

Psalm 24

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it;
For He founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the waters.
Who may ascend the hill of the LORD ?
Who may stand in his holy place?
He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by
what is false.
He will receive blessing from the LORD
and vindication from God his Saviour.
Such is the generation of those who seek him,
who seek your face, O God of Jacob.
Lift up your heads, O you gates;
be lifted up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The LORD strong and mighty,
the LORD mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O you gates;
lift them up, you ancient doors,
That the King of glory may come in.
Who is he, this King of glory?
The LORD Almighty,
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The ENC Prayer

Lord our God,

We stand before you as a family, as a family of communities, brought together by the power of your love. We thank you for your wisdom and providence, calling our communities into your service.

You are the source of all we have, and are, and even hope to become. Without you we can do nothing. Pour out your grace into our hearts that our passion for you may be renewed always.

Through your Spirit enrich us with your gifts, so that we may carry your presence to the world: in teaching, preaching, healing ministries and works of reconciliation.

Father, you are faithful forever, in your mercy help us to be faithful to you, to our giftings, to our callings, to our communities, to our Churches. Make us one in mind, heart and love that others may see our unity and know that you are the true God.

Give us wisdom and perseverance to continue the race until the Bride of your Son is adorned in beauty for the wedding feast of the Lamb, where we may rejoice together with you in heaven for all eternity.

AMEN!

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AMEN!



Why do we in ENC celebrate the opening of The Lords Day?
Johannes Fichtenbauer

In some of our communities and at our ENC international gatherings it is our custom to welcome the Lord's Day (Sunday) on Saturday evening. During this "Lord's Day Celebration" we use certain aspects of Jewish liturgy. Why?

1. The Shabbat opening ceremony at home on Friday night has always been the high point of a Jewish family's week. This tradition of welcoming the "Seventh Day" has been an ongoing ritual for the Jewish people over many centuries of migration and being separated from their homeland. Jewish children are introduced through this ceremony to the basics of biblical faith in the God of Israel. Through songs, symbolic acts, prayers and readings they are reminded each week of God's love and faithfulness to them as a people and they are invited to participate in the very nature of their Creator and Redeemer. After what was for many a week of hard

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work and struggles, the words and symbols of this celebration help them to understand that we are all called to enter into God's rest and eternal peace. The ceremony proclaims that in the future not only we human beings are invited to this rest, but also all of creation. In this sense the weekly Sabbath celebration has a strong eschatological emphasis.

2. When we in ENC use this Jewish model of welcoming the Lord's Day we unite ourselves with the Jewish people being fully aware of the inseparable relationship between them and us Gentile believers.
 - We confess that our Christian faith is deeply rooted in the salvation history which is inseparable from the history of Israel.
 - We confess that God has never revoked his eternal covenant with Israel even when the large majority of the Jewish nation was (and is yet) hindered from recognising Yeshua as their Jewish Messiah and King. We believe that the covenant is still valid and so are the promises to the patriarchs and the revelations given to the prophets. We know that Israel will still be the central element as the eschatological future unfolds.
 - As Gentile believers from many nations we confess our redemption through the Messiah of the Jews, Yeshua of Nazareth, Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.
 - We confess that our place in salvation history has been granted to us through being grafted into the "olive tree" of Israel (Rom 11), and by us spiritually becoming a member of God's Covenant People Israel through our faith in Christ and through baptism.
 - When we perform this ceremony we utilize many elements of the Jewish Shabbat ritual in the same way

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that all Gentile Christians use Hebrew words in their prayers (ie. “Hallelujah”, “Hosanna” and “Amen”). In doing so, we proclaim that our Christian faith is built on Jewish foundations.

- Jesus was a Jew. Mary was his Jewish mother.
- The apostles were all Jewish men.
- These apostles preached a typical Jewish Gospel based on their Jewish faith and the Hebrew Bible – the “First Testament”.
- Our church liturgy and much of our church life is built on this Jewish heritage.

3. Nevertheless our “Lord’s Day Celebration” is not just a copy of the classical Jewish Sabbath liturgy. We pray as Christians and not as Orthodox Jews. As Christians we may use Jewish liturgical elements, but we pray and believe according to our faith in Christ Jesus, like the Jewish apostles did in the First Century and as the Messianic Jews do today.

- We celebrate Sunday as the “Lord’s Day” and not the “Shabbat” (Saturday). We do this because the day after the end of Shabbat is the day of the resurrection of Christ, the “eighth day”, the “first day of the new creation”. Ancient Christian tradition tells us that Sunday actually begins on Saturday evening.
- We celebrate Jesus Christ as the fulfilment of all desire for redemption. Through the cross and Jesus’ resurrection we now can confidently look forward to the rest and peace that is alluded to in the Jewish Shabbat.
- Our Lord’s Day Celebration is derived from the text of the Shabbat Celebration used by “Messianic” Jews. These are Jews who fully embrace the deity of Jesus,

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the Messiah of Israel. Their Messianic faith is centered on the confession of the apostolic Mother Church of Jerusalem and the faith of the apostles as it is expressed in the Apostolic Creed.

4. We celebrate the opening of the Lord's Day as remembrance of our redemption and as a reminder that all of our faith is oriented around the Second Coming of Jesus the Messiah. The paragraph § 674 of the CCC clearly mentions that the eschatological hope for us, our Church, and for the world will directly be linked to the holy moment, when the Jews as a whole nation will discover in "Jesus Christ" their Jewish brother (cf. Joseph and his brothers in Gen. 45) and will faithfully welcome him as their Messiah and King (Zach. 12:10). The conversion of Israel will be a precursor of the Second Coming of Christ. In this sense our Lord's Day Celebration is also a moment of fervent intercession for this eschatological event to take place among the Jewish people.
5. The ritual of the ENC Lord's Day Celebration has absolutely nothing to do with the celebration of the Eucharist. None of the symbols has a parallel to The Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Even when the prayers mention the gift of salvation through the cross of Christ and His resurrection, there is absolutely no proclamation of the "real presence" of Christ over the elements of bread and wine. Nevertheless, the Lord's Day Celebration in our "family" is a way to prepare those who will be gathering for the Eucharist, the centerpiece of each Sunday, the Lord's Day.

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6. In most cases we use the symbols of the Jewish Shabbat ritual for our own Lord's Day Celebrations.

a. Two Shabbat candles represent the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning of God's history with of the universe (Creation) and the fulfilment of human history (Redemption). By lighting the "flame of creation" the Jewish family gives thanks for the gift of creation, while the flame of redemption should strengthen the hope that all the hardships in life will ultimately be turned into the victory and glory for the Kingdom of God (Rom 8, 18-21).

b. Two loaves of bread represent God's tender and loving care for the needs of our daily life in a physical world under the conditions of being exiled from a lost paradise. At the same time those two breads (Hebrew: Chalot) turn the Sabbath table into a kind of "picnic" or place to rest during the long journey through "deserts" of daily living as we head to a future home of messianic peace as we remember the double portion of daily Manna on the day before Shabbat (Ex. 16,5).

c. The salt is a symbol of the irrevocable covenant between God and His people and a kind of spiritual bridge between every meal in a Jewish home and the former offerings in the time of Tabernacle and the period of the Temple in Jerusalem.

d. The Wine is a symbol of our joy over all the good care and grace of God that we have experienced during the previous week in our families and in our communities. Unlike the Christian practice during the Eucharist to first take the bread and after that the

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cup of wine, during the Shabbat celebration the head of the house first says a blessing over the wine and then over the bread. According to Exodus 20:8-9 there are six days where the daily bread is the symbol of maintenance of life in order to be able to do all our work. On Shabbat there is the primacy of the cup of wine distinguishing this exceptional day of freedom from work, of regeneration, and of joy.

7. By its nature our Lords Day Celebration is a family event. The Jewish people developed a helpful liturgical concept for use within the family. Just as it helped them it could also be for us a good model to introduce our children to central elements of our faith. The content of the prayers we pray, the biblical texts we read and Psalms we sing become more tangible as we perform these symbolic acts.

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The Lord's Day Celebration

Sabbath Liturgy



European Network of Communities

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The Honouring of the Messiah according to John 1:1-14

- M** In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
- A** Through Him all things were made;
and from all that exists,
nothing was made without Him.
- M** In Him was life, and that life was the light of men.
- A** The light shines in the darkness,
but the darkness did not take it in.
- M** Heavenly Father, Eternal God.
Your son is the source of life and the light of the world.
We want to light the Sabbath candles to His glory.
May Your peace, Your heavenly blessing
infuse this celebration. Be gracious to us
and let Your Holy Spirit dwell among us
in ever increasing fullness.
- Merciful Father, continue to safeguard us in Your love.
Make us worthy to follow Your Son, the Messiah,
to obey His word, to be steadfast in love
and faithful in our ministries.
Keep darkness and discouragement far from us
and grant that peace, light and joy will dwell in our
house.
- A** For You are the source of life, and in Your light we see
the light.

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The Lighting of the Sabbath Candles

The mother of the house lights the Sabbath candles and prays with hands held over them in blessing.

M Blessed are You, Lord our God!
On the first day of creation You created the light.
And on the seventh day of creation You rested from all Your work.
You also commanded Your people Israel to rest from all their work on the seventh day.
In identification with Your people Israel we also take this day of rest.
On this day we recall Your Son,
Whom You sent in order to begin the New Creation through Him.
Blessed are You, Lord, our God, King of the Universe,
Who has consecrated us through Your commandments and commanded us to light the candles for the Sabbath.

A Blessed are You forever, Lord, our God!

*At this point Psalms 95 to 99 and Psalm 29 can be prayed.
Afterwards in the Jewish Sabbath ceremony the song of praise "Queen Sabbath" is sung.*

The Welcoming and Consecration of the Sabbath.

F Brothers and Sisters: This is the Sabbath of the Lord, our God.

A Let us welcome this day in joy and peace.

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F Today we leave the concerns of the week behind us in order to glorify our Lord and Messiah Jesus. We rest from our work to worship God and to contemplate the eternal life to which He has called us.

A The Lord Himself is with us, in order to revive us and to strengthen us.

F Let us welcome the Lord into our midst and give Him glory.

A We want to trust in the Lord and count on His redeeming grace.

F Let us receive His light and rejoice in His presence.

A The Lord is our light and our salvation.

F Let us live according to His commandments and walk in His ways.

A His word is a lamp onto our feet and a light onto our path.

F Let us exult in the Lord and praise Him, for His goodness to us is everlasting.

A We rejoiced when they said: Let us go up to the House of the Lord.

F Let us pray: Holy Spirit, we welcome your presence at this celebration. Deepen in us our devotion to the Father. Lift up in us Jesus, the Son of God and the Messiah of

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F Let us pray: Holy Spirit, we welcome your presence at this celebration. Deepen in us our devotion to the Father. Lift up in us Jesus, the Son of God and the Messiah of

Israel. Strengthen our zeal for the kingdom and grant us to live as obedient servants all the days of our life.

At this point there could be a time of praise and personal thanksgiving.

The Sign of Peace

F At this hour the peace of God comes upon us and turns the hearts of brother to brother, sister to sister, parents to their children and children to their parents. This is the hour of reconciliation and entering into the peace of the Lord, when the Lord fills us with a new love for one another and inspires us with a greater dedication to one another.

We greet each other with the words: “Shabbat shalom” –or– “Peace be with You.”

The Blessing of the Wine

F Those who keep the Sabbath as a day of joy should also rejoice in the kingdom. They should be filled with the riches of Your house, as they recognize that You have consecrated this day in memory of the work of creation and the gift of redemption.

A Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of Creation.

The father of the house raises the chalice.

F Let us praise God with this sign of joy and thank Him for the blessings of the past week:

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for health, strength and wisdom, for our life together in our families, in our communities, for our personal growth by temptations and trials, and for the joy which we have received through our work.

The participants may also give thanks in their own words.

F God, You have honoured us by the blessing of our labour and in Your goodness You have consecrated us by the blessing of rest when You gave us the commandment: “Six days shall You toil and do all Your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath for the Lord, Your God.”
Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of Creation,
Who has created the fruit of the vine.

A Blessed are You forever, Lord our God.

The chalice is now passed around for the people to drink from.

F Let us especially thank God today for the salvation which we have received through Jesus, the Messiah. He once came as man into the world in order to free us from sin and the power of death. When he returns in glory he will overcome all injustice and will establish the reign of God on earth forever. Heavenly Father, through Your Son Jesus You have made us Your children.

A We now live with Him through the Holy Spirit and rejoice in the day when we dwell with Him in Your eternal kingdom.

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which You have given us in Your Son Jesus.
We thank You for this day on which You remind us
of His deed for our redemption. We thank You for the
new Creation which has begun in us through Him.
Look graciously upon Your servants and show us Your
glory.
Blessed are you Lord our God, for You have poured out
Your grace upon Your people.

A Blessed are You forever, Lord our God.

*The chalice is passed around again. In the meantime the
father of the house sprinkles salt on the two loaves of Sabbath
bread, raises them and speaks ...*

The Blessing of the Bread

F All eyes are waiting upon You
and You give them nourishment at the proper time.

A You open Your hand and fulfil the yearnings of all living
creatures.

F Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of Creation for the
gift of bread.
Through Your loving providence we have received this
bread, which has become a sign of unity and love among
brothers and sisters.
Just as one loaf of bread comes from numerous grains,
so will we become one body,
when we share our lives with one another in the grace of
the Holy Spirit.
Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of Creation,
Who makes the earth bring forth its bread for us.

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The Meal

The Final Blessing

After the meal a chalice is again filled with wine.

F Let us praise the Lord.

A Blessed be the name of the Lord, now and for eternity.

F Let us praise God, for we have a share in His abundance.

A Blessed be our God, for we have a share in His abundance and we live from His goodness.

F Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of Heaven and Earth! You nourish everything which lives through your unchanging love and mercy.
Through Your kindness we have never lacked nourishment.
Through Your goodness may we never miss any of the necessities of life.
Blessed are you, Lord our God, Who sustains all of Your creatures.

A Blessed be Your Name forever.

F Blessed are You, Lord our God!
Through Your great mercy
You have given birth to us anew
as a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

A Blessed are You forever, Lord our God.

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You have given us an imperishable and unfailing inheritance.
Blessed are You, merciful God.
You have given us a new life in Your Son, the Messiah.

A Blessed be Your Name forever.

F Blessed are You, Lord our God,
for Your mercy on Your people,
who have been called by Your Name
and in whom Your Spirit dwells.
May Your blessing be on Your children,
to whom You have given Your Son.

A Blessed be Your Name forever.

F Unify the Body of the Messiah
in accordance with Jesus' prayer before His death.
Bring all parts of His torn Body together,
so that out of Jews and Gentiles the New Man may come
into being.
Let us contribute to this growing reconciliation.
Let us as a family of communities become a visible sign
of this unity ourselves.

A Blessed be Your Name forever.

F Awaken Your whole people in the power of Your Spirit,
that You may have pleasure in us and we may be
prepared for the Second Coming of Your Son.
Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of Heaven and
Earth!
For You rule, sustain and multiply Your people up to the
present day.

You have given us an imperishable and unfailing inheritance.
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While the chalice is being passed around, the father of the house blesses the family.

F May the Lord bless You and protect You.
May the Lord let His Face shine upon You and be
gracious to You.
May the Lord turn His Face toward You and give You
His peace.

A Amen.

A Blessed be Your Name forever.

While the chalice is being passed around, the father of the house blesses the family.

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A Amen.