



# Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

## ***Worship and Liturgical Resources***

*Prayers and Resources in response to the  
Tornado in Middle Tennessee*

### **A Prayer Petition for the People of Middle Tennessee, from Bishop Kevin Strickland (Southeastern Synod):**

God of steadfast love, though destructive winds swirl around us, shattering our lives, we believe and trust that you are with us, just as you have always walked with your people through storm and strife. Today, we pray for the people of Middle Tennessee. Especially the people of St. John's Lutheran Church, Nashville, and Pastor Rick Roberts who grieve the devastation of their church and for all those who grieve the lives that have been lost and the devastation encountered. Use us to surround them with your love, compassion and mercy. Provide them with caregivers and friends to accompany them on the long road to recovery. Be with all those who weep and mourn during these days, and comfort them with your hope and the promise of resurrection. We pray all these things in the name of Jesus Christ, who gave his life so that we might know that you have the power to bring life from death.<sup>1</sup>

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

### **Litanies**

*These litanies may be used to begin a time of prayer and/or they may also be used in the gathering time of worship.*

O Lord, when we cry out in fear and desperation,

**Raise us up from the ashes and hear us.**

When destruction swallows up our hopes and dreams,

**Raise us up from the ashes and help us.**

When our lives and livelihoods are consumed by flame,

**Raise us up from the ashes and save us.**

When smoke clouds our hope and shrouds our joy,

**Raise us up from the ashes and give us peace.**

In Christ, life springs forth from the dust and ashes.

**In Christ, our lives will be raised from the ashes.**

In Christ, all things will be made new.

**Amen.**

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<sup>1</sup> Reworded from a prayer written by Bishop Michael Girlinghouse, Arkansas-Oklahoma Bishop.

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Holy God, in the wake of devastation,  
**Refresh us with the water of life.**  
In the barren places of ash and dust,  
**Restore us with the water of life.**  
When all we can see is devastation and despair,  
**Renew us with the water of life.**  
In Christ, we are washed clean.  
**We are refreshed.**  
In Christ, we drink from the wellspring of hope.  
**We are restored.**  
In Christ, we dance in the fountain of life.  
**We are renewed.**  
**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

## Readings

Psalm 30	<i>Weeping spends the night, joy comes in the morning</i>
Psalm 42:1-3	<i>My soul thirsts for the living God</i>
Psalm 46	<i>God is our refuge and strength</i>
Psalm 77	<i>Seek the LORD in the day of trouble</i>
Psalm 91	<i>The shelter of the Most High</i>
Psalm 121	<i>I lift up my eyes to the hills</i>
Psalm 140	<i>Deliver me from the hands of the wicked</i>
Isaiah 41:9b-10	<i>Fear not, I am with you</i>
Lamentations 1:1-3	<i>The city weeps bitterly</i>
Lamentations 3:55-58	<i>I call on your name from the depths</i>
Matthew 6:25-34	<i>Do not be anxious</i>
Mark 4:35-41	<i>Jesus stills a storm</i>
Romans 8:31-35, 37-39	<i>Who will separate us from the love of Christ?</i>
Ephesians 2:13-22	<i>Christ is our peace</i>
2 Thessalonians 3:3	<i>The Lord is faithful and will guard you</i>
1 Peter 4:12-13	<i>Enduring fiery trials</i>

## Hymn Suggestions

*The following is a list of suggested hymns that may be appropriate in a variety of communities affected by natural disasters. Pastoral discretion is necessary when determining which hymns might best be used.*

ELW 400	God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind
ELW 404	Come, Gracious Spirit, Heavenly Dove
ELW 405	O Spirit of Life
ELW 612	Healer of Our Every Ill
ELW 618	Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer
ELW 626	By Gracious Powers
ELW 639	When We Are Living (Pues si vivimos)

ELW 698	How Long, O God
ELW 699	In Deepest Night
ELW 701	Once We Sang and Danced
ELW 702	You, Dear Lord
ELW 755	Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me
ELW 767	Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me
ELW 770	Give Me Jesus
ELW 773	Precious Lord, Take My Hand
ELW 778	The Lord's My Shepherd
ELW 794	Calm to the Waves

Additional hymns may be found in the LAMENT, HEALING, and HOPE, ASSURANCE sections of Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymns.

## **Additional Prayers**

### **Time of Crisis, disaster**

God, our refuge and strength, you have bound us together in a common life. In all our conflicts, help us to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, to listen for your voice amid competing claims, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect; through Jesus Christ our Lord. (*ELW Pastoral Care*, page 386)

We pray to you almighty God, in this time of need. You are our refuge and our strength, a very present help in time of trouble. Do not let us fail in the face of these events. Uphold us with your love, and give us the strength we need. Help us in our confusion, and guide our actions. Heal the hurt, console the bereaved and afflicted, protect the innocent and helpless, and deliver any who are still in peril; for the sake of your great mercy in Jesus Christ our Lord. (*ELW Pastoral Care*, pages 386-387)

### **Anxiety, apprehension, fear**

O most loving Father, you want us to give thanks in all circumstances and to lay all our cares on you, knowing that you care for us. Grant that fears and anxieties in this mortal life may not hide from us the light of your immortal love shown to us in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (*ELW Pastoral Care*, page 359)

### **Discouragement, despair**

God our comforter, you are a refuge and a strength for us, a helper close at hand in times of distress. Enable us so to hear the words of faith that our fear is dispelled, our loneliness eased, our anxiety calmed, and our hope reawakened. May your Holy Spirit lift us above our sorrow to the peace and light of your constant love; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. (*ELW Pastoral Care*, pages 360-361)

### **A prayer of Thomas à Kempis**

Write your blessed name, O Lord, upon my heart, there to remain so indelibly graven that no prosperity, no adversity, shall ever move me from your love. Be to me a strong tower of defense, a comforter in tribulation, a deliverer in distress, a very present help in

trouble, and a guide to heaven through the many temptations and dangers of this life. (*ELW Pastoral Care*, page 362)

### **Guidance, protection**

Direct us, Lord God, in all our doings with your most gracious favor, and extend to us your continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name; and finally, by your mercy, bring us to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. (*ELW Pastoral Care*, page 362)

### **Guidance, protection**

O God, full of compassion, we commit and commend ourselves to you, in whom we live and move and have our being. Be the goal of our pilgrimage, and our rest by the way. Give us refuge from the turmoil of worldly distractions beneath the shadow of your wings. Let our hearts, so often a sea of restless waves, find peace in you, O God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. (*ELW Pastoral Care*, page 363)

### **Health of body and soul**

By your power, great God, our Lord Jesus healed the sick and gave new hope to the hopeless. Though we cannot command or possess your power, we pray for those who want to be healed. Mend their wounds, soothe fevered brows, and make broken people whole again. Help us to welcome every healing as a sign that, though death is against us, you are for us, and have promised renewed and risen life in Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen. (*ELW Assembly Edition*, page 84)

### **Those in affliction**

Lord Christ, you came into the world as one of us, and suffered as we do. As we go through the trials of life, help us to realize that you are with us at all times and in all things; that we have no secrets from you; and that your loving grace enfolds us for eternity. In the security of your embrace we pray. Amen. (*ELW Assembly Edition*, page 84)

### **Those in emotional distress**

Merciful God, you give us the grace that helps in time of need. Surround us with your steadfast love and lighten our burden. By the power of your Spirit, free us from distress and give us a new mind and heart made whole in the name of the risen Christ. Amen. (*ELW Pastoral Care*, page 185)

### **Those in trouble or bereavement**

Almighty God, your love never fails, and you can turn the shadow of death into daybreak. Help us to receive your word with believing hearts, so that, confident in your promises, we may have hope and be lifted out of sorrow into the joy and peace of your presence; through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen. (*ELW Assembly Edition*, page 84)

### **Caregivers and others who support the sick**

God, our refuge and strength, our present help in time of trouble, care for those who tend the needs of *[the sick]/[name/s]*. Strengthen them in body and spirit. Refresh them when weary; console them when anxious; comfort them in grief; and hearten them in discouragement. Be with us all, and give us peace at all times and in every way; through Christ our peace. Amen. (*ELW Pastoral Care*, page 191-192)

**Those who mourn**

Compassionate God, give courage and faith to all who mourn, that they may have strength to meet the days ahead with steadfastness and patience; not as those who are without hope, but in thankful remembrance of your great goodness, and in the joyful expectation of eternal life in your presence, with those they love; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. (*ELW Pastoral Care*, page 278)

**Emergency workers**

God of earth and air, water and fire, height and depth, we pray for those who work in danger, who rush in to bring hope and help and comfort when others flee to safety, whose mission is to seek and save, serve and protect, and whose presence embodies the protection of the Good Shepherd. Give them caution and concern for one another, so that in safety they may do what must be done, under your watchful eye. Support them in their courage and dedication that they may continue to save lives, ease pain, and mend the torn fabric of lives and social order; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*ELW Pastoral Care*, page 194)

**Health care providers**

Merciful God, your healing power is everywhere about us. Strengthen those who work among the sick; give them courage and confidence in all they do. Encourage them when their efforts seem futile or when death prevails. Increase their trust in your power even to overcome death and pain and crying. May they be thankful for every sign of health you give, and humble before the mystery of your healing grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*ELW Pastoral Care*, page 194)

**Recovery from sickness**

Almighty and merciful God, you are the only source of health and healing; you alone can bring calmness and peace. Grant to us, your children, an awareness of your presence and a strong confidence in you. In our pain, our weariness, and our anxiety, surround us with your care, protect us by your loving might, and permit us once more to enjoy health and strength and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen. (*ELW Pastoral Care*, page 196)

**Recovering from Trauma**

Our Lord and our God, grant us grace to know your love in whatever we face. Give us patience and thankfulness even in our pain, anxiety, or loss; and move us with compassion and tenderness for our afflicted neighbors; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Out of the darkness we cry to you, O God. Enable us to find in Christ the faith to trust your care even in the midst of pain. Assure us that we do not walk alone through the valley of the shadow, but that your light is leading us into life; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. (*ELW Pastoral Care*, page 188)

## Lamenting a dread of death

With Martha and Mary of old we cry out:  
We grieve when our loved ones die.  
Death attacks us; it shocks us all.  
O God, where are you when death comes near?  
We fear to die unprepared, and we dread the end of self.

*A Kyrie or a Trisagion may be sung.*

Hear us, O God: **Hear us, O God.**  
Show yourself, O God: **Show yourself, O God.**  
Give us your life: **Give us your life.**

*A time of silence may be kept.*

Hear these words, and receive their power:  
God the Father formed us as creatures who live and love and die.  
God the Son lived a human life and joined us in death.  
God the Spirit holds us in the eternal body of Christ.  
Thanks be to God: **Thanks be to God.**

## Lamenting a sense of despair

With Job of old we cry out:  
Everywhere the innocent suffer.  
Our desires and efforts achieve us little.  
O God, are you good, yet do nothing to help us?  
Our answers have holes, and we fall through.

*A Kyrie or a Trisagion may be sung.*

Hear us, O God: **Hear us, O God.**  
Show yourself, O God: **Show yourself, O God.**  
Give us your life: **Give us your life.**

*A time of silence may be kept.*

Hear these words, and receive their power:  
The majesty of God the Father undergirds all that is.  
The mercy of God the Son accepts our despair.  
The comfort of God the Spirit embraces us in communities of care.  
Thanks be to God: **Thanks be to God.**

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## *Evangelical Lutheran Worship Occasional Services for the Assembly*

### **Remembering Those Who Have Died**

*Congregations may find it appropriate to remember those who died. The following rite has been adapted to be included in the Sunday worship of the assembly. The rite may be used at the gathering, after the hymn of the day or after the prayers of intercession.*

*For an extended order of worship to be used as a separate worship service see Occasional Services for the Assembly, page 344.*

*The leader begins with these or similar words.*

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the source of all mercy and the God of all consolation,  
who comforts us in all our sorrows  
so that we can comfort others in their sorrows  
with the consolation we ourselves have received from God.

On this somber day, we trust in the expectation of the resurrection to eternal life,  
as we remember this day those who died in the Middle Tennessee tornado  
and who now rest from their labors,  
especially those family members and friends who are dear to us.

Let us pray.

O God, we remember with thanksgiving  
those who have loved and served you on earth, who now rest from their labors,  
especially *(here individual names of the community may be read or a general statement may be used.)*

Keep us in union with all your saints,  
and bring us with them to the joyous feast of heaven;  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**