

A PRAYER, LITANY, and HYMN FOR EASTER

The purpose of this resource is to assist pastors in designing services for Easter, guide the prayers of Christians in the home on Easter Day, and serve as a focus of personal prayer and meditation.

Intercession for Easter Day 2020

On this Easter Day marked by both sorrow and joy, our prayers for the church, the world, and all in need include both heartfelt lament and fervent praise.

A brief silence.

God our Sanctuary, we lament that we cannot gather today for public worship, that death stalks the church, and that our sorrows and fears blunt our songs of Alleluia. . .

A brief silence.

Show the church your mercy: **Your mercy endures forever.**

And yet around the globe we praise you for the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, for our baptismal washing in his life, for your presence come to us in the word, and for the hope the gospel brings. . .

A brief silence.

We praise you for the church: **Alleluia! Thanks be to God!**

God our Creator, we lament that our life styles have harmed your creation and that our efforts to repair your earth are now postponed. . .

A brief silence.

Show the earth your mercy: **Your mercy endures forever.**

And yet here in the north we praise you for the beauty of the natural world, for springtime flowers and budding trees, for the soil and rain that nourish the crops. . .

A brief silence.

We praise you for the earth: **Alleluia! Thanks be to God!**

God our Governor, we lament that war and violence still rage, that countless people suffer injustice, that the plight of refugees seems beyond solution, that appropriate governmental action is delayed and inadequate. . .

A brief silence.

Show the world your mercy: **Your mercy endures forever.**

And yet we praise you that there is peace on our streets, that some elected officials and many aid agencies are devoting themselves to save the people and to share our food, and that we are given connection to friends and family through technology. . .

A brief silence.

We praise you for community: **Alleluia! Thanks be to God!**

God our Physician, we lament all who suffer, those we name here before you . . . but especially we lament the coronavirus and its incalculable suffering, the many thousands sick, the fear instilled, the loss of employment, the cancelation of plans, the overflow in hospitals, the scarcity of supplies, the exhaustion of medical staff. . .
A brief silence.

Show all the needy your mercy: **Your mercy endures forever.**
And yet we praise you for health and well-being wherever it thrives, for the dedication of medical workers, for the goodwill of volunteers, for the generosity of benefactors, and for the comfort we receive from the power of the resurrection. . .
A brief silence.

We praise you for healing: **Alleuia! Thanks be to God!**

God, our Everlasting Arms, mother us in our heartache and distress, receive now our personal laments, and help each of us to praise your name.
A longer period of silence.

We praise you for hearing our prayers: **Alleluia! Thanks be to God!**

God our Life Eternal, we lament the thousands dead and the sadness of all who mourn, and we remember before you all who have died in the faith. . .
A brief silence.

Show to all humanity your mercy: **Your mercy endures forever.**
And yet here we join in our Alleluias, and we praise you on this Easter Day for your promise of an endless banquet of joyous life in your presence, when diseases and sorrows will be no more.
A brief silence.

In life and death we praise you: **Alleluia! Thanks be to God!**

God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who are Source of life, Word of salvation, and Power of mercy, into your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your compassionate might, for the sake of him who lived, died, and rose for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

(Gail Ramshaw)

Litany of thanksgiving (inspired by Psalm 118)

You, Creator God, are so good! At all times, in all places, let all of creation sing praises to your holy name!

You, O God, continually bless us with a love that endures forever.

Though we find ourselves separated, uncertain, and distressed about the future, we know you are our God; the one who remains steadfast with us, and so we sing,

You, O God, continually bless us with a love that endures forever.

Your healing spirit makes us whole. In your presence our brokenness is transformed;
our fears, you soothe.

You, O God, continually bless us with a love that endures forever.

Even as we question the world around us,
we see your Spirit move and breathe life into our lives.
Each day brings new challenges and new marvels.
We rejoice in you and we are glad!

You, O God, continually bless us with a love that endures forever.

You go before us, and you follow close behind us. You are present
in places where our congregation gathers,
in our homes, and in our hearts.
Your Spirit fills us with songs of thanksgiving
and you place upon our lips sweet alleluias to your name.

You, O God, continually bless us with a love that endures forever.

To you we give praise! To the One who creates order from chaos,
who inspires all good things, and guides us as a loving parent guides their children,
we celebrate and glorify your name!

You, O God, continually bless us with a love that endures forever.

(Alicia Vélez Stewart)

Not in glorious organ peal 76.76 D (suggested tune St. Kevin UMH #315)

Not in glorious organ peal, not in brassy wonder,
not by timpani revealed in majestic thunder,
speaks the Christ into each room with sonic enchantments;
echoes in an empty tomb, rather, speak his presence.

Not in lilies, white and green, not in golden candles,
not in dresses bright and clean, bonnets, ties, or sandals,
proof of him we hope to meet cannot be discerned there;
a discarded burial sheet conquers hopeless despair.

Not in church lots full of cars, nor large congregations,
not in deafening applause from huge celebrations;
Mary was alone that morn, at Life's affirmation.
Though apart we feel forlorn, Christ bursts isolation.

Not in chocolate, dark and sweet, not in sugar icing,
nor in honeyed, spiraled meat, nor in feasts enticing,
do we find the nourishment that our souls are craving;
but in bread of covenant, loaf of gracious saving.

We may celebrate this feast with abundant treasure,
but our joy is not increased by this fleeting pleasure.
In Christ's rising we locate our awestruck elation;
at the tomb we celebrate our unearned salvation.

(Heather Josselyn-Cranson)