

Where Two or Three Are Gathered
Worship for Small Assemblies
Easter 2 – Pentecost Year A
2026
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Easter turns our world upside down. There are mystical possibilities of transformation in every moment. We are witnesses to the good news, which is Jesus. The Easter season is the high point of the church calendar. Alleluias abound in our joy in worshipping the risen Christ.

“So in Eastertide we review the memories of these first followers as they struggled to find the right words to describe what exactly had happened to them in the death and resurrection of Jesus. We walk with them as they look for ways to express their newness not simply in terms of personal identity but in social stance toward the dominant culture. We hear how they were transformed into witnesses to God’s extraordinary involvement in the life of Jesus, their own lives, and the lives of all to come after them. But only at the end of the season are they at last empowered by the Spirit to proclaim the gospel and to form an enduring ecclesial community.

What if we invite people to stand on the threshold with the disciples for the few weeks of Eastertide? What if we refuse the easy closure of “Jesus arose, appeared to a couple of people, moved on, and that’s that,” and instead hover in the doorway with the disciples as they try to figure out what it all means?” – Nancy Claire Pittman

Planning Considerations

*I encourage you to read the introductory comments on “Pattern for Worship”

- Holy Communion ELW pp. 91–93
- Service of the Word ELW p. 210
- Service of Word and Prayer ACS p. 42
- Also read the rubrics (red lettered sentences) in each service you consider using

*Service of Holy Communion is used when there is an ordained pastor or authorized lay minister present to preside. Service of the Word is used at all other times.

*If you do not have a preacher, you could receive a sermon which has been prepared by a rotating roster of pastors from across the church. Sign up for this free service at sermonsbyemail@gmail.com

*The Nicene Creed is used during the Easter season.

*Engage all the senses in a variety of ways.

“Not everyone hears God in the same way – variety reflects the diversity of God and God’s people. Through the arts, human beings embody God by imitating God’s creative life – shaping the clay of their experience with voices and hands. In that place, everything becomes new and we participate in God’s continual creation of the universe.” – Diana Butler Bass

*Cut flowers represent Christ’s sacrifice. Use lots of flowers throughout the season.

– Be aware of scent allergies when choosing flowers.

*White and gold are the colours of Easter.

– Use fabric or ribbons hung on walls and draped on the end of pews.

– Fabric or ribbons could also be waved while dancing to various hymns.

– Give everyone a length of ribbon when they enter the worship space and encourage them to wave their ribbons every time they hear “Alleluia!”

"Some years ago, I spent an afternoon caught up in a piece of sewing I was doing. The waste basket near my sewing machine was filled with scraps of fabric cut away from my project. This basket of discards was a fascination to my daughter Annika, who, at the time, was not yet four years old. She rooted through the scraps searching out the long bright strips, collected them to herself, and went off. When I took a moment to check on her, I tracked her whereabouts to the back garden where I found her sitting in the grass with a long pole. She was affixing the scraps to the top of the pole with great sticky wads of tape. "I'm making a banner for a procession," she said. "I need a procession so that God will come down and dance with us." With that she solemnly lifted her banner to flutter in the wind and slowly she began to dance.

... I learned all over again how strong and real is that sense of wonder that children have – how innate and easy their way with the sacred." – *To Dance with God* — Gertrud Mueller Nelson p. 3

*An activity for both adults and children – some people listen more easily when their hands are busy

– Provide butterfly outlines for people to colour and cut out during the service. Put them up on walls or windows, adding to the display each week.

– Use bulletins from previous weeks, or pages from old magazines to make origami cranes (instructions can be found on Youtube). String them together and hang them in the worship space.

Gathering Rite – Based on ELW 367 and 368

2nd Sunday of Easter

L: Now all the vault of heaven resounds

in praise of love that still abounds:

R: Christ has triumphed! He is living!

L: Sing, choirs of angels, loud and clear!

Repeat their song of glory here:

R: Christ has triumphed! He is living!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

3rd Sunday of Easter

L: Eternal is the gift Christ brings,
Therefore our heart with rapture sings:
R: Christ has triumphed! He is living!
L: Now still he comes to give us life
And by his presence stills all strife.
R: Christ has triumphed! He is living!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

4th Sunday of Easter

L: Oh, fill us Lord with dauntless love;
Set heart and will on things above:
R: Christ has triumphed! He is living!
L: Grant grace sufficient for life's day
And by our lives we truly say:
R: Christ has triumphed! He is living!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

5th Sunday of Easter

L: Adoring praises now we bring
And with the heavenly blessed sing:
R: Christ has triumphed! He is living!

L: Be all the glory to Creator,
Jesus Christ, and Spirit blessed;
R: Christ has triumphed! He is living!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

6th Sunday of Easter

L: With high delight let us unite
In songs of great jubilation.
R: Christ has triumphed! He is living!
L: You pure in heart, all bear your part,
Sing Jesus Christ, our salvation.
R: Christ has triumphed! He is living!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

7th Sunday of Easter

L: Let praises ring; give thanks, and bring
to Christ our Lord adoration.
R: Christ has triumphed! He is living!
L: His honour speed by word and deed
to every land, every nation.
R: Christ has triumphed! He is living!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Thanksgiving at the Font is appropriate for the Easter season

*There are lovely options in ACS p. 10 and also p. 59-60

*Also ELW p. 70 - 71 and p. 97

*Invite the children to join you at the font to “play in the water”, creating splashes and drips and other water sounds to accompany the words

YEAR A

*When choosing hymns, consider the day, the lessons, and the themes

* Consider learning a new hymn each week, or every other week

2nd Sunday of Easter - April 12

– Lessons and Prayer of the Day can be found in ELW on page 32

– Themes for the day

– Christ appears to the disciples and offers the gift of peace

– Christ’s resurrection is the fulfillment of God’s promise to David

– Hymn suggestions

ACS 934 Christ is Living

ACS 939 Touch That Soothes and Heals

ELW 379 Now the Green Blade Rises

ELW 635 We Walk By Faith

ELW 646 The Peace of the Lord

ELW 535 Hallelujah! We Sing Your Praises

3rd Sunday of Easter - April 19

– Lessons and Prayer of the Day can be found in ELW on page 33

– Themes for the day

– Jesus walks with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus

- We receive God’s promise through baptism
- Hymn Suggestions
 - ACS 977 Look Who Gathers At Christ’s Table
 - ELW 479 We Come to the Hungry Feast
 - ELW 539 Abide, O Dearest Jesus
 - ELW 391 This Joyful Eastertide

4th Sunday of Easter - April 26

- Lessons and Prayer of the Day can be found in ELW on page 33
- Themes for the day
 - Good Shepherd Sunday; Jesus is the ‘gate’ of the sheep
 - Christ opens the way to abundant life
- Hymn Suggestions
 - ACS 995 Come, Be Among Us, O Jesus
 - ACS 987 Guide My Feet (requires a strong leader)
 - ELW 883 All People That on Earth Do Dwell
 - ELW 385 Good Christian Friends, Rejoice and Sing!
 - ELW 764 Have No Fear Little Flock
 - ELW 780 Shepherd Me, O God

5th Sunday of Easter - May 3

- Lessons and Prayer of the Day can be found in ELW on page 34
- Themes for the day
 - Jesus promises to prepare a place for us
 - Our baptism commissions us to share Jesus’ mission in the world
- Hymn Suggestions

ACS 979 Making Their Way

ACS 1085 Hope of the World

ELW 816 Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life

ELW 758 You Are the Way

ELW 477 I Received the Living God

ELW 389 Christ is Alive! Let Christians Sing

6th Sunday of Easter - May 10

– Lessons and Prayer of the Day can be found in ELW on page 34

– Themes for the day

– We are reminded that the risen Christ dwells with us as the Spirit of truth

– Christ is our advocate

– Hymn Suggestions

ACS 1045 Come, Share the Spirit

ACS 980 Come, Holy Spirit, Descend

ELW 398 Holy Spirit, Truth Divine

ELW 816 Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life

ELW 404 Come, Gracious Spirit, Heavenly Dove

ELW 781 Children of the Heavenly Father

ELW 407 O Living Breath of God

7th Sunday of Easter — May 17

– Lessons and Prayer of the Day can be found in ELW on page 35

– Themes for the day

– We wait for the coming of the Spirit

– Jesus prays for his followers and for their mission in his name

– Hymn Suggestions

ACS 1038 God, We Gather as Your People

ACS 1037 Christ, Our Peace

ACS 984 May the God of Hope Go With Us

ELW 526 God is Here!

ELW 482 I Come With Joy

ELW 470 Draw Us In the Spirit's Tether

Ascension of Our Lord – May 17 *Option: instead of 7th Sunday of Easter*

– Lessons and Prayer of the Day can be found in ELW on page 35

– Hymn Suggestions

ACS 954 You, Lord, Are Both Lamb and Shepherd

ACS 937 Earth, Earth, Awake!

ELW 393 A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing!

ELW 604 O Christ, Our Hope

ELW 434 Jesus Shall Reign

Worship planning should always point the worshippers toward God and where God is leading us into the world. May God's Spirit inspire you in your planning.

Sources

Evangelical Lutheran Worship – ELW

All Creation Sings – ACS

Sundays and Seasons – sundaysandseasons.com

– If your budget does not allow the cost of a subscription to Sundays and Seasons, perhaps an individual in your community may offer this expense, if asked.

To Dance with God – Gertrude Mueller Nelson

Creating Change – excerpt from Christianity for the Rest of Us – Diana Butler Bass

Many hymns and some service music can be found on YouTube

Lutheran World Federation website for added worship resources

Music that Makes Community offers paperless music resources.

Suggested Reading List

To Dance with God, Family Ritual and Community Celebration

Gertrude Mueller Nelson

Paulist Press, Mahwah, New Jersey ©1986

Creating Change, the arts as catalyst for spiritual transformation

Keri Wehlander – editor

Copper House ©2008

Christianity for the Rest of Us

Diana Butler Bass

Harper Collins ©2006