

Order of Teaching and Prayers for Sunday, May 3, 2020
Zion Lutheran Church, Ridgeville Corners, Ohio

This Order of Teaching and Prayers (adapted from Divine Service I) is part of Zion Lutheran's ministry during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic and "Stay at Home" orders in the state of Ohio. Orders for festival days and Sundays will continue to be made available as long as normal worship opportunities are not available. I will post audio recordings of these orders on the appointed day on www.zionrco.org. You are invited to listen and pray with me and my wife at that time, or any time after. Pastor Carl Rockrohr

The teaching for this week continues with the sermon series "God's and His People" started at Zion Lutheran on January 26th. This week we consider the narrative of the tower of Babel as recorded in Genesis 11. Next week the topic will be the call of Abraham in Genesis 12.

Invocation and Opening Verses

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Let us then confess our sins to God our Father,

Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for His sake God forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ He gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit. May the Lord, who has begun this good work in us, bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Lord, have mercy; **Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

Scripture Reading Genesis 11:1-9 ESV

1 Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. 2 And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. 3 And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. 4 Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth." 5 And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. 6 And the Lord said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one

language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. 7 Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech." 8 So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. 9 Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. And from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Scripture Reading Acts 2:42-47

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Apostles' Creed

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

And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

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

Teaching Genesis 8:20-9:2 (*We consider connections between the Flood and Tower of Babel narratives today, so a few verses from the Flood narrative are included for the teaching.*)

8:20 Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. 21 And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. 22 While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." 9:1 And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. 2 The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered.

11:4 Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.” 5 And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. 6 And the Lord said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. 7 Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another’s speech.”

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer.

Even after the Lord God had sent the great flood, sin and evil had not stopped among people. Yet God still made promises and blessings for all people through the blessings on Noah. Even though God knew “the intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth,” God blessed Noah, his sons and all future descendants:

1. Never again would God send a great flood.
2. Seasons of the earth enabling farming would continue for all time.
3. All animals would be afraid of mankind.
4. Animals were also now given as food, as well as plants.
5. God said mankind was to multiply and fill the whole earth.

Thus, the Lord God promised He would bless, protect, give food and give places to live for all mankind. It is very clear God wanted to continue to watch over and be near all mankind in these promises.

A relationship of faith, trusting in the Lord God, is the central issue in all the Bible. Even though all people have evil intentions in their hearts, God wants to take care of people and He wants people to trust Him. God had made a promise and plan to deal with human evil once and for all. Adam and Eve heard His words: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” (Genesis 3:15) All mankind need their Creator God and His grace and love.

The people who built the tower of Babel proposed to rely on their own power and ingenuity for their survival and welfare. They did not recognize the Creator God’s blessings and protection. They would not go out and fill the earth as God directed. They wanted their own name to be great without acknowledging God’s blessings.

The Creator God has built into all mankind a tremendous creativity and ingenuity. People study creation. People learn and work with everything in creation to build and make many things. Working with things of this world to enrich our lives are blessings of God which He provides. But evil intention comes in when people believe they can control creation, as if they have made all things. When people want to make their own name great and believe they survive like that, not only is this a denial of God and His blessings, it is a denial of the reality of human life.

God caused different languages to be spoken and understood by the people building the tower, and they could no longer work together as one. They separated out into language groups and started filling the earth as God had said they should.

Throughout time, cultures and languages a knowledge of the Creator God has been among all people. St. Paul used this natural knowledge of God to teach about God's Son, Jesus Christ.

22 So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: To the unknown god." What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. 24 The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, 25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. 26 And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, 27 that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, 28 for

'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring.'

29 Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. 30 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, 31 because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead." (Acts 17)

What happens when faith in Jesus comes to people so that people know God is watching over them; that God has forgiven them of all evil intentions and actions; and that God gives them not only all things for this life but even for life everlasting?

What happens is shown among the first Christians after the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 2:

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God

and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

God in His mercy and grace does not want to destroy men, women and children even though we have evil intentions in us even since our conception. (Psalm 51:5) God wants to cleanse people of evil and give true life and love through Jesus Christ. This forgiveness and true life He offers to all people no matter what language, culture, tribe and condition.

Please pray with me: Dear Lord Jesus, Help me trust in Your promises to forgive and give me life. Let me not be like the people of Babel who wanted to forget God and make their own name great. Give me faith to trust that all things are in Your hands, and that as You love me I can also share love. Amen.

Now may the peace of God that passes all understanding guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Hymn *Beautiful Savior* *Lutheran Service Book 537 (Public Domain)*

1 Beautiful Savior, King of creation,
Son of God and Son of Man!
Truly I'd love Thee, Truly I'd serve Thee,
Light of my soul, my joy, my crown.

3 Fair is the sunshine, Fair is the moonlight,
Bright the sparkling stars on high;
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer
Than all the angels in the sky.

2 Fair are the meadows,
Fair are the woodlands,
Robed in flow'rs of blooming spring;
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer;
He makes our sorr'wing spirit sing.

4 Beautiful Savior, Lord of the nations,
Son of God and Son of Man!
Glory and honor, Praise, adoration,
Now and forevermore be Thine!

Prayers

Blessed Shepherd, You establish Your Church with Your sacrificial death and mighty resurrection. Grant us devotion, that we may abide in the teaching of the apostles and honor the fellowship of the Church. Guard us against all enemies of Your Word, and keep us within the care of Your flock and staff forevermore. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Mighty Shepherd, You hold in Your hands all the might of man, and You hold accountable those who would govern Your people. Grant to us good government and good leaders who will honor Your purpose, protect Your people, serve the cause of justice and defend our liberty against all threats. Give them wisdom in their pandemic response. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy Shepherd, Bless all artists and artisans, composers and musicians, and craftsmen and writers, that they may employ all their skills for Your glory and in service to the Gospel. Watch over and guard all who serve us in daily needs of health and protection. Be with and protect all

retail workers, food producers, transportation workers, law-enforcement, firefighters, military personnel, doctors, nurses, emergency crews, medical researchers, and utility workers. Grant that we recognize and support all these people as good gifts from You. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful Shepherd, Your wounds are our healing and Your voice calls us to You in time of need. Hear us on behalf of all those who suffer in body or mind, who grieve those whom they love, and to whom death draws near. We pray especially for _____ and those we name in our hearts. Grant them healing according to Your will, grace to sustain them in the day of trouble, and hope of the new and everlasting life to come. Be with the unemployed and the distraught, and return them to health and livelihood. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

(In Zion Lutheran's prayers: Margaret; Norma; Lillian; Carolyn; Charlotte; Sandy; Henry; Lincoln; Isaac; Julie; Loretta; Bryceton; Cathie; Karlyn; Mark; Dan; Kathy; Shirley; David; Carlton; daughter of Julie; Pastor Scheiwe and Pastor Berlin.)

Gracious Shepherd, You seek out those who have fallen and restore the sinner to repentance. Send forth Your Spirit to rekindle faith in the hearts of those who have fallen away from the truth or who have been overcome by temptation and sin. Bring good from ill and increase in all the hunger for Your Word and a recognition of our need, that many may be gathered into Your flock when church doors are opened wide again. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O great Good Shepherd, we pray You to hear Your sheep and answer our prayers with mercy, granting us those things profitable for us and our salvation and keeping from us all things harmful; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be 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.

O Lord, hear my prayer.

And let my cry come to You.

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all. **Amen.**

You are invited to listen to hymns and use other resources at "Resources" www.zionrco.org.

Order of Prayer adapted from "Divine Service I," *Lutheran Service Book*, Concordia Publishing House. Prayer adapted from LC-MS Three-Year Series Prayers for May 3, 2020. <https://www.lcms.org/worship/three-year-series-prayers>