



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Worship Resource for Re-Gathering

This rite may be used at a time when it is possible and safe for many people to gather for in-person worship around word and sacrament after a time of no or limited in-person gatherings. This time will be different for each context. This rite does not suggest that other forms of gathering such as online worship services were not important to the community. Rather, this rite could be a helpful moment to mark a new chapter in the life of the congregation or worshiping community.

It is likely that the specific words of lament and praise will need to be adapted for the local situation and context. This rite could also be adapted for synod or other larger gatherings that have not been able to meet in-person. Physical aspects of this rite, such as processions or gestures, may need to be adapted to honor current safety protocols.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,
who upholds us through adversity,
who consoles us in our sorrows,
whose mercy endures forever.
Amen.

Song

“Here, O Lord, Your Servants Gather / *Sekai no tomo to te a tsunagi*,” ELW 530

A reading from Isaiah 54:10:

For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed,
but my steadfast love shall not depart from you,
and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,
says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

A prayer of lament

We lament before you, O God, Comforter in our distress,
the losses that *our congregation / this community* has suffered.
We have missed our weekly assembled worship,
our sharing of bread and cup,
our communal song,
our greetings of peace;
the full observances of Holy Week,
the Three Days, Easter, Pentecost, and Trinity;
baptisms, confirmations, weddings, and funerals;
gatherings for education;
coffee hours;

the mutual consolation of the faithful enacted each Sunday,

Other laments of the local community may be added.

and we mourn members, friends, and family who have died of COVID-19.

O God, we lament our losses, for they are many.

Restore us, gracious God.

Restore us, gracious God.

We lament before you, O God, Sustainer of the universe,

the tragedies that our world has experienced.

We lament the millions sickened;

the countless dead;

thousands unemployed;

medical systems depleted;

economic security threatened;

government assistance inadequate;

political discord escalated;

despondency rampant;

racial injustice intensified;

communal engagements canceled. . .

Other laments of the world may be added.

O God, we lament the world's tragedies, for they are incalculable.

Heal us, compassionate God.

Heal us, compassionate God.

Song of lament

Sometimes Our Only Song Is Weeping, ACS 1050

Psalm 91

The Psalm may be sung or read recalling God's faithfulness in a time of plague.

Praise on a Sunday of Re-Gathering

Yet today, O God of the everlasting arms,

we rejoice at this re-gathering of our congregation:

we praise you for Sunday worship in word and sacrament;

for the personal presence of our pastor[s], [our deacon], and ministers;

for infants, children, youth, adults, and the aged together;

for communal song and live music; s

for coffee hours;

for Bible study;

for service with one another for the wider community;

for the mutual consolation of the faithful enacted on Sundays and weekdays . . .

Other praises of the local community may be added.

O God, we rejoice at this re-gathering for baptismal life together.

Empower our church, faithful God.

Empower our church, faithful God.

And we pray, O God of safe harbor, for the emergence of a wholesome world:

with health restored;

mourners consoled;

vaccines available;

hospitals restocked;
employment reinstated;
poverty averted;
sustenance shared;
science respected;
travel resumed;
fear replaced with confidence;
sorrow turned to joy . . .

Other praises of the world may be added.

O God, we pray for the emergence of a wholesome world.
Renew the whole world, merciful God.

Renew the whole world, merciful God.

Give us your peace, eternal God.
Give us your peace, eternal God.

The people bow to one another, greeting each other without touch.

Gathering Song

What Is This Place, ELW 524

The liturgy of Holy Communion continues with the greeting and the prayer of the day.

Additional hymns and songs may be substituted for those suggested above.

ELW 632	O God, Our Help in Ages Past
ELW 633	We've Come This Far by Faith
ELW 649	Behold, How Pleasant / <i>Miren qué bueno</i>
ELW 761	Evening and Morning
ELW 763	My Life Flows On in Endless Song
ELW 774	What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine / <i>Leaning on the Everlasting Arms</i>
ELW 781	Children of the Heavenly Father / <i>Tryggare kan ingen vara</i>
ELW 786	O Holy Spirit, Enter In
ELW 791	We Sing to You, O God
ELW 839/40	Now Thank We All Our God
ACS 1026	In the Midst of Earthly Life
ACS 1030	Death Be Never Last
ACS 1080	Total Praise / <i>Lord, I Will Lift Mine Eyes</i>
ACS 1097	Ten Thousand Reasons / <i>Bless the Lord, O My Soul</i>
ACS 1100	O Beauty Ever Ancient

In addition to the hymns and songs suggested above, assembly song under the headings of "Gathering" and "Lament" in ELW and ACS may be especially appropriate.

ELW: *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*

ACS: *All Creation Sings*

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