



Prayer for the
20th Anniversary of the
Joint Declaration on the
Doctrine of Justification

‣ Preparation: 5 large candles on the altar (to be lit during the liturgy), vigil candles for everyone to be distributed, baptismal font with plenty of water, possibly a crucifix, Bible, or Paschal Candle for the procession depending on local liturgical traditions.

OPENING

→ Organ (or other musical) Prelude

The organ or other musical prelude may be based on the theme of “Nun danket alle Gott” or other hymns of thanksgiving.

‣ The liturgy may begin at the baptismal font.

The assembly is invited to stand and, if possible, to face the font at the entrance of the church.

Trinitarian Greeting

‣ Two or three presiders may lead this Thanksgiving.

In the name of the Father, and of the (+)
Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen!

The Lord be with you!

And also with you!

Thanksgiving for baptism

We gather around the font remembering that in baptism we have been incorporated into the one Body of Christ. “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.” (Ephesians 4:4-6)

‣ Water may be poured into the baptismal font.

“Blessed are you, O God, maker and ruler of all things. Your voice thundered over the waters at creation. You water the mountains and send springs into the valleys to refresh and satisfy all living things. Through the waters of the flood you carried those in the ark to safety. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery to freedom. [...] Pour out your Holy Spirit; wash away sin in this cleansing water; clothe the baptized with Christ; and claim your daughters and sons, no longer slave and free, no longer male and female, but one with all the baptized in Christ Jesus, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.”¹ **Amen.**

Let us confess our faith together.

Do you believe in God the Father?

**We believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

**We 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 into 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?

***We 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.***

→ Opening Hymn

Festive, processional hymn, preferably a well-known melody to the communities present, for example, “O For A Thousand Tongues” which is a Wesley hymn and echoes the Ephesians text read at the beginning of the Thanksgiving for Baptism.

‣ During the opening hymn, the presiders may process to the front of the church (near the ambo or lectern). A Crucifix, or Paschal candle, or large Bible may lead the procession forward, depending on local tradition and worship practice.

‣ While singing, people may come to the baptismal font to make a sign of the cross with the water or in some other way remember their baptism.

Greetings

‣ Read from the lectern.

Presider 1 (Lutheran): Today we celebrate 20 years of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification and we give thanks for the journey traveled together. “Our common way of listening to the word of God in Scripture has led to such new insights. Together we hear the gospel that ‘God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life’ (John 3:16).”²

Presider 2 (Catholic): “We confess together that all persons depend completely on the saving grace of God for their salvation. The freedom they possess in relation to persons and the things of this world is no freedom in relation to salvation, for as sinners they stand under God’s judgment and are incapable of turning by themselves to God to seek deliverance, of meriting their justification before God, or of attaining salvation by their own abilities. Justification takes place solely by God’s grace.”³

Presider 3 (Methodist): “The Methodist Movement has always understood itself as deeply indebted to the biblical teaching on justification as it was understood by Luther and the other Reformers and then again by the Wesleys. It also embraced elements of the doctrine of justification which belong to the Catholic tradition of the early church both East and West. This gave its own doctrine of justification its distinctive profile.”⁴ [...] “The deep connection between forgiveness of sins and making righteous, between justification and sanctification, has always been crucial for

the Methodist understanding of the biblical doctrine of justification.”⁵

Presider 4 (Reformed): The World Communion of Reformed Churches states: “We affirm our doctrinal agreement with the common statements on the doctrine of justification [...]. We rejoice together that the historical doctrinal differences on the doctrine of justification no longer divide us, and we experience this as a moment of self-examination, conversion and new commitment to one another manifesting new unity and advancing our common witness for peace and justice.”⁶ “The doctrine of justification cannot be seen in the abstract, divorced from the reality of injustice, oppression and violence in today’s world”⁷. “Justification is, both a ‘declaring righteous’ and a ‘setting right.’”⁸

Presider 5 (Anglican): “The Anglican Consultative Council welcomes and affirms the substance of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. [...] Anglicans and Lutherans share a common understanding of God’s justifying grace [...], that we are accounted righteous and are made righteous before God only by grace through faith because of the merits of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” With the Roman Catholics we agree “on the essential aspects of the doctrine of salvation and on the Church’s role within it.”⁹

→ Sung response

For example, Psalm 136 “O Give Thanks to the Lord” or other response giving thanks.

WORD

Reading: Romans 3: 21-28

→ Hymn of Praise

For example, Psalm 100 (Genevan Psalter “Old Hundredth”) or another psalm / song such as Psalm 148, 149, or 150.

Gospel Reading

Suggested texts: Matthew 13:31-33 / John 15:1-5 / John 17:20-26

This is a festive hymn that focuses on the theme of unity.

Presider: We now hear excerpts from the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* and from the Notre Dame Consultation Statement.

The organ or other instrument may begin playing “Ubi Caritas” (Taizé) or similar repetitive song quietly throughout the five readings.

▸ During each reading, a young person lights one of the five large candles on the altar or specially placed table.

Sermon

→ Hymn of the Day

Reader 1: “Justification is the forgiveness of sins (Rom 3:23-25; Acts 13:39; Lk 18:14), liberation from the dominating power of sin and death (Rom 5:12-21) and from the curse of the law (Gal 3:10-14). It is acceptance into communion with God—already now, but then fully in God’s coming kingdom (Rom 5:1f). It unites with Christ and with his death and resurrection (Rom 6:5). It occurs in the reception of the Holy Spirit in baptism and incorporation into the one body (Rom 8:1f, 9f; I Cor 12:12f). All this is from God alone, for Christ’s sake, by grace, through faith in ‘the gospel of God’s Son’ (Rom 1:1-3).”¹⁰

Reader 2: “We confess together that good works—a Christian life lived in faith, hope and love—follow justification and are its fruits. When the justified live in Christ and act in the grace they receive, they bring forth, in biblical terms, good fruit. Since Christians struggle against sin their entire lives, this consequence of justification is also for them an obligation they must fulfill. Thus both Jesus and the apostolic Scriptures admonish Christians to bring forth the works of love.”¹¹

Reader 3: “Our churches face similar challenges in communicating the meaning of justification to today’s society in ways which meet the experiences and needs of the world. We are gripped with the imperative of proclaiming the good news of salvation, through compassion and working for justice.”¹²

Reader 4: “We will work to strengthen our witness to the common bond of baptism we share. We propose to work on creating appropriate resources for celebrations of baptism and renewal of baptismal vows where they do not exist already. In a similar way, liturgies to celebrate justification and our common baptism around 31st October, the eve of All Saints, should be offered more widely.”¹³

Reader 5: “Common themes for spiritual edification and ecumenical reflection for each year should be identified. In all these ways we wish to make more visible our common witness, in worship and service, on our journey together towards visible unity, walking together, praying together and working together.”¹⁴

Presider: Our prayer continues as the light of Christ is passed among us. We proclaim Christ who calls us to witness to God’s reconciling and resurrecting love as we walk and pray and work together.

After the last reading, the assembly begins singing “Ubi Caritas” or other designated song.

→ Song “Ubi caritas” (Taizé)

› During this song, children pass the light from the Christ candle to all gathered.

PRAYERS

Intercessory Prayer

Intercessory prayer is led by various young people. There may be a sung response, for example, a Kyrie from Taizé.

Presider: Let us bring the needs of the church, the world, and all in need, to God's loving care, singing:

→ Kyrie eleison

1. Renew the church throughout the world. Strengthen our testimony to unity in truth and love. Let us walk in the communion of all the baptized under the guidance of the gospel. Bless our further dialogue, lead us towards that visible unity which is Christ's will and let us wait, in full communion, for the coming of your Kingdom.

→ Kyrie eleison

2. Restore the suffering creation. Teach us to limit our freedom and share all resources, that we recognize our deep connectedness to all people and all of your good creation.

→ Kyrie eleison

3. Reconcile all people that war and violence come to an end. Remember the people, in [name places that need particular attention...]. Embolden us to say "no" to all forms of violence.

→ Kyrie eleison

4. Protect all refugees and displaced persons. Give us strength and courage to advocate for their dignity and full human rights.

→ Kyrie eleison

5. Gather into your embrace all those who call out to you under different names. Bring an end to inter-religious strife, and make us more faithful witnesses of your merciful love.

→ Kyrie eleison

6. Sustain all those who do not call upon you. Open doors for dialogue and collaboration with all peoples of good will. Fill us with peace, that we may live as one human family.

→ Kyrie eleison

7. Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live.

→ Kyrie eleison

8. Accompany and protect those who are persecuted for faith in you and those of other faiths who suffer persecution. Give us the courage to confess.

→ Kyrie eleison

The Lord's Prayer

Presider: In confidence that you O God hear our prayers for the needs of this world and

for the unity of all Christians in their witness, let us pray as Jesus taught us...

Our Father in heaven...

▶ A song based on The Lord's Prayer may be sung.

BLESSING AND SENDING

God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us!

Amen!

Bless all creation, O God, and make your ways be known upon earth, your saving power among all peoples.

Amen!

God, Father, (+) Son and Holy Spirit, bless us and all creation. God keep us in his way together in hope.

Amen!

▶ Presiders and readers may process back out.

▶ From the back of the church, one of the readers proclaims:

Go in peace in common witness and service!

Thanks be to God!

▶ The assembly is invited to share a sign of peace with one another.

→ Organ (or other musical) postlude

→ Closing Hymn

A hymn of thanksgiving and praise such as "Lobe den Herren" (Praise to our God) or other hymn.

The Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church signed the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) on Reformation Day (31 October 1999) in Augsburg, Germany.

Endnotes

- ¹ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Water Memorial Worship Resources, Prayer Two [abridged form], 2016. https://download.elca.org/ELCA_Resource_Repository/Water_Memorial_Worship_Resources.pdf.
- ² Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, 1999 (JDDJ), paragraph 8.
- ³ Ibid., paragraph 19.
- ⁴ The World Methodist Council Statement of Association with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, 2006, paragraph 4.
- ⁵ Ibid, paragraph 4.2.
- ⁶ Association of the World Communion of Reformed Churches with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, 2017, paragraph 2.
- ⁷ Justification and Sacramentality: The Christian Community as an Agent for Justice – Report of the Fourth Phase of Catholic-Reformed International Dialogue, 2015, paragraph 56.
- ⁸ See note 6, paragraph 16.
- ⁹ Anglican Consultative Council, Resolution 16.17: Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, 2016.
- ¹⁰ JDDJ, paragraph 11.
- ¹¹ Ibid., paragraph 37.
- ¹² Notre Dame Consultation Statement, 2019.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches



World Communion
of Reformed Churches

ANGLICAN
COMMUNION
IN OVER 165 COUNTRIES

