

Reflections on Faith and Life for Palm Sunday, April 5, 2020 (COVID)

The Good News of God in Jesus Christ in the midst of the COVID-19 uncertainty: *EASTER IS NOT CANCELED!* Easter is forever! Even though the congregations may be closed down, the Church is not a building. The Church is the body of Christ, the fellowship of believers, the communion of saints.

Easter is not just one Sunday a year. The liturgical season of Easter lasts 50 days, until the Day of Pentecost (50 days), the day when the Holy Spirit enlivens the bodies, minds, and lives of disciples still locked in the Upper Room of the Last Passover of Jesus. And for Christians, *every* Sunday is a “little Easter.”

So even though we'll be socially distanced during Holy Week and its culmination in the Resurrection, *we will still be the Church!* I'll try to send you sermons and services for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, as well as for Easter itself.

Here are some prayers from the ELW (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, St. Stephen's hymnal), p. 76; most of these are also in the front of the LBW (*Lutheran Book of Worship*).

Time of conflict, crisis, disaster: God, our refuge and strength, you have bound us together in a common life. In all our conflicts, help us to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, to listen for your voice amid competing claims, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

National distress: Eternal God, amid all the turmoil and changes of the world your love is steadfast and your strength never fails. In this time of danger and trouble, be to us a sure guardian and rock of defense. Guide the leaders of our nation with your wisdom, comfort those in distress, and grant us courage and hope to face the future; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Time of conflict, crisis, disaster: O God, where hearts are fearful and constricted, grant courage and hope. Where anxiety is infectious and widening, grant peace and reassurance. Where impossibilities close every door and window, grant imagination and resistance. Where distrust twists our thinking, grant healing and illumination. Where spirits are daunted and weakened, grant soaring wings and strengthened dreams. All these things we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.