

Gospel

Proclamation



Every disaster is different but the Word of the Lord endures forever. In spite of the devastation caused by natural disasters and the atrocities brought about by man-made ones, the preaching of the Gospel continues. It is at these times that pastors and people alike are confronted with the difficult, sometimes impossible realities that have been brought about in one way or another by sin.

Many people who have never been interested in the church before may come seeking answers as to why something so terrible could happen. It can be a great opportunity to clearly confess the comfort of the resurrection, the great Gospel of Jesus Christ, which moth, rust and disasters can't destroy.

There also can be incredible pressure for a pastor to participate in so-called "civic events." To address this challenge, we simply commend to your study the 2004 LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations' document called, "Guidelines for Participation in Civic Events." In summary, if an event is "overwhelmingly secular" then pastors "are free to participate, and perhaps to pray or offer a message." However, if these events are conducted in such a way as to give the impression that those present share common religious beliefs then "participation is to be avoided." Furthermore, "If such an event were to

involve joint prayer or worship with adherents of non-Christian religions ... LCMS pastors may not participate." When in doubt, an open dialogue with your ecclesiastical supervisor would be fruitful.

Fortunately, during times of disaster, most of these cases can be avoided altogether with a quick and timely response on behalf of the individual congregation or perhaps even an entire circuit. Below you will find resources for special worship services that congregations may use in times of disasters.

A Brief Service of the Word During Disaster Response

Do not hesitate to invite people to come together for the following brief service. You may be amazed at how many come and the great comfort this service can provide to your members and the community. The service may be used as a "prayer vigil" hosted in your sanctuary. It also may be adjusted accordingly for use in the field as on-site volunteers and/or affected families gather. Also, feel free to follow shortened versions of the many services found in the *Lutheran Service Book* with the Propers included here for your convenience. If used in the field, we encourage you to print it out, so it can be taken home by the attendees for continued devotional use.

Invocation

✠ ✠ ✠ In the name of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit. ✠ ✠ ✠

Psalm (Select one of the following and shorten
if necessary. Also feel free to speak responsively
if able.)

Ps. 4:1-3, 8	Answer me when I call, O God
Psalm 5	Let all who take refuge in you rejoice
Psalm 6	O Lord, deliver my life
Psalm 11	In the Lord I take refuge
Psalm 23	The Lord is my shepherd
Ps. 27:1, 3-14	He will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble
Ps. 31:1-5	Into your hand I commit my spirit
Ps. 42:1-6a	I shall again praise God
Psalm 46	God is our refuge and strength
Ps. 77:1-2, 7-15	In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord
Psalm 91	My refuge and my fortress
Psalm 121	My help comes from the Lord
Psalm 130	Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord

Scripture reading (Select one or more of the
appropriate passages found below.)

Job 19:23-27	I know that my Redeemer lives
Is. 25:6-9	He will swallow up death forever
Matt. 11:28-30	I will give you rest
John 11:17-27	I am the resurrection and the life
John 14:1-6	Let not your hearts be troubled
Rom. 5:1-8	Suffering produces endurance
Rom. 8:1, 31-35, 37-39	If God is for us, who can be against us
Rom. 14:7-9	He is Lord of the dead and the living
2 Cor. 1:3-4	Comforts us in all our afflictions

2 Cor. 4:16-18	Affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory
1 Thess. 4:13-14	We do not grieve as others do
Titus 3:4-8a	He saved us according to his own mercy
1 Peter 1:3-7	Trials test the genuineness of faith
1 Peter 4:12-13	Christ shares in your fiery trial

Brief meditation on the reading

Prayers (Select an appropriate prayer from the list
offered at the end of this service.)

The Lord's Prayer

Hymns (See the list below for suggestions.)

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God (*LSB* 656, 657)
Entrust Your Days and Burdens (*LSB* 754)
Have No Fear, Little Flock (*LSB* 735)
I Know That My Redeemer Lives (*LSB* 461)
I Leave All Things to God's Direction (*LSB* 719)
I Am Jesus' Little Lamb (*LSB* 740)
Jesus Lives! The Victory's Won (*LSB* 490)
Jesus, Refuge of the Weary (*LSB* 423)
Let Me Be Thine Forever (*LSB* 689)
Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide (*LSB* 585)
Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word (*LSB* 655)
Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart (*LSB* 708)
My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less (*LSB* 575, 576)
Oh, How Great is Your Compassion (*LSB* 559:1-3)
O God, Our Help in Ages Past (*LSB* 733)
Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me (*LSB* 761)
Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted (*LSB* 451)
When in the Hour of Deepest Need (*LSB* 615)
Disaster Response Hymns (See Appendix,
Pages 150–161)

Benediction/blessing

Announcements (Share the next time you
gather for worship, any additional news, etc.)



Prayers

In time of disaster

Have mercy, most merciful Lord, on all those who suffer in this time of disaster. In Your mercy and according to Your will, supply their physical needs, give them hope and comfort in the midst of their distress, and grant them faith in the One who suffered for us, Jesus Christ. Guide, equip and strengthen all who work to bring healing and relief. Swiftly restore civil order and peace. Use this time and these events to humble us before You, to lead us to repent of our sin, and to seek Your mercy and love, which never fails; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

After a catastrophe

Almighty God, merciful Father, Your thoughts are not our thoughts and Your ways are not our ways. In Your wisdom You have permitted this disastrous fire/flood/earthquake/plane crash/terrorist attack/other to befall us. Keep name(s) and all of us from despair and do not let our faith fail us but sustain and comfort us. Direct all efforts to attend the injured, console the bereaved and protect the helpless. Deliver any who are still in danger and bring hope and healing that we may find relief and restoration; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (Pastoral Care Companion [PCC], Concordia, St. Louis, 2007, Page 515.)

During an epidemic or ongoing stress

Almighty God, heavenly Father, give us grace to trust You during this time of distress. In mercy put an end to the epidemic/plague/other that afflicts us. Grant relief to those who suffer and comfort all who mourn. Sustain all medical personnel in their labors and cause Your people ever to serve You in righteousness and holiness; through Jesus Christ Your Son, our Lord. Amen (PCC 515).

For children in crisis

Father in heaven, You see Your children growing up in a sinful and corrupt world. Give name(s) strength to remain steadfast in his/her/their holy faith and keep him/her/them in Your tender care. Show him/her/them the truth of Your Word, shield

him/her/them from all evil and lead him/her/them in the way he/she/they should go; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen (PCC 386).

As we mourn those who have died

Dearest Father, death has robbed us of those we love. Your promise of the resurrection gives us hope, but our hearts feel torn and our spirits feel empty as the dearest memories now bring the deepest pain. We need Your peace. Give us the strength that sustained You in the death of Your only Son that we may have strength in our days, purpose in our calling and comfort in our afflictions. Gather our loved ones into Your arms that we may be reunited one day, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son. Amen.

Following an act of terrorism or persecution

Gracious God, heavenly Father, You know the shock and sorrow that the events of these days have spread across the land. We are helpless before the evil that afflicts us and therefore cry out to You for comfort, shelter and protection. Mercifully embrace the frightened in Your love, empower the weak with Your strength, restrain the wicked by Your might and preserve the righteous in Your grace, giving us Your peace and turning tragedy to triumph; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (PCC 515)

For comfort

Dearest Jesus, during these days we may feel like no one understands our needs, anxieties or heartache. Only you know the depths into which we have plunged; only You can reach us, sustain us and lift us up. We pray that you, who forsook comfort for the cross, would not forsake us but would gather us to Yourself and hold us fast, that we may know Your lasting comfort and peace. Amen.

For strength

Lord Jesus, You came to earth as a helpless child, setting aside the fullness of Your power to redeem frail humanity. You know the weakness of our mortal flesh through Your own suffering and death. Our afflictions drain us of energy and empty us of enthusiasm. According to Your Word, perfect Your power in our weakness, support us in Your mighty arms and grant us strength to follow where You lead and to live according to Your Father's will; for You live and reign with Him and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

For protection from despair

Heavenly Father, God of hope, protect me from all thoughts of hopelessness and despair. So much has gone wrong and help seems so far off. Open my eyes to always see Your never failing love in Jesus Christ. Please place before our eyes the never-failing love of Jesus, which we see in His suffering and death on the cross in our place. Allow us to always remember that You love us beyond measure. In every darkness and difficulty, help us to trust You and Your promises, so that we may live in hope. Amen.

Called to suffering

Lord Jesus Christ, You have promised that You would not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear. Right now we are suffering greatly, we have lost much and our lives seem turned upside down. It is hard to see any good that may come out of this. But allow us to know that You have called us to endure this pain and that You truly will not allow us to be left alone. You will not allow us to fall into despair. Give us strength right now to endure what we are facing, fulfill Your promise before us and before our eyes that You truly will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear but, through Your Son Jesus, Who will always provide the right measure of comfort, strength and consolation during these days. Amen.

Loss of home

O Lord, my house in this world is gone. Gone is the earthly roof over my head, gone are the walls that protected me, surrounded me and gave me security. Gone are all the possessions and reminders of my past. I ache knowing that I have been uprooted and thrown about so greatly. Grant me shelter for my physical body. Comfort me by Your dear Son Jesus that my confidence may rest in the shelter He is for me. Allow me to find peace, knowing that You are my eternal dwelling place. You are my mansion prepared for me in heaven. If it be Your will, let my home be rebuilt and in all things, allow me to be content. Amen.

For loss of daily work

O Lord, You find pleasure in our labors. Ever since creation You blessed the work of our hands and the

sweat of our brow. Be with us as we struggle with unemployment, financial worries and the loss of purpose in our life. We pray that You would restore all of us speedily to gainful employment so that we may honor You through our vocations. Until then, do not allow false pride to prevent us from accepting the assistance and generosity of others. Through this receiving, allow us to see what it means to truly rely upon You for all things. Amen.

For rescue workers

Merciful father, we commend to Your keeping all who work to bring rescue and relief especially names. Give them courage in danger, skill in difficulty and compassion in service. Sustain them with bodily strength and calmness of mind that they may perform their work to the well-being of those in need so that lives may be saved and communities restored; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen (PCC 516).

Additional resources may be found in the *Pastoral Care Companion* (Concordia, 2007), *Lutheran Service Book: Agenda* (Concordia, 2006) and at lcms.org/disaster.