

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Geneva

English-Speaking Congregation

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Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost + 20 September, 2020

Congregation Retreat

10:30 Park des Evaux, Onex

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle: *Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Peru*

Most of the time we are wearing masks.

Gathering

We need to spread out in family units. Settle into a space suitable for you or your family but far enough away from others to be safe. Then begin by greeting those you don't know. Find out where they are from, how they are doing during this strange time. If you know everyone, then greet those you haven't seen in a long time. To help us re-connect, make a point of discovering those you don't know well, or haven't seen in a long time. Even with a mask keep some distance. Return to your place when we begin singing.

Musical Preparation

Opening words

So much for which to give thanks,
but no instruments with which to sing,
so much to do,
and so many wondering what is next for them,
so much to complain about,
and so few ears to listen,
nevertheless, we are those who find bread in the wilderness,
feeding on manna, the gift of God,
living in such a way that living is Christ,
rejoicing in the company of one another,
praising the Blessed Trinity,
one God, now and forever.

Hymn **Now, we join in celebration**

Call to Prayer

Complaints--

in the wilderness, there are usually complaints. We hear that all the way back to the story of the Exodus. Red Sea, liberty, grumbling. Sometimes it seems as if freedom really means the ability to gripe. But the story also says that God hears.

In the wilderness, before there was bread, there were complaints. We pray.

Prayer of Lament

God of the desert,
what purpose does this wilderness of a pandemic have for you?
Is it good to constantly hunger for contact, for connection, for the warm embrace?
Dare we remember when we sang a hymn,
and our voices echoed back to us from the ceiling and floor?
Wasn't it better back then?
Do you hear our complaints?
How long will you leave us in unrelenting uncertainty?
From where will the manna for our time come?
From where the quails?
Will they satisfy?

Sung Response **Ouve Deus de amor**

God, who makes covenant with us,
hear our complaints and answer our cries.
Draw near to us so we are not left in despair.
Even when our lives feel as if they are barren,
give us eyes to marvel at the beauty persisting in the desert
and spirits open to your goodness and support
surprising us like a morning frost glinting in the sun,
through your crucified and resurrected Beloved,
Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Gloria

Prayer of the Day

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Let us pray:
Bread in the Wilderness
providing what we need, even if we could not see how it would be,
offering a way forward, even if it is not one we would choose,
change how we want,
so our desires are no longer limited by ourselves
but become attuned to our neighbors, our community, our world,
as we follow your Beloved, Jesus Christ
to whom we give glory,
this day and all days.
Amen.

Old Testament Reading:

We divide the crowd into groups of 15 to 20 each. In each group we need the following: Narrator, Moses, Israelites (which can be one, several, or all the rest of the group). The Israelites have a complaint: 'If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger. Children might be taught the end of the line e.g. 'for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.'

Complaints are accompanied with different gestures, tones of voices, stances. In the script below, you will

be invited to explore the complaint in three different ways: first as a whiny child, then as a scolding parent, then as a lawyer. Before starting the reading, the group might practice the complaint of the Israelites from these three different perspectives, including gestures and the use of the body. Notice how the complaint changes when the gesture or the voice change. Then enter into the story.

Old Testament Reading

Exodus 16:2-15

Narrator

A reading from the book of Exodus

The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them,

Israelites *Maybe said like a whiny child*

"If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Narrator

The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

Israelites *This time like a parent scolding a child*

"If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Narrator

The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

Israelites *This time like a lawyer in a court of law*

"If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Narrator

Then the LORD said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days." So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites,

Moses

"In the evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your complaining against the LORD. For what are we, that you complain against us?"

"When the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the LORD has heard the complaining that you utter against him--what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against the LORD."

Narrator

Then Moses said to Aaron,

Moses

"Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, 'Draw near to the LORD, for he has heard your complaining.'"

Narrator

And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. The LORD spoke to Moses and said, "I have heard the

complaining of the Israelites; say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'" In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another,

Israelites *with surprise or wonder*
"What is it?"

Narrator
For they did not know what it was.

Moses
"It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat."

Narrator
This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Alleluia

Gospel reading John 6:31-35
The Gospel according to John chapter 6.
Glory to you, O Lord.

[Someone from the crowd said:] "Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat." ' Then Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.'
Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Alleluia

Sermon
Rev. Andy Willis

Hymn **All who hunger gladly gather**

Welcoming New Members

Introduction
God gives us a new birth into a living hope through the sacrament of baptism. The power of sin is put to death in this holy flood, and we are raised with Jesus Christ to new life.

Presentation

Introducing the new members.

Prayer
Let us pray

Merciful God, we thank you for these sisters and brothers, whom you have made your own by water and the word in baptism. You have called them to yourself, enlightened them with the gifts of your Spirit and nourished them in the community of faith. On this Pentecost Sunday, fill them anew with your Spirit, and surround them with sisters and brothers praying for them, holding them in your love and inviting them further along the pathway of following Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Renunciation of Evil

I ask you and the whole community to reject sin, profess your faith in Christ, and confess the faith of the church.

Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God?

I renounce them.

Do you renounce the ways of sin that draw you from God?

I renounce them.

Do you turn to Christ as your Lord and Savior?

In faith I turn to Christ.

The Apostles' Creed

Do you believe in God the Father?

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

***I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven. He is seated at the right hand of the Father
and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.***

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

***I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen***

Affirmation in the Presence of the Assembly

You have made public profession of your faith. Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

to live among God's faithful people,
to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,
to serve all people, following the example of Jesus
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

New members

I do, and I ask God to help and guide me.

People of God, do you promise to support these sisters and brothers and pray for them in their life in Christ?

We do, and we ask God to help and guide us.

Prayer

Let us pray

We give you thanks, gracious God, that through water and the Holy Spirit, you give us new birth, cleanse us from sin, and raise us to eternal life.

Stir up in xxx, xxx and xxx the gift of the Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirits of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence, now and forever.

Welcome

Let us rejoice with these sisters and brothers in Christ and welcome them with song

Response **Tatanaka, mamananaka saratañani**

Prayers of Intercession

This morning, because we are a little spread out, I invite you to pray in the groups we had for the readings. It is not good to hold hands, but maybe we can form distanced prayer circles.

Someone can maybe remember the birthdays and anniversaries printed in the bulletin. One or two can pray for Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Peru. Someone can pray for the sick. Each one can add silently or aloud their concerns.

God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

At the end of the prayers

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray,
trusting in your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

The Passing of the Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
And also with you.

Gathering of Gifts

*While we sing this, you are invited to put your food out,
with some bread and a cup to receive wine or juice for communion.*

We are coming, Lord, to the table

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The musical score is written on three staves. The first staff has two parts: 'Pastor' and 'People'. The lyrics are: 'The Lord be with you. And also with you.' The second staff also has two parts: 'Pastor' and 'People'. The lyrics are: 'Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.' The third staff has two parts: 'Pastor' and 'People'. The lyrics are: 'Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give God thanks and praise.' The score includes treble clefs, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and various musical notations such as notes, rests, and slurs.

At the beginning of the day, you spoke light and the chaos was overcome by creation.

We tell of all God's wonderful works.

At the center of the garden, you formed humanity in your image and breathed your Spirit within.

We tell of all God's wonderful works.

When some became oppressors and others became slaves, you claimed those enchained as your people and called them to a new society with a new home, leading them through the sea.

We tell of all God's wonderful works.

When they complained in the wilderness, you gave them manna with the morning dew and quails in the evening sky.

We tell of all God's wonderful works.

When they strayed, you sent prophets to speak of justice and hope, so they might turn and follow your law.

We tell of all God's wonderful works.

At the beginning of the day, your Beloved arose, overcoming sin and death, so that we might be free.

We tell of all God's wonderful works.

With the church of every time and place, eating and drinking in every conceivable way, we join in the endless hymn of praise.

Sanctus

Eucharistic Prayer

Most of all we thank you for your Beloved, Jesus Christ,
who leads beyond the questions of what is owed, to the questions of what is given,

hosanna in the highest,

who keeps offering everyone a place in the coming realm of justice and light,

hosanna in the highest,

who keeps forming from fishermen and seamstresses his church.

Hosanna in the highest,

Love keeps on giving itself away, discovering life full and free.

Hosanna in the highest.

Words of Institution

If possible, you are invited to lift up the bread. Children might help with this.

On the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering

This strange table, spread out, without any physical connection or design, nevertheless becomes for us the table of Christ. In the wilderness, here is bread, becoming for us the body of Christ. Here is wine, offering us salvation, the blood of life surging through our veins. Although we do not touch each other, we are touched by the remembrance of Christ, all that he and his community mean to us.

We proclaim the mystery of our faith.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, come,
so we see Jesus, with us throughout this strange time.
Re-make us into his body,

connecting to one another with love that counters our fears,
so that we follow his way and do his will,
giving thanks for his presence in our lives, in our community, in our world.
Through Christ, with Christ and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honor are yours,
now and forever.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Together we say our common prayer in our many languages.

***Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.***

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Agnus Dei

Cordero de Dios

Communion

We serve those in our family or ourselves saying with the bread, the body of Christ. The Pastor or an assistant will come around and pour wine or juice into your cup.

Song during Communion

Eat this bread

Prayer after communion

Let us pray:

Surrounded by sandwiches, cheese and fruit,
we give you thanks, God, hearing our cries,
for your presence with us in bread and wine,
and in the feast to come.

Fill us up with love,
so we could imagine that we are dining on mana and quails,
enough food for rejoicing, even in the wilderness,
through the gift of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Song

Picnic Lunch

Closing service

We make two large concentric circles while we sing. We are spaced out. The inner circle will have fewer people. We need to wear masks

Gathering Song **Cantai ao Senhor**

from Psalm 105:1-6, 37-43

O give thanks to the LORD,

Inner circle: and call upon God' name,

Outer circle: make known the deeds of the Lord among the peoples.

Sing to the LORD,

Inner circle: sing praises;

Outer circle: and speak of all God's marvelous works.

Glory in God's holy name;

Inner Circle: let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

Outer Circle: let our hearts rejoice.

Seek for the strength of the LORD

Inner circle: continually seek God's face.

Remember the marvels God has done,

Outer circle: the wonders and the judgments of God's mouth,

O offspring of Abraham,

Inner circle: God's servant,

O children of Jacob,

Outer circle: God's chosen ones.

O give thanks to the LORD,

Inner circle: and call upon God' name,

Outer circle: make known the deeds of the Lord among the peoples.

At this point the inner circle walks in a clockwise direction and the outer circle walks in a counter-clockwise direction. People don't need to look at their bulletins for the rest. When Terry says a word of phrase the inner circle repeats it and then the outer circle.

You led out your people with silver and gold,

in all their tribes there was not one that stumbled.

Egypt was glad to see them go, because they were afraid of them.

You spread a cloud for a covering,

Terry a cloud

Inner circle a cloud

Outer circle a cloud

and fire to give light by night.

Terry: fire

Inner circle fire

Outer circle fire

They asked, and you brought quail,

Terry quail (maybe with some wings motion)

Inner circle quail

Outer circle quail

and satisfied them with bread from heaven.

Terry UMMM

Inner circle UMMM

Outer circle UMMM

You opened the rock, and water flowed;
so the river ran in the dry places.
For you remembered your holy word,
and Abraham, your servant.
So you led forth your people with gladness,

Terry gladness

Inner circle gladness

Outer circle gladness

your chosen ones with shouts of joy.

Terry shouts

Inner circle shouts

Outer circle shouts

Louder

Terry shouts

Inner circle shouts

Outer circle shouts

Louder

Terry shouts

Inner circle shouts

Outer circle shouts

your chosen ones with shouts of joy.

Terry shouts of joy

Inner circle shouts of joy

Outer circle shouts of joy.

Prayer

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray:

God reaching toward us,
forming of us your church,
even if sometimes we are fed-up
but mostly fed,

we thank you for eyes smiling at us above the masks,
the words of support spoken across the distances,
the wonder of being together, even if it be in this strange way.

Whatever wilderness lies ahead of us,
give even our grumbling the grace to lead us back to your goodness.

Whatever hungers keep stirring in us,
point us toward the mana that we don't understand
but that expands our possibilities of following you
through the uncertainties of blowing, shifting sands
toward your promised land of hope and peace
through Jesus Christ
in whose name we pray.

Amen.

Thanksgiving

Re-imagining mana

We begin by teaching the chorus. We haven't done this in a while, but it is worth the work. Also we teach a simple walking movement that goes along with it.

The two circles go in opposite directions. When the song stops, those from the inner circle will be opposite one or two others in the outer circle. They go close enough (but not too close) to offer the one or two others a word, a phrase, a gesture that comes out of the day.

When the Israelites first saw what was to become their basic food for forty years, they asked in wonder, "What is it?" In Hebrew Mana. They were surprised at the gift.

Today we were not here for the morning dew. Thank goodness there is no frost. But have there been some surprises today? If not surprises, delights? If not delights, insights? The Israelites gasped and said, Mana. Might you put into a word or phrase, or maybe a gesture or a step, one surprise from this day, or one delight, or one insight?

As we sing, the inner circle will move clockwise, and the outer circle will move counter-clockwise. When the song stops, those in the inner circle will be opposite one or two others in the outer circle. Get close enough to share your gesture, or your word. When the music starts again, the return to your place in the circle until the music stops again.

Song **Memento Novo**

The first time we sing only the chorus.

We stop and share.

Terry sings the first verse while the people move, and then everyone sings the chorus.

We stop and share.

Then we do more verses or choruses as appropriate for the energy.

Sending prayer

Let us pray:

How good it is to be together,
gracious God.

It is like oil pouring down Aaron's beard.

It is like the fresh rain washing away the dust of the air.

It is like being blessed over and over.

Send us out full of mana

questions becoming surprises

becoming bread in the wilderness,

life forevermore, in Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Benediction

Then maybe we sing the chorus of Memento Novo one more time.