

“FOR THE HEALING OF THE WORLD”: A SERVICE TO CELEBRATE THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

Use for...

- * Devotions for council or adult forum
- * LWF Sunday, October 6
- * Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), founded in 1947, has 131 member churches in 72 countries representing over 60 million of the world's 64 million Lutherans. In July 2003, the LWF will hold its international Assembly in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. This service lifts up the assembly and its theme, “For the Healing of the World,” a wondrously baptismal and cosmic theme that is revelatory of Christ's work of redemption for all creation.

Suggestions for Gathering

Opening Hymn: WOV 690 “Shall We Gather at the River”

Hymn of Praise: WOV 794 “Many and Great, O God, Are Your Works”

Prayer of the Day:

Gracious God, wonderful Creator, Lord of the nations, in this world of amazing diversity of people and cultures, give us a unity of caring and purpose, so that together we may create communities of healing and peace. Call us and lead us, by your will, boldly to shape the future with hope, so that we may be witnesses to your saving love in all the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Source: *Lutheran World Federation Sunday Worship Aids*

Suggestions for the Word

First Reading: Ezekiel 47:1-12

Psalm: 96:1-13

Second Reading: Revelation 22:1-2

Gospel Acclamation: WOV 788 “Glory to God, Glory in the Highest”

Gospel: Matthew 25: 31-46

Sermon or Reflection (see box)

Hymn of the Day: WOV 668 “There in God's Garden”

The Prayers:

LBW (223) p. 50, (147) Unity p. 39

God our creator, earth has many languages, but your Gospel announces your love to all nations in one heavenly speech. Make us messengers of the good news that, through the power of your Spirit, everyone everywhere may unite in one song of praise; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Almighty and most merciful God, we call to mind before you all those whom it would be easy to forget: the homeless, the destitute, the sick, the aged, and all who have none to care for them. Help us to heal those who are broken in body or spirit, and to turn their sorrow into joy.

Source: *Laudamus* (see page 20)

Offertory Prayer: WOV 761 “Now We Offer”

Suggestion for the Meal

Communion Hymn: WOV 773 “Thuma Mina” (add verse “Heal me”)

Story for Sermon or Reflection:

On the edge of the Sahara Desert in the west African nation of Mauritania, green shoots push through the dry, yellow sand. The Lutheran World Federation has helped the village of Ganki dig a second well for a fruit and vegetable garden. Every day, residents pull buckets of cool water from wells deep in the sand and proudly water and weed around their young plants. Many enjoy drinking the refreshing water themselves! Beans, sorghum and mangos are just some of the plants residents are able to grow in this harsh climate. This fresh food gives residents the nutrients they need, and the chance to grow additional produce to sell for some extra income when the plants mature.

Water covers a third of the land in the water-rich country of Bangladesh. Bangladesh's rivers are a way of life. They are used to transport goods for commerce and trade, and children bathe and play in them every day. They are a source of food, and nourish the country's staple of rice. Lutheran Health Care Bangladesh (relationship to LWF?) uses rivers and streams to transport women who bring much-needed healthcare services to remote villages. The women visit villages once a week on a speedboat and bring with them a doctor or nurse. The women also teach classes in literacy, nutrition, and hygiene, including instructions to wash hands and food with clean water.

In Tanzania, the Lutheran World Federation supports a unique fish farming project. Farmers are given 2-inch fingerlings and instructions on how to construct a fish pond. In just a few months, the ponds not only provide an abundant food supply, but a means of profit as well when there are extra fish to sell. There are more than 5000 ponds in the country now as this idea spreads!

For all humans, water is the source of life. As the Revelations 22:1-2 text makes clear, water is also wondrously baptismal and cosmic, wondrously revelatory of Christ's work of redemption for all creation. We "lap the infinite freshness" of God's healing grace for all the nations.

Suggestions for Sending

Benediction:

Leader: May the love of God enfold us.

People: May the grace of God uphold us.

Leader: May the power of God set us free

People: to love and serve all God's people.

Leader: Now to God, who by the means of the power working in us, is able to do so much more than we can ask or even think; to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus for all times, forever and ever.

People: Amen.

Source: *Worshipping Ecumenically* (see page 20)

Closing Hymn: WOV 755 "We All Are One in Mission"

