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Praise Today!

A JOURNAL OF WORSHIP FOR TODAY,
BASED ON TRADITIONAL CHURCH WORSHIP

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Welcome Back!



Welcome back for another re-incarnation of *Praise Today!* I apologize for the infrequent printings, but finances, lack of submitted material, and time have contributed to the delays of the regularly scheduled publication of this fine newsletter. I have taken this time to review the format and make it fresher, crisper, and easier to read. It is my hope and prayer that you find this publication much improved over previous printings. And again, I beg your co-operation in sharing this

publication with fellow pastors. Free copies are available for display at pastors' conferences.

This publication has been and will always be reader driven. I depend on readers to supply information – either liturgical uses you have witnessed that you thought successfully declared the Gospel or something you have done. Have you written a responsive prayer? Have you penned a hymn? Please feel free to share them with your colleagues in the ministry. We all seek good, fresh, Scripturally-based forms for our worship of our most gracious God.

As always, the purpose of this periodical is to share fresh ideas for Lutheran worship. This publication does not seek to deviate from the common order of worship but to supplement and enhance our worship with fresh uses of the various orders in the liturgy.

This issue looks at using the baptism as a children's devotion that also educates adults. Also included is a Good Friday litany using the suffering servant verses from Isaiah with Paul's admonition to the Philippians. Finally, Luther's morning and evening prayers are set to a litany format. These prayers work well for Morning Worship (Matins) and Evening Praise (Vespers).

It is my hope and prayer that you find these items beneficial and edifying; may they also enrich your worship of our God and Lord.

To God be the glory.

Good Friday Litany

P: Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

C: *Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,*

P: but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

C: *And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross.*

P: See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.

C: *Just as there were many who were appalled at him—his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness—*

P: so will he sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him.

C: *For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.*

P: Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

C: *He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground.*

P: He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

C: *He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.*

P: Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

C: *Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.*

P: But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities;

C: *the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.*

P: We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way;

C: *and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

P: He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth;

C: *he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.*

P: By oppression and judgment, he was taken away, And who can speak of his descendants?

C: *For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the*

transgression of my people he was stricken.

P: He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death,

C: *though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.*

P: Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering,

C: *he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.*

P: After the suffering of the soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied.

C: *by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.*

P: Therefore God exalted him to the highest place

C: *and gave him the name that is above every name,*

P: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

C: *in heaven and on earth and under the earth,*

P: and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is LORD,

C: *to the glory of God the Father.*

P: Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,

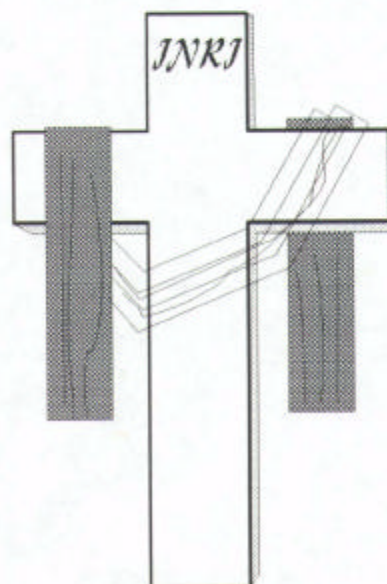
C: *and he will divide the spoils with the strong,*

P: because he poured out his life unto death,

C: *and was numbered with the transgressors.*

P: For he bore the sin of many,

C: *and made intercession for the transgressors.*



Philippians 2:5-11
Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Baptismal Catechism Lessons

...Baptize them in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit...
Teaching them to observe
all things as I have commanded you.



Children love to watch a baptism. They want to be “up front” where all the action is happening, or on the floor by the font if the font is at the back of the church.

Adults themselves are intrigued by baptisms. We also know that catechism lessons from our youth soon get lost in the clutter of our gray matter when we are older.

Many congregations and pastors have mini devotions for children just before the sermon. Here the children gather at the front of the church and hear a special, simplified gospel message.

Rev. James Sonnemann (WELS, Salem on Cramer, Milwaukee) has employed a novel device that addresses all three situations described above.

Having Luther’s explanation of baptism from the *Small Catechism* printed out and inserted into the bulletin, Rev. Sonnemann invited the children to come to the front after the sponsors were in place. Then he proceeded to go through the printed flyer on baptism, asking the adults to follow along and explaining the miracle of baptism to the children. When the brief explanation was over, Rev. Sonnemann proceeded with the Order of Baptism in *Christian Worship*. The children were right there to witness this miracle even as, unseen, the Holy Spirit began to create and strengthen faith in the hearts of the two babies being baptized.

Next time you have a baptism, why not try this novel approach? You can re-educate your congregation (as well as educate visitors) on the sacrament of baptism; the children in your congregation get to observe firsthand and with “front row pews” this miracle taking place; this all fits seamlessly in your worship service.

A baptism is one area where we can certainly practise evangelism. How many visitors do you suppose come to see a baby in the family get baptised? When Rev. Sonnemann used this for his children’s devotion, the children were delighted and I heard many positive comments from members as well as visitors with whom I spoke.

“Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not. For of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

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Luther's Prayers

LUTHER'S MORNING PRAYER

P: In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

C: *Amen*

P: I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have kept me this night from all harm and danger.

C: *Keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please you.*

P: Into your hands I commend my body and soul and all things.

C: *Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.*



LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER

P: In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

C: *Amen*

P: I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have graciously kept me this day.

C: *Forgive me all my sins, and graciously keep me this night.*

P: Into your hands I commend my body and soul and all things.

C: *Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.*

