

Prayer of the Day

God of all, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.

Amen.

First Reading: Exodus 14:19-31

Having decided to let the Israelites go from Egypt, Pharaoh had second thoughts and sent his army after them (14:5-8). Though the passage through the Red Sea became a sign of salvation for the people of Israel, Pharaoh's forces drowned in the waters. As a result the Israelites believed in the LORD and in the LORD's servant Moses.

¹⁹The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. ²⁰It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

²¹Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided.

²²The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. ²³The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. ²⁴At the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. ²⁵He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt."

²⁶Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers." ²⁷So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the LORD tossed the Egyptians into the sea. ²⁸The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. ²⁹But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

³⁰Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. ³¹Israel saw the great work that the LORD did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the LORD and believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

Psalm 114

¹Hallelujah! When Israel came | out of Egypt,
the house of Jacob from a people | of strange speech,

²**Judah became God's | sanctuary
and Israel | God's dominion.**

³The sea beheld | it and fled;
Jordan turned | and went back.

⁴**The mountains | skipped like rams,
and the little hills | like young sheep.**

⁵What ailed you, O sea, | that you fled,
O Jordan, that | you turned back,

⁶**you mountains, that you | skipped like rams,
you little hills | like young sheep?**

⁷Tremble, O earth, at the presence | of the LORD,
at the presence of the | God of Jacob,

⁸**who turned the hard rock into a | pool of water
and flint-stone into a | flowing spring.**

Matthew 18:21-35

When Peter asks about the limits of forgiveness, Jesus responds with a parable that suggests human forgiveness should mirror the unlimited mercy of God.

²¹Peter came and said to [Jesus], “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²²Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

²³“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³²Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray...

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need, saying “God, in your mercy,” and responding, “hear our prayer.”

A brief silence.

You welcome us when we are weak in faith. Uphold your church throughout the world; make it a place of welcome. Strengthen faith through Bible studies and Sunday schools, confirmation classes and youth ministries. Nurture new ministries of education and growth, especially as we are called to be creative in this time. God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

The heights of the heavens show us the vastness of your steadfast love. Have compassion on your creation. Where human selfishness has brought ruin and destruction, we look to you to heal, renew, and redeem your world. God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Make your ways known to the nations. Speak kindness to our bitter grudges. Settle our hearts when we want to settle accounts with violence. Bless our leaders with patience and wisdom, that the needs of all may always guide their decisions. God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Bring healing and justice wherever harm is dealt. Provide vindication for all who are oppressed. Free victims of human trafficking and forced labor; deliver all who are bound by debt. Feed all who hunger, and guard refugees fleeing famine, poverty, and war. God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Teach us to forgive. Remind us that you do not always accuse us. Still our tongues when we are tempted to pass judgment and argue over opinions. Make this congregation a community of mercy for one another and for all our neighbors. God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Whether we live or whether we die, we are yours. We thank you for those who have showed us faithfulness, for the knees that taught us how to bow to you and the tongues that taught us to praise you. God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



Gloria Dei
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Reflection for Season of Creation from Bishop Susan Johnson (ELCIC)...

At the 2018 Bishops' Academy, theologian Cynthia Moe-Lobeda reminded us of our call to "neighbour love," to love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself. She went on to say that if God loves the creation, then we must think of the creation as our neighbour.

I am reminded of this when I read today's lesson. What if Peter had rephrased his question to Jesus as "Lord, if a neighbour sins against me, how often should I forgive?"

Or, what if the neighbour asking the question was creation asking about us? How many times should creation forgive us for overfishing, deforesting, polluting, endangering species, desertification, commodifying or even just not paying attention? Whether it is seventy-seven times, or seventy times seven, we are past the breaking point.

The 1854 speech attributed to Chief Seattle included these words: "Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. If men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves. ... The earth is precious to [God], and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its creator."

How long until we don't just know it in our heads, but know it in our hearts, and change the way we treat the creation, our neighbour?

Creator, we pray that you would help us touch the earth gently. Turn us from our ways of commodifying the earth and consuming its riches without thought. Amen.



SEASON OF CREATION



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in Canada**
In Mission for Others



The Anglican Church of Canada