

Praise Today

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Why Praise Today?

By John L. Hoh, Jr., Editor

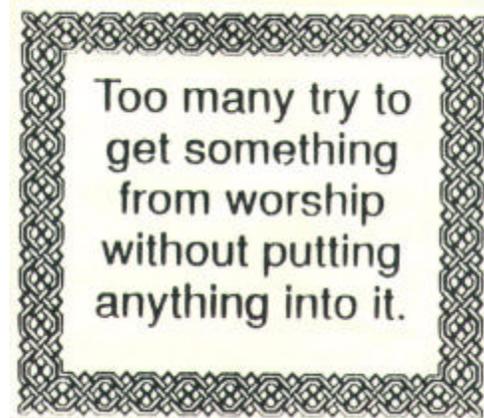
As you get this newsletter in your mailbox, you may wonder what it is exactly and what its purpose is. You may wonder where its coming from. All valid questions, to be sure. But a need exists for this publication. Its purpose, more or less, is a clearinghouse of ideas for our public worship. Ideas expressed are not intended to replace the Order of Service which we use in our worship in the Lutheran Church. It is intended to supply ideas with which pastors and worship leaders can enhance the worship of their flocks. It is my hope that those who subscribe will feel free to share their ideas, forms, hymns, and other worship-related material.

What are the plans for *Praise Today*? Obviously I would like to see it grow and the reader to grow. At first I plan on a quarterly publication of 4-8 pages. If the response warrants it, *Praise Today* can be expanded to a bi-monthly, if not monthly, publication. In a large part the success depends on you, the reader, more than it depends on me, the editor. I know that we all use varying forms in our liturgies, not only for our mid-week Advent or Lenten services and Festival Sundays, but even during the summer or for early morning services. Those ideas are worth sharing. This is the forum for sharing those ideas.

Our Lutheran liturgical heritage is precious. It ought not to be tossed aside. On the other hand, it is not worthy of our “going through the motions.” The propers of the day have a variety—each Sunday has its own theme and focus! That focus, expressed and followed, will help to enrich the worship of our people. To follow through can sometimes be difficult. Hopefully we as brothers in Christ can help each other in this area.

Obviously you may also be wondering what the finances are of this venture. True, to print and mail this publication has a cost burden. This inaugural edition is from my own pocket. To publish and mail 4 issues per year would cost roughly \$2.00 per copy per year. The subscription rate is set at \$2.00 per year.

It is my hope and prayer that this effort is of benefit to you. If you feel as strongly as I do, please subscribe today. If you know someone who would also be interested, please let me know so that I can send that person a copy of this issue.



Responsive Readings

One method of congregational participation is the responsive reading. Sadly, the use of responsive readings has been limited to the psalms and an occasional litany. For consideration I present the Canticles found in The Lutheran Hymnal, pages 120-122. These are portions of Scripture set in a responsive format. One could use these, perhaps, as the prayer after the sermon. Another use is for pastor and congregation to read a canticle responsively in lieu of the pastor reading his sermon text solo. Below are two canticles taken from The Hymnal (Presbyterian Church, 1936). The John 17 (High Priestly Prayer) section would be appropriate for Maundy Thursday; Isaiah 53 for Good Friday.

JOHN 17:3-6, 16-23

This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

That they all may be one;

as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us:

That the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them;

That they may be one, even as we are one:

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one;

And that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

ISAIAH 53:1-7, 10-12

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground:

He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:

And we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities:

The chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;

And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth:

He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief:

When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed,

He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

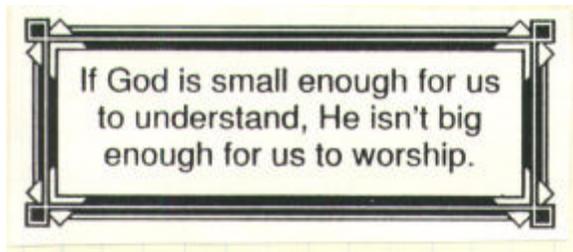
He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied:

By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;

Because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors;

And he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.



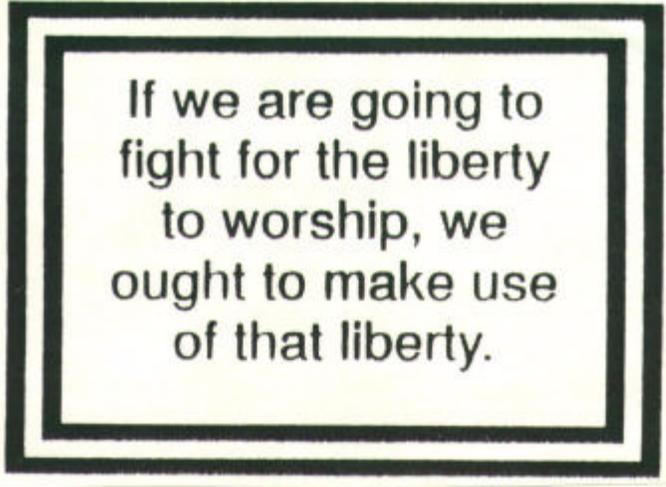
The Word of God Within Me

by Gene Andrus and Jim Dunham

For your consideration I present this hymn co-authored by Rev. Eugene Andrus (Elkton, MI–WELS) and Rev. James Dunham (WELS). It was written for the Mission Seminar at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, WI, held in 1987. The motivation of our evangelism efforts is purely from the blood of the Lamb as the hymn writers so eloquently put it. I personally appreciate the truths contained in the doxology that form verse four. May this hymn edify you and your people at mission festivals or when the Sunday theme is missions.

Possible tunes for use with this hymn: The Lutheran Hymnal numbers 352 or 276. Any 7.6.7.6.D tune will work—there are many listed in The Lutheran Hymnal, Christian Worship, and The Lutheran Hymnary.

1. The Word of God within me
Burns like a lamp divine.
To spread it to the nations
Should be the work called mine.
The Holy Ghost inspired it and
Gave it now to me.
To spread it to the heathen
My work should ever be.
2. This Word will surely show me
The way that I should strive.
has taken me from darkness
And made my heart alive.
To spread this Word to others
Must be our highest call,
To show the love of Jesus
And say he died for all.
3. This Word of God requires us
To teach the earth to sing
The praises of Christ Jesus
The world's most gracious King.
Now is my heart rejoicing
With all believers blessed,
We'll sing His praises on earth
And as His heavenly guest.
4. Praise be to God the Father
For sending us His Son,
And to our Lord and Savior
For work that he has done,
And to the Holy Spirit
Who gave this Word to us.
To spread it to the heathen
Is now our holy trust.



If we are going to
fight for the liberty
to worship, we
ought to make use
of that liberty.

Pioneer Prayer

By Rev. Theodore Bodjanac

Rev. Theodore Bodjanac (Cibecue, AZ, WELS) set the familiar Pioneer Prayer to this responsive format for the Chic-La District Campout in 1991.

ADULTS—Jesus, help our eyes to see

BOYS—Our salvation earned by thee.

ADULTS—Jesus, help our ears to hear

BOYS—Calls for help from far and near.

ADULTS—Jesus, help our feet to go

BOYS—In the way that thou wilt show

ADULTS—Jesus, help our hands to do

BOYS—All things loving, kind and true.

ADULTS—Jesus, may we helpful be,

BOYS—Growing every day like thee.

ALL—Amen.

Confession of Faith (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

By Rev. James Sonnemann

Rev. James Sonnemann (Milwaukee, WI < WELS) used this Confession of Faith for the Easter Festival Service on 11 April 1993. It follows the focus of the day as well as use Paul's firm conviction written to the Thessalonians as we express our faith and the sure hope of the empty tomb.

PASTOR—Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.

PEOPLE—We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

PASTOR—Therefore encourage each other with these words.