

Gathering Rite for the Reopening of Church Buildings Diocese of Algoma

GATHERING

Greeting and Opening Dialogue

Presider: Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
People: **And blessed be God's Kingdom, now and for ever.**

Presider: I was glad when they said to me,
People: **'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'**

Presider: Happy are they who dwell in your house, O Lord!
People: **They will always be praising you.**

If a land acknowledgement is included in the liturgy, it is offered here.

Then the Presider continues, in these or similar words:

We have longed for this day when we would be able, once again, to gather together around the Table of the Lord. Our act of gathering is the primary liturgical symbol of what God intends for the whole world, gathering all people to a rich feast, gathering all from the ends of the earth into the Kingdom. Therefore, this is a moment of great joy.

However, today is also a solemn occasion. For we know the risk and challenge, suffering and fear prompted by the current pandemic remain. Therefore, as we gather once again, let us also call to heart and mind those impacted most deeply by the COVID-19 virus, longing for that day of which our gathering here is a foretaste.

The Presider, or another leader, may say the entrance litany, being sure to pause after each remembrance so the congregation may call to mind those named. Local circumstance may suggest others to be remembered. The congregation responds with the text in bold print.

As you gather us together, O Christ,
may we remember and give voice
to those most affected by the novel coronavirus.

Those who are or have been infected;

elders, and all with conditions that put them at risk;

those who are quarantined or sheltering in place;

the grieving who long for your consolation;
those struggling with anxiety or fear;
families with children home from school,
or concerned about children returning to school;
loved ones separated by distance or quarantine;
all who have lost their jobs or are laid off;
small business owners
in danger of losing their livelihood;
prisoners, people in homeless shelters,
and all in confined or crowded situations;
those in desperate need of shelter and food;
Gather us in, O Christ.

**Holy God,
holy and mighty,
holy immortal one,
have mercy upon us.**

As you gather us together, O Christ,
may we remember and give voice
to those supporting the common good,
particularly those serving the most vulnerable.

Nurses, doctors, and all health-care providers,
hospital and care facility workers;
grocery and drugstore workers,
delivery, postal, and public transportation workers;
restaurant staff and others in food service;
sanitation workers and cleaning staff;
police, firefighters, and all first responders;
Social Workers, shelter employees;

researchers and scientists pressing forward
to understand the virus, develop treatments, and create a vaccine;

regional health units,
and health authorities serving at the national and provincial levels;

government officials and civic leaders in every nation and country,

Gather us in, O Christ.

**Holy God,
holy and mighty,
holy immortal one,
have mercy upon us.**

As you gather us together, O Christ,
we anticipate the great day
when all will be gathered into your Kingdom,
and we remember those who died during or as a result of this pandemic.

Presider: Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord,
People: **And let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Presider: May their souls, and the souls of all the departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
People: **Amen.**

Collect of the Day

Presider: The Lord be with you.
People: **And also with you.**

Presider: Let us pray.

*After a moment of silence, the Presider says the Collect of the Day. At the conclusion of the prayer, the people respond, **Amen.***

Notes: It is not necessary to print the whole of this litany for every congregant. Bulletins or projections only need to provide text for the opening dialogue, the Trisagion (with the Presider's cue and/or the opening and close of each section so people know when to respond), and the text for the Requiem Aeternam.

It is appropriate that prayers and thanksgivings for the Archbishop, other church leaders, and those who continued ministries to the vulnerable on our behalf during such a difficult time (national, provincial, diocesan, and parish) be offered in the Prayers of the People.

If you are celebrating the Holy Eucharist, and using one of the fraction sentences in the BAS for the Breaking of the Bread, #3 is recommended for its emphasis on God's gathering work in Christ.