your people. Help us to endure, to be renewed, and to be agents of your grace whenever possible. We thank you for dreaming us into being and we offer ourselves to your love. Amen.

Blessing

Send us forth, O God, as carriers of your dreams,
with worshipful hearts to keep, adapt, and persist in your love that threatens the way things are.

**In the dim as well as bright times,
we will seek you and your strength;
we will seek your presence continually.**

(Resources from Seasons of the Spirit)

Hymn Suggestions:

Praise, Praise! You are My Rock.	ELW 862
Shout to the Lord	W&P 124 (Worship & Praise)
Jesus, Saviour ,Pilot Me	ELW 755
Calm to the Waves	ELW 794
Precious Lord, Take My Hand	ELW 773
When Peace Like a River	ELW 785
Nothing Can Trouble	ACS 1033
My Life Flows On In Endless Song	ELW 763
O God, Our Help in Ages Past	ELW 632

Lectionary 20 / 12th Sunday After Pentecost Aug.20, 2023

Lectionary:

Isaiah 56:1, 6-8; Genesis 45:1-15 (semicontinuous); Psalm 67; Psalm 133 (semicontinuous); Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32; Matthew 15: (10-20) 21-28

Optional Resources Call to Worship/ Opening Prayer/ Offering Prayer/ Blessing

Call to Worship

We have climbed trees and over mountains hoping to find a place of belonging. **Love is possible.**

We cross the boundaries that divide us by ages and stages, ethnicities and genders, hurts and disagreements. **Love is possible.**

We open our hearts and ready our hands to reach out to one another, and discover One who is within and beyond us. **Love is possible.**

Let us worship together in love.

Opening Prayer

We reach out to you God in our believing and in our doubting. We reach out to you with our dreams, our songs, and our listening. We know you have already reached out to us before we even thought about reaching out to you, so we come to give you thanks today.

Offering Prayer

God, who loves all of earth, every created thing is beloved to you. We give thanks for your embrace and reach out to this wild world with the gifts we dedicate to your love. May these gifts transform so many stories. Amen.

Blessing

People of God – look around.

These are your brothers and sisters.

Nothing divides us other than our limitations. Released from the burdens of fear, anger, resentment, and pain, let us go into the world made new, celebrating our new freedom to reach out with your love. Let us go to love and serve. Amen.

(Resources from Seasons of the Spirit)

Hymn Suggestions:

All Are Welcome	ELW 641
God, We Gather As Your People	ACS 1038
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore thee	ELW 836
There's a Wideness in God's Mercy	ELW 588
Let us Ever Walk with Jesus	ELW 802
Mercy, We Abide in You	ACS 1077
Lord, Whose Love in Humble service	ELW 712
My Faith Looks up to Thee	ELW 759
May the God of Hope Go With Us	ACS 984

Lectionary 21 / 13th Sunday After Pentecost Aug.27, 2023

Lectionary:

Isaiah 51:1-6; Exodus 1:8-2:10 (semicontinuous); Psalm 138; Psalm 124 (semicontinuous); Romans 12:1-8; Matthew 16:13-20

Optional Resources Call to Worship/ Opening Prayer/ Offering Prayer/ Blessing

Call to Worship (Based on Romans 12)

Hidden in the quiet of our morning, our ancestors gather among us. **Together, we open our hearts to spiritual worship.**

We come seeking transformation and the renewing of our minds; **so that we might know what the work of justice looks like now in this moment.**

We share in the ministry of being one body with differing gifts. **Let this time of worship be a time of growing in compassion**

Opening prayer

Come, O Justice, to these many members with gifts to share. Come into our uncertainty about how to act and when. Come into every question and hesitation when we know there is so much compassion to share. There is so much that is needed, so come. Come, O Justice, and be our help. Bring your vision, we pray.

Gathered as your people, wonderful and diverse, we join as one body in worship – remembering your saving Spirit and embodying your creative purpose.
Make yourself known to us as we worship, we pray. Amen.

Offering Prayer

We offer these gifts in our desire to live by your story rather than someone else's story. Help us to use them, dear God, to bring hope in despair and compassion where there is distress. Bless these gifts and every gift we offer with your love. Amen.

Blessing

Sisters and brothers, go full of mercy,
carrying peace, abundant in generosity and steadfast in the work of love.
This is the work of justice. It is shalom that we share.
Go into the world knowing God's goodness in your heart and assured that you are loved. Amen.

(Resources from Seasons of the Spirit)

Hymn Suggestions:

Built on a Rock	ELW 652
My Hope is Built on Nothing Less	ELW 596, or 597
O Holy Spirit, Enter In	ELW 786
Here on Jesus Christ I Will Stand	ACS 1024
Faith of our Fathers	ELW 812
We All Are One in Mission	ELW 576
Let Us Enter In	ACS 985
Guide My Feet	ACS 987