

Day of Supplication and Prayer - 18th Nov 2020

Liturgical colour: purple (the colour of contemplation, self-evaluation, repentance, and preparation for the high-feasts of Easter and Christmas)

“Days of Supplication and Prayer” have a long tradition in mankind – not just in Christian times. Since the beginning of mankind, people gathered in times of trouble or disaster to take a break – in the routine of life and also spiritually in front of their gods/idols to repent for their false way of living (assuming that the disaster is a punishment for sins) and to pray for help and upturn of life, society, and country. These days were marked unregularly when it seemed to be necessary. In the Roman Empire these days were customary. The Christian Church adopted this custom of special days for public common repentance, supplication, and prayer. -The Protestant tradition to mark a “day of supplication and prayer” each year on the Wednesday before the Last Sunday of the Church Year comes from the former kingdom of Prussia, where the Prussian king Wilhelm II (the later German Emperor) in 1893 made this day a public holiday as a return to God. In old German hymnals the hymns for this day are summarised in the category “for people and country”.



The **watchword for this day**, taken from the Book of Ecclesiastes, chapter 14, verse 34, makes clear that a “day of supplication and prayer” is in the first instance not about my personal life in front of God, my own repentance, confession and absolution, but about the way of life of the/my whole country and society: “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.” On such a day, Christians pause for a moment to evaluate the wrong developments of politics and society, to pray for forgiveness in front of God – indeed representatively for the whole society or the politicians, even if they are no Christians – and to pray for help from God, knowing that God will judge everyone, as the **Epistle Reading** for this day says: Romans 2, 1-11:

1 Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. 2 We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things.

3 Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

5 But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed. 6 He will render to each one according to his works: 7 to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; 8 but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. 9 There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, 10 but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. 11 For God shows no partiality.

In all times and today more than ever such a day is appropriate for us to evaluate our societies and our politics, our commerce, the way we deal with each other, with our neighbours and strangers among us, with the environment – and foremost how we incorporate our Christian faith in the almighty and heavenly God in our everyday life, and the decisions we take. It is good to listen at least once a year to clear words of God, to be startled and to stop and to start re-thinking, words like the **Old Testament Reading** of Isaiah 1, 10-18:

10 Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom! Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah!

11 “What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the Lord; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. 12 “When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts? 13 Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations— I cannot endure iniquity and

solemn assembly. 14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.

15 When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.

16 Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, 17 learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.

18 "Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.



Therefore let us (even without the opportunity of a service) take the possibility of such a day, this day, to meditate on God's word and to pray for us and our home countries, societies, politicians, and responsible people to walk their way of life in the light of God's commandments. Let us take the chance to repent and to return to God as long as there is still time to do so, as our Lord Jesus Christ teaches in the Gospel Reading for this day, according to St. Luke, chapter 13, verses 1-9:

1 There were some present at that very time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other

Galileans, because they suffered in this way? 3 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? 5 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

6 And he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. 7 And he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?' 8 And he answered him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. 9 Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

Prayer for Day of Supplication and Prayer

Let us turn to our God in heaven, who created the earth and still preserves it with everything we need.

Almighty God, we thank you that we can live in freedom and peace in our Western World. We ask you: Give Your love of justice to those who rule the European Union, Belgium and our various home countries. Help them to rule with wisdom and compassion, so that the poor and powerless may be treated fairly and with justice. Open their ears to the cries for help from those caught in cycles of poverty, abuse or violence. Grant them wisdom to know how best to respond, and courage to do the right thing, even when it may not be popular. Under their rule, may the people flourish; may there be lasting peace and plenty for all. – We pray: Lord, have mercy.

Merciful Father, we thank you for decades of peace between our nations, times of growing closer to each other and of friendship. We ask you: Open our eyes every day anew for this great gift and give us the strength, wisdom and words to stand against all people who undermine this open atmosphere. Bless those who protect our freedom and peace, the police and the armed forces, the social workers, peacemakers, and people who are involved in reconciliation and mediation between the people. And we pray even for our enemies that their plans won't succeed, but that they may understand that love and peace are greater than hate and violence. And help us not to be a stumbling block for them. – We pray: Lord, have mercy.

Creator and preserver of the world, we thank you for the wealth of our nation and lives. We ask you, help us never to forget that everything we have comes out of your giving hands. Let us find the best ways in our power to preserve your creation. Show us ways to share the richness of your creation with all people on earth so that nobody must starve or get sick by dirty water or a lack of medicine. Strength and bless all who heal and help, the doctors, nurses, scientists, development workers, helpers in emergencies or disaster response. – We pray: Lord, have mercy.

Lord of Heaven, we thank you for your Holy Word, your Church and our Faith through the Holy Spirit. We thank you that we can gather and share our faith publicly and in freedom. We ask you, keep our faith by your gentle touch, rule our hearts and minds and your Church with your guiding hand. Especially we pray for our persecuted Brothers and Sisters in other countries. Give them hope and strength to resist all afflictions, make an end to their persecution and let them overcome. Spread your Gospel and let your people meet one day in your heavenly kingdom without sorrow, pain and tears as you have promised us. – We pray: Lord, have mercy.

Redeemer and Accomplisher, we thank you that you have gathered us here in Brussels out of so many different nations to be your people, anchored in you, Lord. But these times are tough – for us personally and also for us as a congregation. We ask you not to forsake your people, stay with us in these dark times. Keep us steadfast in faith and positive in thinking to overcome this time, separated, limited, in and with just a small congregation. – We pray: Lord, have mercy.

[silence and personal prayer can be added here]

– We pray: Lord, have mercy.

Almighty God, merciful Father, we turn to You full of hope that You are there for us and that You hear our prayers. You know what is good for us and the world. So we lay all these things on our hearts and minds into Your mighty hands. In the name of our Lord and intercessor, Jesus Christ, Your son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God in eternity. – Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make His face shine on us and be gracious to us. The Lord look upon us with favour and + give us peace. Amen.

A hymn for the Day of Supplication and Prayer

Text: Latin, 6th century / adapted by Martin Luther Tune: Nuremberg 1531

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

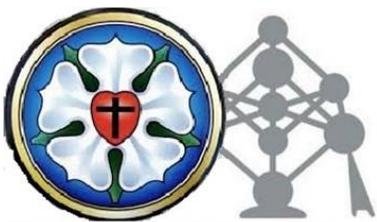
Grant Peace, We Pray,
in Mercy, Lord 778

Grant peace, we pray, in mer-cy, Lord; Peace in our time, O send us!

For there is none on earth but You, None oth-er to de-fend us.

You on - ly, Lord, can fight for us. A - men.

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of three systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system has the lyrics 'Grant peace, we pray, in mer-cy, Lord; Peace in our time, O send us!'. The second system has the lyrics 'For there is none on earth but You, None oth-er to de-fend us.'. The third system has the lyrics 'You on - ly, Lord, can fight for us. A - men.'. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature.



ALL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF BRUSSELS

This compilation comes from **All Lutheran Church of Brussels**, www.alcb.be

a congregation of the Evangelisch-Lutherse Kerk in België,

member of the International Lutheran Council (ILC)

represented by The Reverend Johannes Reitze-Landau, pastor@alcb.be

the selection of the readings follows the German Protestant Series of the Biblical Readings for the

Sundays and Church Feasts based on the "Ancient Church Series", last review in 2018

the Biblical passages are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV)

the scan of the hymn is taken from "Lutheran Service Book", Saint Louis 2006.