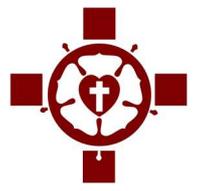




LUTHERAN PORT ELIZABETH FRIEDENSKIRCHE - CHURCH OF PEACE



Home Service for Rogate 9 May 2021

Pray

Opening

A warm welcome to our celebration of this Sunday called Rogate. The Latin word Rogate means Pray! God awaits our prayers through His Son, our risen Lord, Jesus Christ. The One, who has taught us to pray, intercedes for us by God the Father. That which He promised his own disciples once, still is valid for us today: God hears our prayers, He hears us when we call to Him, He takes note of our suffering, He accepts our thanks and praise. As our watchword for the new week proclaims: "Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer, or removed his steadfast love from me."

Let us sing together the first hymn:

Hymn LH 423 2,4,5

2 O Father, draw me to my Saviour
That your dear Son may draw me then to you.
Your Spirit guide my whole behaviour
And rule both sense and reason in me, too,
That, Lord, your peace from me may ne'er depart
But wake sweet melodies within my heart.

4 For he can plead for me with sighings
That are not speakable by lips defiled.
He bids me pray with earnest cryings,

Jehovah, let me now adore Thee.

Bears witness that I am your precious child,
Joint heir with Christ, and thus may dare to say:
O heav'nly Father, hear me when I pray!

5 O joy! my hope and trust are founded
On His sure Word and witness in the heart;
I know Thy mercies are unbounded,
And all good gifts Thou freely wilt impart;
Nay, more is lavished by Thy bounteous hand
Than I can ask or seek or understand.

Votum

P. In the Name of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

C. Amen.

P. Our help is in the Name of the Lord,

C. **who made heaven and earth.**

P. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,

C. **and you forgave the guilt of my sin.**

All. Thanks be to God.



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Psalm 423:

The Psalms are a great resource of prayers written by people in all sorts of situations in life. They can also help and support us in our prayer time. They help us find words to pray when we find it difficult. Let us now pray with words from Psalm 43:

- L. Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause, against an ungodly people, from the deceitful and unjust man deliver me!
- C. **For you are the God in whom I take refuge; why have you rejected me? Why do I go about mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?**
- L. Send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling!
- C. **Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy, and I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God.**
- L. Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me?
- C. **Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation, and my God.**
Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forevermore. Amen.

Kyrie

- L. Kyrie eleison!
- L. Christe eleison!
- L. Kyrie eleison!
- C. Lord, have mercy!
- C. Christ, have mercy!
- C. Lord have mercy!
- L. Glory be to God in the highest!
- C. **And on earth peace, to all in whom He delights.**

All glory be to God on high! Who has our race befriended; to us no harm shall now come nigh, the strife at last is ended. God showeth His goodwill to us, and peace shall reign on earth again. O thank Him for His goodness!

- L. The Lord be with you!
- C. **And also, with you!**

Dear God, heavenly Father when we tread a path to your door, we find it open and welcoming. When we make requests of you, even the most difficult, selfish, or presumptuous, you give us what is needful, according to your will grace and goodness. Forgive what is twisted or dangerous in us when we make our requests and demands. Restore us with the surprise of your willingness to listen to us. Strengthen our courage; bolster our endurance; spur us onward in your way in the world through the power of your Holy Spirit and the name of Christ, who lives and reigns with You, one God, now and forever. Amen.



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Epistle Reading

1 Timothy 2:1-6

C: Hallelujah

Hymn LH 420 1-3

Let all things now living .

- 1 Come, my soul, thy suit prepare,
Jesus loves to answer pray'r.
He Himself has bid thee pray,
rise and ask without delay.
- 2 Thou art coming to a King,
large petitions with thee bring,
for his grace and pow'r are such,
none can ever ask too much.

- 3 With my burden I begin,
Lord, remove this load of sin!
Let Thy blood, for sinners spilt,
set my conscience free from guilt.

Gospel Reading

John 16:23-33

Hymn LH 422 1-3

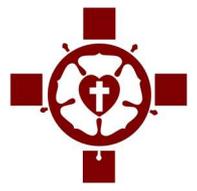
Great Shepherd of Thy people hear,

- 1 Great Shepherd of thy people, hear,
thy presence now display;
as thou hast given a place for prayer,
so give us hearts to pray.
- 2 Within these walls let holy peace
and love and concord dwell;
here give the troubled conscience ease,
the wounded spirit heal.

- 3 May we in faith receive thy word,
in faith present our prayers,
and in the presence of our Lord
unbosom all our cares.



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Sermon

Matthew 6:5-15

Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our Sermon Text for this Prayer Sunday is taken from the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 6, where Jesus was teaching his followers how to pray and said to them:

"When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us the wrong we have done, as we have forgiven those who have wronged us. And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one."

Dear Congregation!

Often, I find myself in the position, where I do not know what to say. Words do not come easy to me. Many times, in my life, I could identify very well with the song, called: "Words". The first line of the lyrics accurately describes this position of not knowing what to say: "Words – don't come easy to me. How can I find a way...?"

And I believe that, more often than not, the situation is not that much different for those who seem to have no problem in finding words to say to others and to make themselves heard. There are times when they do not really know what to say either. But words are a way of trying to find a way; a way to explain or to describe to other people what we think and feel, what we see and hear, what we experience and how we experience it.

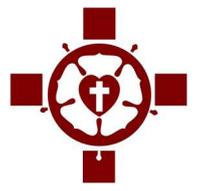
And even when those who find something to say, in themselves do not know what there really is to say, they say something anyway, because they need to. Because for them, the alternative of not saying anything, is too unbearable.

A philosopher called Montaigne once accurately described this human predicament, that is, the soul's desperate need for words and for expression when he said: "I cannot imagine any state of being that could be more unbearable and more painful, than when a living soul that is filled with emotion, is robbed of the capability to express itself." Emotion and experience without words that can describe it, leads to despair, with no way out. Even other forms of expression like body language or art in the end are all in one form or another attached to words, words that can identify and describe these expressions to others.

Ultimately, we simply cannot do without words and we cannot do without those that we can share these words with. As human beings we all have a desperate need to be heard, to be understood in and through relationships with others.



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But sometimes we are so overwhelmed by what we experience, be it intense joy or pain, that we simply become speechless, and we are at a loss for words. We are indeed lost when we lose our way for the lack of words. And we are just as lost, when the words we do find are empty of hope and meaning. It is then that we need to be found. It is then that we have just as much a great need to *receive* words, a great need to have others who can help us to attach words to our experiences and to help us find our way.

Nobody knows the depth of our need to be found more than God does; "...your Father in heaven knows what you need before you ask him".

In Jesus Christ, God came to find us, to seek relationship with us, to speak healing words and to give us words to say where we are left speechless, to help us find our way in the world, through talking to God. God chooses to be our loving Father and to give us what we need in Jesus Christ, who is the Word of God that came to us to show us the way, to bring us words that we can pray: OUR FATHER...

Christ opened the way for us, the way where we can have a childlike relationship with God and speak to God intimately, calling him Father, and expressing our deepest needs to him. Because Jesus is the Son, we can know God as "Our Father". Christ showed us the way that we are children of God, his beloved children. And our Baptism reminds all of us that we have been adopted as beloved children by our Father in heaven.

There is great comfort here. Because it means that our relationship with God as His children is not based on what we have felt, what we have done or what we believed. It means that we do not have to anxiously seek for words and scan our inner thoughts of whether we have confessed all our sins accurately or whether we have really forgiven that other person or not.

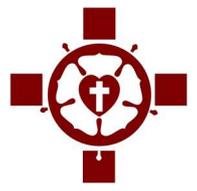
We are given these words of the Lord's prayer as a gift from God, so that God can make them come true for us in our lives; these words are there to help us to cope with the struggles we deal with day after day in the life of our workplace, our families; also, in the life of our soul and spirit. Because, in a time where we all live overwhelmingly stressful lifestyles, and where we are confronted with numerous pains that threaten our soul, we are more often than not, at a loss for words.

We are either numb and speechless; or we simply start talking in a desperate attempt to say something, to find some way to make sense of it all, to try and talk to one another, and to find some way to talk to God. Or we simply give up the attempt to say anything, we also give up praying altogether for fear of disillusionment and the pain of not being heard.

That is why, in our desperate need, God gave us the gift of His Word and of attaching His Word to our deepest needs, very down to the deepest needs we do not even know about, much less can find any words for. We are in need of God doing for us what we cannot do for ourselves.



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That is why we have received the words of the Lord's prayer from God through his Word. That is also the reason why we hold out our empty hand at Holy Communion. It is a visible and physical way of showing our hunger, our emptiness, and our need for God and for God's people to give us our daily bread.

And so, it is with our daily prayer life. Speaking the words of the Lord's prayer daily. We need it desperately. Even, and especially, when we feel empty, when we do not know how or what to pray, do not know what to say to God. It is God himself who helps us by coming to us in his Son Jesus Christ and seeking us through his Holy Spirit. Paul says that none of us really knows what to say to God. It is the Holy Spirit that helps us speak: *"The Spirit helps us in our weakness; says Paul, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes (for us) with sighs too deep for words."*

And the Lord's Prayer is given to us by God in His Word to help us pray, not just for our needs, but also for the needs of others and for the good conclusion of God's entire creation and His good will for this world and for all of us.

God gives us His Word that He is with us. It is this Word of God that helps us find our way in a world that is often too chaotic for words.

God opened the way for us to him, by making His way down to us in Jesus Christ. In Christ we can safely speak words that bring us direction and healing for our lives from God, knowing that we are in the loving care of OUR FATHER in heaven who calls us his beloved children. Therefore, we can be bold, and we are safe to say, "OUR FATHER..."

And the peace of God the Father which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Amen.

Hymn LH 426 1-3

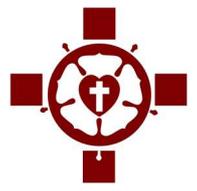
- 1 What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer!
- 2 Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged;
take it to the Lord in prayer!

What a friend we have in Jesus,

- Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
take it to the Lord in prayer!
- 3 Are we weak and heavy laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Saviour, still our refuge--
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Do your friends despise, forsake you?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In his arms he'll take and shield you;
you will find a solace there.



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Church Prayer

As we come to prayer let us remember that we do not have to twist the arm of a reluctant God to seek good things for ourselves and this world, nor find ways to persuade a distant God to come near and listen to us. Let us remember that as we pray, we kneel alongside Jesus Christ, in the presence of God, with the help of the Spirit. Let us pray:

Merciful God, to pray rightly - who can do that? We come to you with our helpless words, our silence, with our longing for clarity and comfort and pray: Fill our prayer with your Spirit to make it true. We call:

Lord, hear us!

We pray for all to whom the words before you become crying, for the desperate, for the uprooted and embittered, for the unemployed who look for work in vain and for those who are pushed far beyond their limits and are over-worked. We call:

Lord, hear us!

We pray for all who cannot pray, because they have become despondent, because you seem far and incomprehensible, because they feel they can no longer trust what the church stands for. . We call:

Lord, hear us!

We pray also for ourselves, that you strengthen our trust in You, that we can trust that you work everything in our lives for good, whatever it may be, good and easy or difficult and threatening. Reassure us of your faithful providence and your graceful care for us and help us to expect all help from you. We call:

Lord, hear us!

Merciful God, to pray rightly - who can do that? We pray that there may be people who pray for us before you, when our prayer falls silent.

We thank you that your dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, constantly intercedes for us before you. Guide us Lord, keep us steadfast in faith and bring us home to eternal joy. We pray all this and all the prayers of our hearts in the Name of our risen Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

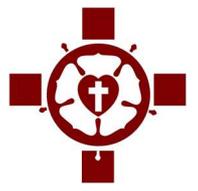
And in His name, we call on you in song as He has taught us to pray:

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 today our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever.

Amen



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Announcements

Our next **Divine Service** will take place next week Sunday in English, with Holy Communion, at 09h30.

Friday Take-Out: Any donations toward this initiative will be helpful to us. We would like to make this an ongoing source of raising funds for our congregation.

Money Wall: Please support us by filling the envelopes with the minimal amount printed on the envelope. One lucky winner will win R 500.

Birthdays:
09 May Precious Mulioh
13 May Clinton Sternberg
14 May, Ayesha van Wyk
15 May, Geoff Andrews

May God bless you and have a happy and joyful birthday!

Blessing

- L. Depart in the peace of the Lord C. **Thanks be to God.**
L. May we go into this week strengthened by the Word of God and His blessing:
L: The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you;
The Lord look on you with favour and give you, His peace.
C. **Amen, Amen, Amen**