



The Shepherd's Staff

'Sing and Make Music to the Lord'

The people of God proclaim the Word of God through music.

By Dan Zager

THE BOOK OF PSALMS is filled with encouragement to sing. "Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth" (Ps.96:1). "Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things" (Ps. 98:1a).

Why do we sing? The very next verse tells us: "The Lord has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations" (Ps. 98:2). We sing in grateful response to this Good News of salvation, given to us freely by a God who wants us to live with Him eternally. We sing in order to proclaim this message of God's redeeming love.

When we think of the people of God joining in proclamation we naturally think of the hymns in our hymnals. Taking their cue from the Psalms. Christian poets through the ages exhort us—we who by faith have seen God's promises fulfilled in Christ—to sing.

Luther on singing

Martin Luther understood that the Christian is compelled to sing. As he comments on Paul's great resurrection chapter, 1 Corinthians 15, Luther writes: "And now St. Paul appropriately concludes with a song which he sings: 'Thanks and praise be to God, who gave us such a victory!' We can join in that song and in that way always celebrate Easter, praising and extolling God for a victory that was not won or achieved in battle by us...but was presented and given to us by the mercy of God. But we must sing of this victory in Christ."

Elsewhere, Luther wrote: "After all, the gift of language combines with the gift of song was only given to man to let him know that he should praise God with both words and music, namely by *proclaiming* [the Word of God] through music..."

For Luther, praising God with music is always connected with proclaiming the Word of God through music. We praise God by proclaiming His Word, by singing the story of His saving acts.

One of his earliest hymns, "Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice" (LW 353, TLH 387), is a model of what it means for a hymn to proclaim the Word of God. Here is a hymn where the Christian congregation joins to proclaim Law and Gospel, to sing the story of God accomplishing salvation for His people.

Newer hymns

Living hymn writers are doing the same thing for the church today. Pastor Stephen P. Starke (see accompanying article) has written an Easter hymn, "All the Earth with Joy Is Sounding" (*Hymnal Supplement 98, 829*), that provides us yet another means of joining Paul's song of thanks for God's great Easter victory. Starke very effectively incorporates Jesus' own comparison of Himself to Jonah (Matt. 12:40): *All the earth with joy is sounding: Christ has risen from the dead! He, the greater Jonah, bounding from the grave, His three-day bed, wins the prize: Death's demise—songs of triumph fill the skies.*

The best hymn writers, whether from the past or the present, provide us a means to proclaim the Biblical and Confessional substance of our faith through congregational singing.

Hymns that 'fit'

Within the Divine Service, congregational hymnody relates to the Scripture lessons appointed for each Sunday ("This Is the Word of the Lord," *The Lutheran Witness*, March '00) and festival in the church year.

The first 120 pages of Lutheran Worship contain both a one-year and three-year series of Scripture lessons for each Sunday in the church year. Pastors and church musicians choose hymns that relate to the lessons for the day as well as the season of the church year. The hymns chosen will provide opportunities for the congregation to join together in proclaiming the Scriptural truths read at the lectern and preached from the pulpit.

The Hymn of the Day

The Hymn of the Day is the chief hymn in the Divine Service, the hymn that relates most closely to the primary theme of that day—most frequently the Gospel lesson. That Scriptural theme will be sounded first through the reading of the Gospel lesson, then proclaimed by the congregation as they sing the Hymn of the Day, and preached and applied to our lives by the pastor in his sermon.

Hymns connect to lessons

No matter what the day of the church year, look for connections between the lessons appointed for the day and the hymns carefully chosen to complement those readings. Notice that the musicians at your church may play instrumental music based on these hymns, providing you another opportunity to direct your thoughts to the main teachings of the day.

They hymns in the Divine Service may or may not always be our "favorite." Perhaps the same might be said for the Scripture readings. Yet we are exhorted to encounter the "whole will of God" (Acts 20:27). Thus we may come to understand that hymn singing is the means by which the congregation adds its voice in proclaiming the specific truths encountered in God's Word each time the people of God gather for worship.

OCTOBER ATTENDANCE AND OFFICIAL ACTS

Church Attendance

	Sat	8:00	10:30	Total
Oct 6-7	51	63	54	168
Oct 13-14	58	59	68	185
Oct 20-21	58	75	74	207
Oct 27-28	38	56	57	151
Comm				224

Transfers/Releases

Transfers In: David & Debra Diemer from St Paul, Ft Dodge

Larry & Shirley Vosberg from St Paul, Ft Dodge

Transfers Out: Jason Fuller and Gracie Maguire to Gloria Dei, Urbandale, IA

Marriages: Dean Fowler & Jeri Beier-Oct 12

LWML NOTES

LWML Board Meeting is Tuesday, December 4 at 1:00 pm.

LWML will be hosting a brunch on Sunday, December 2nd. We will be serving from 9:00 till after late service. Free will offering with proceeds to support our seminary student. There are sign up sheets for food donations and workers on overflow table. After brunch we will decorate the church for Christmas.

LWML Group meeting will be December 11th from 6:00 to 8:00 at Lutheran Family Services, 230 9th Avenue North, Fort Dodge. LFS is furnishing the meal and we will be able to view the nativities throughout. All ladies of the church are invited. If you are planning on going please sign up at the table in the over-flow.

Newsorthy Notes

We are fixing and serving the meal for the Beacon of Hope on Thursday December 6 If you'd like to help cook, we will start at 2 pm that afternoon at the church. Serving is at 5 pm at the Shelter.

We are collecting Box Tops for Education for St Paul School. Please leave them in church office if you have any!

Community Christmas which replaces Operation Christmas will be permanently located at AFES, 712 3rd Street NW. Since this is the first year they are getting a head start on donations. Checks may be made out to AFES and Community Christmas in the memo line and can be sent to the above address. If you have questions or wish to volunteer please email AFESCommunityChristmas@gmail.com, Sarah Hatley, or call Charles Clayton at 955-2969. They are also on Facebook at AFESCommunityChristmas.

Movie and pizza night will be on Friday, December 9 at 5:30 pm.

The signup sheet for catechism parents to provide dessert, and help in cleaning up is on the table in the church overflow. **All** parents need to pick a date or dates!

LFS Christmas Open House will be on Sunday, Dec. 2 from 2-4 pm. Come share some Christmas cheer while touring various nativity sets!

It's that time of year again when the Lord's Cupboard needs our help! The Lord's Cupboard does a great job of helping others in need so let's help by collecting items for the Lord's Cupboard!

C.I.A. Youth and Sunday School

Jr & Sr Christmas Party-Sunday, Dec 2-5-8 pm.

Fill treat bags for Children's Program-Sunday, Dec 16-9:15-10:15 am

Jr & Sr C.I.A.-Sledding & activities @Twin Lakes 2:30pm-7:30 pm.

The Children's Sunday School program will be on Sunday, December 16 at the 10:30 am service.

December 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 5 pm-Divine Worship
2 8 am-Divine worship with HC 9 am-LWML Brunch 9:15 am-SS/Adult Bible Study 10:30 am-Divine Worship Following Service Church Decorating 5 pm-C.I.A. Christmas Party	3 12 pm-LL Preschool	4 8:15 am-LL Preschool 8:30 am Pastor Winkle 9 am-Sewing; 1 pm-LWML Bd. 5:30-Praise Team 6:30 pm-Bd of Ed.	5 8:15 am-LL Preschool 12 pm-LL Preschool 12:30-Advent Service 4:45-Children's Bells 5:30-Meal; Family Singers 6 pm-CC classes 6:15-Shep. Ringers 7-Advent Service	6 7 am-Men's Bible Study 8:15 am-LL Preschool 12 pm-LL Preschool 5 pm-Beacon of Hope meal 5:30 pm – Biblical Christianity Class	7 8:15 am-LL Preschool 12 pm-LL Preschool	8 5 pm-Divine Worship
9 8 am-Divine worship 9:15 am-SS/Adult Bible Study 10:30 am-Divine Worship with HC 3-5 pm-Pastor's Open House 7 pm—Compassionate Friends Candle lighting	10 12 pm-LL Preschool	11 8:15 am-LL Preschool 9 am-Sewing 1:30 pm-Fr. Haven Comm. 4 pm-Ch. Outreach 5:30-Praise Team 6-8 pm-LWML Group at LFS	12 8:15 am-LL Preschool 12 pm-LL Preschool 12:30-Advent Service 12:30-Advent Service 4:45-Children's Bells 5:30-Meal; Family Singers 6 pm-CC classes 6:15-Shep. Ringers 7-Advent Service	13 7 am-Men's Bible Study 8:15 am-LL Preschool 12 pm-LL Preschool 5:30 pm – Biblical Christianity Class	14 8:15 am-LL Preschool 12 pm-LL Preschool	15 5 pm-Divine Worship with HC
16 8 am-Divine Worship 9:15 am-SS/Adult Bible Study/CIA fill bags 10:30 am-Divine Worship with Sunday School program	17 8:15 am-LL Preschool 12 pm-LL Preschool	18 8:15 am-LL Preschool 9 am-Sewing 11:30 am-JOY Group 12 pm-LL Preschool 5:30-Praise Team 6:30 pm—Elders	19 10 am-LL Preschool Christmas Program 10:30 am-Lamplighters 12:30-pm-Advent Service 1 pm-LL Preschool Christmas program 5:30 pm-Meal; Family Singers 6 pm- CC classes 6:15-Shep. Ringers 7:00 -Advent Service 7 pm-Advent Service	20 7 am-Men's Bible Study 5:30 pm – Biblical Christianity Class	21	22 5 pm-Divine Worship
23 8 am-Divine Worship 9:15 am-SS/Adult Bible Study 10:30 am-Divine Worship	24 7 pm-Christmas Eve Worship 11 pm-Candlelight Service	25 9:00 am Christmas Day Worship with HC	26	27	28	29 5 pm-Divine Worship
30 8 am-Divine Worship 9:15 am-SS/Adult Bible Study 10:30 am-Divine Worship	31 7 pm-New Years Eve worship with HC					*Times & dates subject to change.

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Good Shepherd Fort Dodge

Throughout his epistles and his preaching recorded in the Book of Acts, St. Paul refers, in one way or another, to thanksgiving and thankfulness nearly 50 times. Whether vertically toward God, or horizontally toward the neighbor, thanksgiving is a major theme within St. Paul's body of work. What does this mean? It means thankfulness is intrinsic to the life of those baptized into Christ. In other words, giving thanks is what Christians do as they live out their lives in this world.

The problem is that we often forget this. Consider your average, run-of-the-mill, normal day. When you get home, and your parents, your spouse or your children ask about your day, what first comes to your mind? After 99 percent of things went right, went exactly as planned, were enjoyable and blessings, we tend to focus on and remember the 1 percent of things that went poorly, that didn't go as planned, and that were nuisances. We remember the bad things. We focus on discontent. And we fail to give thanks in all circumstances for everything (Eph. 5:20) and to rejoice in the Lord always (Phil. 4:4).

Thankfulness and contentment go together. We are content with things for which we are thankful. St. Paul could be content with having plenty or when in need because He gave thanks to the Lord for all things. He thanked the Lord for those who had prayed for him and listened to his proclamation of the Gospel. He gave thanks for their good works in and for the Church of Christ. He gave thanks for the grace of God in Christ Jesus and found that God's grace was sufficient for him.

So, give thanks for all things and in all circumstances dear brothers and sisters in Christ. For you have been saved from sin, death, and hell by the death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. You have been added to the very family of God in an adoption of grace through Holy Baptism. God is your Father. Our Lord, Jesus Christ is your brother.

But He not only provides for your spiritual well-being, He cares also for this body and life. Your Father in heaven provides food and clothes, house and home, husband, wife, and children. He gives you reason and all your senses. He has given you the raw talents that you have developed into careers. Everything you are and everything that you have is a gift from His fatherly divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in you.

Give thanks for these things. Make a list – every morning if you must. Say them out loud. Sing about them within the congregation of the saints. And remember this: God has given you these things so that you may be of service to those around you – your family, your neighbors, your brothers and sisters in Christ. For to whom much is given; much shall be required (Luke 12:48). *From LCMS Stewardship Ministry*