

Holy Week and Easter Resources

For In-Home or Online Worship and Faith Formation



#RELUCTANTJOY



South Dakota Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

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Maundy Thursday

SD Synod, Holy Week Task Force

Faith Formation *(home)*

Foot Washing Ritual

Supplies: towel, bowl, warm water, chair

Read John 13:1-17. Take turns washing one another's feet. Fill a large bowl with warm water and place it on the floor in front of a chair. Have one person sit in the chair and place their feet in the water. The person who is doing the washing will kneel on the other side of the bowl and will carefully wash their family member's feet. After the washing is done, the washer will then dry the feet with the towel. Move through the ritual silently, taking turns until all have been washed and done the washing. After, the footwashing litany and prayer can be used (found in worship pieces). Then, explore how the ritual went with some conversation questions.

Conversation questions:

- What is the purpose of washing another's feet?
- How did it feel to have your feet washed?
- How did it feel to wash someone else's feet?
- What might Jesus have been thinking as he washed his disciples' feet?
- What might the disciples have been thinking as their feet were washed?
- What are some ways to serve others, and show kindness and love, other than foot washing?

Last Supper Ritual

Options:

1. **Dinner party.** After preparing a favorite meal with your family (it can be fancy, simple, fresh, frozen, ordered in - there are no rules!), sit, give thanks for the food, and eat. Enjoy conversation with one another, free of distractions. When dinner is finished, stay seated at the table and read Matthew 26:17-30. Use the Table Talk questions to guide discussion. To end, pray together the Lord's Prayer, and help with clean up!
Prep ideas: Work on a menu together. What does the meal look like if each family member chooses their favorite thing? Create and color place-cards and placements for the table for those who are there and even for those who are not. Light candles for the table.
2. **Virtual dinner party.** Invite loved ones near and far to join you for a virtual dinner party. Contact them early to set a time for dinner, and to choose a platform: Facetime, Zoom, Snapchat, Facebook video chat, Skype, phone call. Each household prepares their own meal, and then come together. Read Matthew 26:17-20, give thanks for the food, eat,

and catch up! Enjoy conversation with each other, or use Table Talk questions to guide discussion. To end, pray the Lord's Prayer together.

Later: send a card or letter of thanks to your dinner guests!

3. **Share a recipe & prayer.** Choose a treasured recipe (perhaps your family's Easter favorites?) to share with a friend. Send the recipe electronically or in the mail, and include the Last Supper scripture and a prayer. Ask for a recipe or two from others and make this an exchange! When we are welcome to gather in person again, set up a time to have dinner with those you shared with and received recipes from.
4. **Maundy Thursday delivery.** Taking into consideration most up to date COVID-19 precautions, prepare and deliver a meal and prayer to someone.

Table Talk from [www.buildfaith.org](https://buildfaith.org/discussion-prompts-intergenerational-groups/) (<https://buildfaith.org/discussion-prompts-intergenerational-groups/>)

- If you could describe your ideal day, what would it be like?
- If you could take lessons in anything, what would you learn?
- If you could have dinner with one person, past or present, whom would you choose?
- If your house caught fire and, after all people and pets were safe, you had the chance to save one item, what would you grab?
- When during the day do you feel closest to God? Why?
- If you had \$100,000 to spend on others, how would you use it?
- Can you think of a time when you helped someone? How did you feel?
- What is one of your favorite hymns or worship songs? Why?
- What is one of your favorite Bible passages or Bible stories? Why?
- Have you ever given something up for Lent? How did it go?
- What are the qualities of a really good friend?
- What is one thing you wish you knew how to cook?

Prayer Stations

Set up a few prayer stations in your home by marking certain areas for prayer with candles, a blanket/pillow/chair to sit on, or other items. When the stations are ready, spend a few minutes at each one. Station ideas: prayers for loved ones, creation, the world, healing, the church, thanksgiving.

Provide pre-written prayers for folks, or a list of activities for little hands at each station, or meditations to contemplate.

Social Media Engagement

Serving Others

Jesus washed his neighbors' feet - what can you do for your neighbor? Through Facebook/church app/website, encourage members to think of creative ways of serving others from a distance! Postcards, chalk messages, coloring pictures for folks in care centers, digital chats, writing letters, making a donation, ordering food from a small business are a few ideas. Ask them to share photos or a video of themselves engaging in these acts of kindness.

Prayer Stations

Reach out to members of the congregation and have them record a prayer video to be used on your church's preferred platform. The prayer video should be short (about 1 minute) and include an introduction of the pray-er, what you're praying for, and then the prayer. Ideas for prayer can be broad or specific. Prayers can come from a resource (make sure it's cited!) or can be written or off-the-cuff.

How often? It's up to you! You could have one recorded prayer a day for each day in Holy Week, or three prayers on just Maundy Thursday, or a day of prayer with a prayer video posted each hour. (On Facebook, you can schedule posts ahead of time.) Invite interaction with the videos by asking for prayer requests.

Worship Pieces *(leadership-led or adapted for home use)*

Confession & Forgiveness

CONFESSION

My sisters and brothers,
Christ shows us his love by becoming a humble servant.

A brief silence for individual confession.

Most merciful God,
we your Church confess
that often our spirit has not been that of Christ.
Where we have failed to love one another as he loves us,
where we have pledged loyalty to him with our lips
and then betrayed, deserted, or denied him,
forgive us, we pray;
and by your Spirit make us faithful in every time of trial;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FORGIVENESS

Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ.
But Christ suffered and died for us,
was raised from the dead and ascended on high for us,
and continues to intercede for us.
Believe the good news:
In the name of +Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!
Thanks be to God! Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Father, on this, the night he was betrayed, your Son Jesus Christ washed his disciples' feet.
Help us to commit ourselves to follow his example of love and service. Lord, hear us,
and humble us.

On this night, Jesus prayed for his disciples to be one. We pray for the unity of your Church, that
all may see one another as siblings in Christ. Lord, hear us,
and unite us.

On this night, Jesus commanded them to love, but suffered rejection himself. We pray for the
rejected and unloved, that they may find belonging in you and your church. Lord, hear us,
and fill us with your love.

On this night, Jesus prayed for those who were to believe through their ministry.
We pray for the mission of your Church, that we all may be bearers of your good news for all
people. Lord, hear us
and renew our passion to share the Gospel.

We lift these prayers to you, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

Stripping of the Altar

Psalm 22, read responsively

Footwashing Litany

(inspired by John 13: 1-20)

O Prince of Peace, O Friend of Sinners,
we praise you and give you thanks,
because you laid aside your power as a garment
and took upon yourself the form of a slave.

You became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

**You allowed yourself to be born to die in our place,
You allowed your own feet to be anointed for death.
You allowed a sinner to wash your feet with her tears.
For God chose what is low and despised in the world
to bring to nothing things that are.
Therefore, with the woman who gave you birth,
with the woman who anointed you for death,
with the woman who worshiped you with her tears,
and with all our fellow sinners
who have loved and served you from that time till now,
we praise you, Lord Jesus.**

O Eternal Father, blessed is our brother Jesus,
who on that night before Passover,
rose from the Supper, laid aside his garments
took a towel and poured water,
and washed his disciples' feet, saying to them:
"If I, your Lord and Teacher,
have washed your feet,
you also ought to wash one another's feet.
If you know these things,
blessed are you if you do them."

**Come now, mighty Spirit of God,
wash us and make us one body in Christ,
that, as we are bound together
in this act of love,
we may no longer be in bondage
to the principalities and powers that enslave creation,
but may know your liberating peace
such as the world cannot give. Amen.**

— from [A Footwashing Liturgy](#) by Reggie M. Kidd.

Footwashing Prayer

Merciful Savior,
We have traveled this long, dusty Lenten journey.
Our feet are tired, dirty, aching, and calloused.
You have shown us Your love
by becoming a humble servant.
Humble us when we try to travel without You.
**As Christ has washed us,
so let us wash one another.**

Humble us when we believe some work is below us.

**As Christ has washed us,
so let us wash one another.**

Humble us when we are too proud
to accept help, or care, or love.

**As Christ has washed us,
so let us wash one another.**

Humble us when we do not fully receive
the gift of Your amazing and bountiful grace.

**As Christ has washed us,
so let us wash one another. Amen.**

-By Karen Turner, and posted on the **Lifeway** website.

http://www.lifeway.com/lwc/files/lwcF_PDF_LW_MaundyThursday.pdf

Prayers of Intercession (based on John 17)

Loving, listening God,
ever-attentive to the voices of those in need,
we call on your name so that we might live.
Now hear our prayer:

For the church that bears Christ's name,
**that the world may know we are his disciples
by the love that we have for one another.**

For leaders of nations and all persons in positions of authority,
that their lives may be marked by Christ-like service and love.

For all who are oppressed and living in captivity,
**that they may escape from evil and death
to find the land of freedom you have promised.**

For those who are hungry and thirsty this day
and for those who have too much,
that we may learn to share your generous gifts, O God.

For those who are dealing with loss or facing death,
that the presence of Christ may bless and keep them.

Answer us in the day of trouble, O God,
so that we may lift up the cup of salvation
in the presence of your people,

giving thanks for all your goodness to us;
through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

— posted on the *Worship Resources for Maundy Thursday* page of the **Presbyterian Church USA**. <https://www.pcusa.org/>

Personal Prayer:

Almighty and merciful God, you are the only source of health and healing; you alone can bring calmness and peace. Grant to our *sister/brother/sibling* _____ an awareness of your presence and a strong confidence in you. In *her/his/their* pain, weariness, and anxiety, surround *her/him* with your care, protect *her/him/their* by your loving might, and grant to *her/him/their* once again the gifts of health and strength and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Other Resources & Videos:

SD Synod, Sacraments in a time of emergency:

<https://sdsynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/sacraments-in-a-time-of-emergency.pdf>

Luther Seminary, Holy Week webinar and ideas: <https://faithlead.luthersem.edu/faithful-adaptation-holy-week/>

Washing of feet, “Welcome Church”, Philadelphia, PA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Be3bLphdyo>

Good Friday Ideas - Reluctant Joy

1. 7 Last Words of Jesus
Luke 23:33-34

Luke 23:39-43
John 19:25-27
Matthew 27:45-46
John 19:28-29
John 19:30
Luke 23:44-49
 - a. *options to make your own
 - i. Extinguish a candle after every reading
 - ii. Meditation after reading
 - iii. Send to families and encourage them to read at home
 - iv. Possibly select people in the congregation to write reflections on the 7 last words, one word per person. Perhaps have those people make a down-and-dirty video (with subterranean production values) of them speaking their reflections and knit these reflections together into a GF resource for the congregation. Could also simply make the text-only version available to all, of course.
 - v. Post your reflections (photos and videos) using #ReluctantJoy and tag @SDSynod on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The synod will share these throughout the three days.
2. A friend who is a Presbyterian pastor in Virginia is hosting a congregation-wide Zoom meeting to discuss Advanced Care Directives (<https://theconversationproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/ConversationProject-ConversationStarterKit-English.pdf>) Given that old Uncle Marty (Luther) had the notion that a proper theology of the cross called a thing what it is, this could be an exercise (somehow) tied to GF. This is a moment to be straightforward with each other: before all this is over and done, families in the synod will have to manage end-of-life complications with family members who decline very quickly and have no existing Directive that could guide their family and medical team.
3. Cross with burlap draped over it. Putting nails in the burlap.
 - a. Way of symbolizing of leaving our sins, brokenness, pain, worries, anxieties at the cross



- 4.
5. Lots of people are using the “Six Word Snapshot” model to tell each other their joys, sorrows, fears, and frustrations. Maybe make that a congregation-based activity, strip names (probably) and make a video loop (Prezi is good for this) that could function as a kind of “prayers of the faithful” either during online worship (with music over it) or just online to be accessed whenever.
6. There are so many fine resources being shared all over. You all have seen them. So have the pastors, and congregation members, in the synod. In such a resource-rich environment, our task might be to create a synod “bulletin board,” a place where EVERYBODY could tack up the good ideas they have run across. This would probably have to be curated somehow (there are also a lot a fairly dopey ideas out there), but creating such a resource clearinghouse would save us from imagining that we were somehow invented the wheel.
7. A resource developed by my friend in Virginia, who is wonderfully creative, and is a gifted storyteller: <http://www.storydivine.com/?p=372>
8. Perhaps do something in the way of an exploration of the Stations of the Cross, only using bits that were gathered from a synod-wide Six Word Snapshot project. For instance:

**The First
Station**

*Jesus is
Condemned
to Die.*

**The Second
Station:**

*Jesus Carries
His Cross.*

**The Third
Station:**

*Jesus Falls
the First
Time.*

**The Fourth
Station:**

*Jesus Meets
His Mother.*

**The Fifth
Station:**

*Simon Helps
Jesus Carry
His Cross.*

**The Sixth
Station:**

*Veronica
Wipes Jesus'
Face.*

**The Seventh
Station:**

*Jesus Falls
the Second
Time.*

**The Eighth
Station:**

*Jesus Meets the
Women of
Jerusalem.*

**The Ninth
Station:**

*Jesus Falls the
Third Time.*

**The Tenth
Station:**

Jesus is Stripped.

**The Eleventh
Station:**

*Jesus is Nailed to
the Cross.*

**The Twelfth
Station:**

*Jesus Dies on the
Cross.*

**The Thirteenth
Station:**

*Jesus is Taken
Down from the
Cross.*

**The Fourteenth
Station:**

*Jesus is Laid in
the Tomb.*

- a. What might be connected with each of these? Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem: maybe something submitted by a nurse, an elementary teacher, or someone else in a woman-majority profession? Veronica Wipes Jesus' Face: maybe something from someone involved in Church On The Street or other ministry with people who are housing-insecure. This idea is ill-formed, but aims to connect the narrative of GF with the stories EVERYBODY is telling on facebook and everywhere.
9. Though it's not part of GF, the same sort of thing could be done with the texts that form the backbone of the Easter Vigil. The fact that this nasty virus originated in nature (not in some conspiracy-theory-imagined laboratory) means that, for instance, this might be a year to reflect on the first text in the Easter vigil, the Genesis 1 Origin Story. If this is a good idea, perhaps we could gather a group who could write a paragraph or three on each of these texts.
10. Or, what about creating a kind of Tenebrae service? I "borrowed" this basic structure from one I found online:

The Service of Shadows

The Shadow of Betrayal

Reading Matthew 26:20-25

Response *Ah, Holy Jesus*

The Shadow of the Agony of Spirit and Arrest

Reading Matthew 26:36-50

Response *Go to Dark Gethsemane*

The Shadow of Denial

Reading Matthew 26:69-75

Response "Judas, Peter" Poem by Luci Shaw

The Shadow of Accusation

Reading Matthew 27:11-14, 20-29

Response *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*

The Shadow of Crucifixion and Humiliation

Reading Matthew 27:31-43

Instrumental Response (*see notes below*)

The Shadow of Death

Reading Matthew 27:45-54

Response *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* (verses 1-3)

The Christ Candle is Removed

The Shadow of Burial

Reading Matthew 27:57-60

Solo Response *Were You There?*

Silent Meditation

- a. Perhaps remove the music?
 - b. Perhaps substitute a Six Word Snapshot that somehow echoes the reading for each step. Since the flow of Tenebrae is from illumination to darkness, perhaps create a video at night in a worship space lit only by candles.
 - c. Could also be done in each congregation. The congregation I served now so long ago in rural Wisconsin has a deep love for its sanctuary, a space they now do not enter. Seeing it move from light to dim darkness would be powerful. I see pastors posting videos from inside their empty sanctuaries and I realize that they are like me in loving the space in which we worship. This might be powerful to do.
11. This isn't strictly a GF idea, but there has been some semi-vigorous discussion about "delaying" the celebration of Easter until we can again gather together. There has also been a fair amount of scolding from people who are sure God has told them that this is theologically foolishness and must never be done. Fascinating. I tend to think better in both-and structures and find either-or structures to generate fist-fights that some people seem to enjoy a whole lot. Since EVERY Sunday is a celebration of Easter, I see no reason not to do both. Thank you for listening to my TED Talk.

Easter Sunday Faith-In-The-Home Practices

On Easter we celebrate Jesus rising from the dead, with assurance that The Lord overcomes death and confidence that our deepest pain will never have final word. In worship opportunity includes the Remembrance of Baptism. As parishioners move from their virtual worship experience to home opportunity, we will wish to provide opportunity to reflect on the promise of their baptism and outward practices that reflect the hope we have in Christ.

Option One: Remembrance of Baptism Personalized Candle Activity

Easter is preceded by Holy Saturday. Included in a traditional Easter Vigil is celebration of our baptism, reminder that we are joined in Jesus' death and resurrection. In the Small Catechism, Martin Luther wrote, "baptism works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this." And, in these materials, you are invited on Easter to experience God's forgiving and eternal love in contextual way through light.



Materials Needed: Baptismal candle (if you have it), bowl or cup of water, wax paper piece, one piece of white tissue paper, sharpie markers, regular piece of white paper, white candle, hair dryer

- 1) If you have your baptismal candle, light it and say, "Thank you, God, for claiming me as your child."
- 2) Read Psalm 42:1-2 *As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?*
- 3) Reflect
 - a. How have you experienced thirst for God differently this Lenten season?
 - b. How does knowing you are a baptized child of God affect the way you see life?

- c. When thinking about where you most closely meet/commune with God, what image, scripture or symbol comes to mind?

This self-contemplative activity holds you in quiet purity and connection to your God. Begin by:

- Cut the piece of paper to match the size of your candle.
- Draw the image, scripture or symbol outline that came to your mind on the piece of white paper with a black marker.
- Place the tissue paper on top of your drawn pattern.
- Trace the pattern with sharpie and color it in with sharpies in the color of your choosing.
- Remove your tissue paper from on top of the copy paper and cut out your design *as close to the edge of the design as possible so it is as little as can be without cutting off any of your image.*
- Set your tissue paper image on top of the candle so that it is facing you.
- Place a piece of wax paper on top of your tissue paper image and pull it tight around your candle.
- On high heat move the blow dryer in a back in forth motion slowly and closely to your image to adhere the design to your candle. This will take at least 40 seconds.
- Pull back the edge of your wax paper to make sure the design transfer is complete. Continue heating or stop, as necessary.

Light your candle (whenever you wish) as visible reminder that God meets you, loves you, works through you, and is your light of hope.

Finish by dipping your finger in the water of your cup/bowl. If you are with someone, mark the sign of the cross on their forehead and say, "Jesus loves you and so do I." If you are doing this activity in solitude, place the sign of the cross on your own forehead and say, "I am sealed by the cross, forever."

Activity Two: He is Alive!

Holy Week takes us on an emotional experience. From the tomb to the resurrection, we can use visuals to help us understand the faith story. This is particularly effective with young children who can use imagery to better understand concepts.

Materials needed: A big box, some helium filled balloons, wrapping paper.

- On Friday
 - o Purchase some latex or mylar balloons with hifloat.
 - o Read the Good Friday story in the Bible of your choosing (Frolic, Spark, Jesus Storybook, Connect, or your personal bible of choice)
 - o Wrap the balloons inside of the large box.
 - o Ask your yourself/your child:
 - How does it feel to have the balloons sitting inside the box?
 - How do you think Jesus' friends felt when he died?

- Why do you think Jesus stayed on the cross? (*Discuss love, that God has good plans even when we can't see it*)
- On Saturday
 - Wrap box in wrapping paper.
 - Ask yourself/ your child
 - Why might we be wrapping this box in wrapping paper? (*Discuss Jesus being a gift, big day is coming*)
 - What does hopeful anticipation feel like?
- On Sunday
 - Read the Easter story in the Bible of your choosing (Frolic, Spark, Jesus Storybook, Connect, or your personal bible of choice).
 - Take the box outside & unwrap the gift, allowing the balloons to soar high.
 - Ask yourself/your child:
 - What do the balloons represent? (*Jesus' resurrection*)
 - How did you feel when you saw the balloons fly out and soar up?
 - What special hope do we have because we are God's children?

Activity Three: Window and/or Walk Witness

He is risen, indeed! With joyful hearts we proclaim with great joy our story to the world around us. During this time of social distancing, reminding others who are out walking and seeing our windows/driveways that God is FOR them and overcomes the world's troubles is hope in the darkness.

What you will need: Blue painters tape, washable paint, Dawn dish soap, and paper towels.
AND/OR sidewalk chalk.



For the Window Witness

- You will make a window others can see into a gorgeous stained glass project.
- Use the blue painters tape around the exterior of the window.

- Use the blue painters tape in the space of your window to create the outline of your cross. *Remember, you will want an open center to your cross so that it is prominent.*
- In different directions and shapes, use the blue painters tape to create the window panels.
- Mix the washable paint with dawn dish soap in approximately a 2:1 ration.
- Paint the panels to the color of your liking. *Be especially mindful of the color of your cross so that it sticks out.* You may need to go over it a couple times.
- Use paper towels to catch any drips.
- Allow it to dry.
- Pull off the blue painters tape.

For the Walk Witness (Chalk Your Walk)

- You *can* use sidewalk chalk to make a window like suggested above. Use one color for the outline and like the “painters tape” to create the window panels.
- OR, you can write out your favorite Easter Scripture verses and beautify around it.
- OR write “He is Risen” and beautiful around it.

These visuals are sure to bring the world joy. Let’s shout it out from our homes.

RELUCTANT JOY: Easter Celebration in 2020

A word on the options presented here

At this time, many of our churches have made the painful decision to suspend in-person worship services for Easter 2020.

As a minister, this decision may grieve your soul. Rest assured that you are making this decision for the safety of the community you serve and the people you love.

Thankfully, though, not all is lost for our Easter celebration. You may have considered recently that the Christian tradition holds Easter as a moveable feast. Indeed, you may wish to schedule your full-blown Easter service for later in the year, when your congregation can resume local in-person worship practices.

Until then, what to do for Easter morning?

These days, technology permits us to worship across a distance through television or livestreamed worship. Perhaps your church may try distance worship for the first time this Easter. Or maybe your church has led worship this way for quite some time. Regardless, these are extraordinary circumstances.

But Easter is an extraordinary day, too. On Easter, we celebrate that Jesus's resurrection means new life for all people. We may also recognize that first Easter was not so much *celebrated together* so much as *discovered individually* by people who had isolated themselves after the death of their friend, Jesus.

Many parishioners—and a great many ministers, too!—will certainly grieve the loss of in-person worship in this time. We long to gather with our community to worship God; and the loss of Easter hallmarks like Holy Communion hit us hard.

But Easter worship can still provide great meaning and comfort for your people, especially if we draw on the strength and hope we find in our baptismal promise.

Included in this packet are three liturgical options meant to be adapted for your local practice. Each presents an adapted version of a Thanksgiving for Baptism to be used in distance, telecast, or livestream worship on Easter Sunday.

These Thanksgivings may be used at the beginning of worship, as is often the custom in Lutheran churches; or wherever is customary in your local context. But if you present a whole worship service for Easter Sunday, I humbly suggest using this piece at the end of worship, in the position normally occupied by the Eucharistic celebration.

Baptism and Holy Communion are different sacraments, to be sure. But both unite us to Christ's death and resurrection. Baptism cannot *replace* Holy Communion, but using a Thanksgiving for Baptism where our worshipers *expect* Holy Communion can remind us of the centrality of the baptismal promise for the life of faith.

The options begin with original pieces meant to address the challenges of these days. This first option is written with the expectation that some of the participants are not in the same room. It should feel equally at home in a traditional worship context (worship in your empty sanctuary, for instance); or, led by a presider in a less-formal setting (say, a Zoom livestream from your living room). If the latter, make sure to bring some symbols into the picture; a cross or a candle provide a visual reminder of the sanctity shared in the worship moment.

The second and third options are adaptations of the traditional ELW Affirmation of Baptism; and the ELW Thanksgiving for Baptism. Both are slightly retooled to better serve worship leadership over the airwaves; but you may make any additional modifications to suit your local context.

Each of these options assume that your worshipers will have some access to materials before your worship begins: a candle; a dish of water; and even the words of these liturgies. Feel free to modify the format to match your use of the materials.

A note for the Presider

As you present these pieces in your broadcast worship service, please note that you will tend to lead worship more quickly than you would if you were leading a group in-person. If you want people to respond at home, you must slow down. The most effective way to ensure a reasonable pace is to include someone in your webcast who can respond to the words as you say them. Hearing others on-camera who respond to liturgy will also help your viewers feel more comfortable responding themselves.

OPTION 1: “Reluctant Joy,” A Call to Worship and Thanksgiving for Baptism¹

Notes on this option

This option collects three original pieces.

- *A Gathering Ritual*. This brief rite can be used at the beginning of worship to center your worshipers in prayer.
- *A Call to Worship*. Your Thanksgiving for Baptism may often lead the worship service in the Gathering Rite. This option is provided as an alternative in case you elect to move Thanksgiving for Baptism to a later position in worship.
- *Thanksgiving for Baptism*. This is written to be included at the end of your worship service, in the position normally occupied by Holy Communion.

Gathering Ritual

I invite you to light your candle.

As I light mine, I will say a blessing.

I invite you to repeat each line of this blessing after I say it.

God, I light this candle now

God, I light this candle now

It is a sign of your presence.

as a sign of your presence.

You have drawn us together.

you have drawn us together.

Nothing separates us from your love.

Nothing separates us from your love.

Call to Worship

In his life,

Jesus seemed invincible to shame,
immune to criticism,
impervious to illness and death.

Jesus was laughter aplenty,
food abundant,
new health after illness.

Then he died.
And his friends scattered,
because they knew

¹ All words by the Rev. Justin Kosec

death had come for them.

This is Easter morning--
the day death lingers
near the ones God loves.
And death still lingers in our world.

Like fearful disciples who sheltered in place,
**we hide in the lonely
shadow of death;**

Like Nicodemus embalming the body of God,
**we swallow our questions
and bury our hope.**

Like Jesus's friends who walked the Emmaus road,
**we struggle to understand
the signs of this age.**

Like Mary who carried one last farewell for a friend,
**we grieve the loss of the life we knew,
and we fear an uncertain future.**

But then we find the empty tomb.
The angels in white.
The useless stone.
The discarded clothes.
One question remains:
Why are we weeping?

Christ is risen!
Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Greetings to you
in the name of our mighty God,
the Father, +Son, and Holy Spirit;
the one God Trustworthy and True,
the Firstborn of the Dead,
the Calm from the Chaos,
Rest for the overworked,
Love for the overlooked,
Breath for the overwhelmed.

Christ is Risen!
Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Even if we believe,
joy does not evaporate tears;
faith cannot always dispel confusion.

So hear the truth once more,
and trust the Word is true:
Christ is Risen!
Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Thanksgiving for Baptism

A word upon the occasion of Easter

Today we cannot be together
to celebrate Holy Communion.
But we have been united in worship
through the words of scripture;
through the worship we have shared;
through the time we have spent with one another;
and by the Holy Spirit that enlivens our faith.

Normally, at this time,
we would celebrate Holy Communion.
In this meal, we meet Jesus
who died and rose again.
And we celebrate the promise of resurrection
that binds us to Christians past, present, and future.

But we cannot share the gift
of Holy Communion today,
when social distancing separates us.
We cannot share the bread and wine
that makes a meal out of unity.

But Holy Communion is not our only sacrament.
This morning,
we can use this time to remember
that Christ died so we might live.
We receive this promise
in our baptisms,
In baptism, water and Word
unite us with Christ's death;
and enable us to receive the new life
Christ claimed on Easter morning.

So on this day,

we will celebrate our unity
through Thanksgiving for Baptism.

If you haven't already,
I encourage you to find a dish of water.
I have one here, too.

Let this water
connect us to each other
and to the one baptism
that brings us to new life in Christ.

The Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Together we pray.

Great are you, O God.
Great are you, O God.

For you have chosen water
to give life and water to preserve it.

In the beginning
you separated chaos from creation
and land from sea.

But you sent rain to care
for grain grown in the ground.

Great are you, O God.
Great are you, O God.

When the Israelites ran from slavery,
the Red Sea blocked them like a prison door;
but you turned the sea into salvation.

Great are you, O God.
Great are you, O God.

When disease ate the flesh
of the warrior Naaman,
you used gentle water and a word to cleanse him.

Great are you, O God.
Great are you, O God.

You washed the feet of your friends,
when nobody else respected them.

You made mud in your hand
to open the eyes of a man
nobody noticed.

You chose to speak to a woman
who chose the loneliest hour to visit the well;
and you gave her a thirst
for your unquenchable promise.

Great are you, O God.
Great are you, O God.

When we despise the water
that floods farmland and house;
when we beg for water
as the ground cracks;. .
when we fear the disease
spread by the vapor we breathe—

You are still great,
because you have made water
the agent of healing and hope.

Great are you, O God.
Great are you, O God.

Amen.

Now, take your dish in your hands
as we bless the waters we share.

God of Love,
all water
is a sign of the goodness you create:
the rivers that flow in our state;
the waters that pool beneath the ground;
and oceans that ring our planet;
the water that fills our skin, our blood, our bones.

Bless this water we have gathered

as a sign of your blessing,
for this water binds us to your promise,
your eternal word;
it is the wellspring of love
for the world you have made.

People of God, repeat after me.

We try to cross the distance;
We try to cross the distance;

but still we are alone.
but still we are alone.

We try to wash our hands of trouble
we try to wash our hands of trouble.

But only you can cleanse the soul.
But only you can cleanse the soul.

You pour out salvation.
You pour out salvation.

You refresh the weary.
You refresh the weary.

You have died and risen.
You have died and risen.

My grave will not hold me.
My grave will not hold me.

Hear now the promise
of the one who died and rose again:

Our graves will not hold us.
We will see the ones we love
and the ones we have lost.
We will hold each other close
and we will share the cup of life.

Amen.

Wherever you are,
use this water to mark the sign of the cross on your forehead.

And remember—
this is the great promise of baptism:
Christ was born a human
to die like one, too;
Christ lives today
so we may never die.

Worship continues with the Sending rite.

OPTION 2: ELW Affirmation of Baptism

This is the standard form for Affirmation by the Assembly, with slight modifications.

On the occasion of this Easter celebration

In this time of pandemic, social distancing, and isolation, we are not able to worship together as we ought or as we long to do. Even so, we know that God's promises flow through our lives like an underground spring, like water from the well; these promises connect us to the new life we have received in Christ Jesus.

At this moment in our worship service, we would normally celebrate Holy Communion. Unfortunately, the distance between us today prevents us from sharing the holy meal together. But Holy Communion is not our only sacrament. Today, we will use this time to affirm our baptism.

In the absence of the holy meal, there could be no more appropriate way to celebrate our unity on Easter morning. We may not be able to share bread or wine, but water connects us: through rain and cloud; through rivers, lakes, and oceans; through aquifers and underground watercourses. In water, we discover our rebirth; our cleanliness; our refreshment; our renewal.

And, on Easter, we remember that through water, we die with Christ; so we may be reborn with Christ.

Let us pray.

Merciful God, we thank you that you have made us your own by water and the Word in baptism. You have called us to yourself, enlightened us with the gifts of your Spirit, and nourished us in the community of faith. Uphold us and all your servants in the gifts and promises of baptism, and unite the hearts of all whom you have brought to new birth. We ask this in the name of Christ.

Amen.

Profession of Faith

The presiding minister addresses those making public affirmation of baptism. The assembly may stand and join in the responses.

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

Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God,
the powers of this world that rebel against God,

and the ways of sin that draw you from God?
I renounce them.

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 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.**

**Or, "he descended into hell," another translation of this text in widespread use.*

Affirmation

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?

If so, say, "I do, and I ask God to help and guide me."

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

People of God, do you promise to support and pray for one another in your life in Christ?

If so, say, "We do, and we ask God to help and guide us."

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

Let us pray.

We give you thanks, O God, that through water and the Holy Spirit you give us new birth,
cleansing us from sin, and raise us to eternal life. Stir up in your people the gift of your Holy Spirit:

the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence both now and forever.

Amen.

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“On the occasion of this Easter Celebration” by the Rev. Justin Kosec for the South Dakota Synod of the ELCA.

OPTION 3: ELW Thanksgiving for Baptism

This form uses language from the ELW rite for Thanksgiving for Baptism

Thanksgiving for Baptism

This order may be used in various circumstances outside the primary weekly assembly to give thanks for the gift of baptism. Examples of settings in which this order might be used, both within and outside the church’s worship space, include council or committee meetings, small group gatherings, conferences and retreats, camps and recreation areas.

The gathering may be at the font or near a body of water, or a bowl of water may be placed in the midst of those who are gathered. A candle may be lighted and placed near the water.

Those present may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the leader begins.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Amen.

The leader addresses those who are gathered.

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God’s mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

The leader gives thanks, using one of the following prayers or similar words.

Holy God, holy and merciful, holy and mighty, you are the river of life,
you are the everlasting wellspring, you are the fire of rebirth.

Glory to you for oceans and lakes, for rivers and streams,
especially the rivers that wind across this state:

the Minnesota River, the Missouri River, the Red River of the North, and all their
tributaries;

and the lakes settled between prairie hills;

and the aquifers deep below that feed our faucets.

Here other particular bodies or sources of water may be named.

Honor to you for cloud and rain, for dew and snow.
Your waters are below us, around us, above us: our life is born in you.
You are the fountain of resurrection.

Praise to you for your saving waters:
Noah and the animals survive the flood, Hagar discovers your well.
The Israelites escape through the sea, and they drink from your gushing rock.
Naaman washes his leprosy away,
and the Samaritan woman will never be thirsty again.
Praise to you for the water of baptism and for your Word
that saves us in this sacrament.

Thanks to you for the water
that flows into our homes.
Now, we lift up vessels of water
we have gathered for this blessing.
Through water bound to Word,
you cross the gulf between life and death;
you link our lives to yours.

The Assembly is invited to repeat after the presider.

Use this water
use this water

to remind us of your promise;
to remind us of your promise

to reconcile us to our past;
to reconcile us to our past;

to unify us across every distance.
to unify us across every distance.

Illumine our days.
Illumine our days.

Enliven our bones.
Enliven our bones.

Dry our tears.
Dry our tears.

Breathe your Spirit into all who seek your blessing
from water and word.
Come to us behind closed doors;
join the prayers in our hearts
to those prayed elsewhere.
You have gathered us in each room
and across all creation.

Wash away the sin within us, and drown the evil around us.
Satisfy all our thirst with your living water, Jesus Christ, our Savior,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Now the Presider invites the Assembly to sprinkle each other with water, or to use their water to mark the sign of the cross on their foreheads, as a reminder of the gift of baptism.

Almighty God,
who gives us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit
and forgives us all our sins,
strengthen us in all goodness
and by the power of the Holy Spirit
keep us in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Worship continues with the Sending rite.

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

This brief order is an adaptation of the thanksgiving for baptism from the *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* service of Holy Communion.

Sprinkling with water is one of several ways in which a visible and tangible reminder of baptism may be employed. Another option, especially when a small group is gathered with a bowl of water in their midst, is to have each person make the sign of the cross upon herself/himself or upon her/his neighbor, using water from the bowl.

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