

# Martin Luther

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*Hymns*

*Ballads*

*Chants*

*Truth*

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## LUTHER AND THE SONG OF THE GOSPEL

One of the greatest chapters in the story of the Reformation of the Church is the one focused on Martin Luther and his hymns. Luther was a gifted musician with a talent for singing, playing the flute and lute, and composing. A great admirer of composers and musicians, Luther lent his support to music and musicians not only with his words of commendation but also his words of encouragement to those who could put song on the lips of believers in Christ.

Such song—in reality, music of every kind—is a gift of God, in Luther's eyes. As a gift from God, music's chief function is proclamation of God's Word and the praise of God, the Creator of the world who sent His Son for the redemption of that world. In support of that purpose, Luther wrote and encouraged others to write hymns for the congregation to sing. The German people at his time did have some hymns or folk music that was used in some connection with the Mass. But it was Luther who would make music an integral part of the worship life of the Church.

The time leading up to Luther's first hymn in 1523 was spent in translating the entire New Testament and a good portion of the Old Testament of the Bible. Time was also spent on reforms in the worship life of the congregations. His work in translation and in worship reform became the seedbed for the flourishing of his hymn writing. From the latter part of 1523 to less than a year later, Luther had produced 24 hymns, nearly two-thirds of the total hymns he wrote. What made such an output possible was the variety of his

resources. Not only because of his translating the psalms but also because of his familiarity with them from his monastery days, the first of his hymns were psalm paraphrases. Other parts of Scripture, especially the canticle of Simeon, the vision seen by Isaiah, and the Ten Commandments, became the foundation for liturgical and catechetical hymns. The rich treasury of Latin hymns yielded several hymns for Luther to translate and recast. The *Leise*, German medieval folk hymns ending with the Greek phrase *Kyrie eleison* (Lord, have mercy), served as another source for Luther either to edit or correct with the addition of some stanzas to the original. When Luther wrote a hymn from scratch, he modeled his work after ballads, carols, or singing games.

No matter the source or the model for his hymns, Luther's ultimate goal is proclamation of the Gospel—the Good News that God the Father sent His Son Jesus Christ into our world to take on our flesh and bone, to suffer and die in our place, and to rise from the grave in order for us to have forgiveness of our sin, freedom from our fear of death, and eternal life with Him. The way to proclaim that Gospel is to proclaim Christ and His work. The hymns of Luther are not about him or his work, nor are they really about us and what we can do. Luther's hymns are about Christ and His saving work on our behalf—and that becomes the basis for the psalmist's "new song," a new song of the believer in Christ as well as the new song taken up by countless Christians since Luther's day.

This collection is by no means absolutely definitive either in the number of Luther's hymns, chants, or ballads, nor in the way his music may be sung. Rather, it is an exploration of the seed of Reformation hymnody and song that continues to bear fruit even in our day.

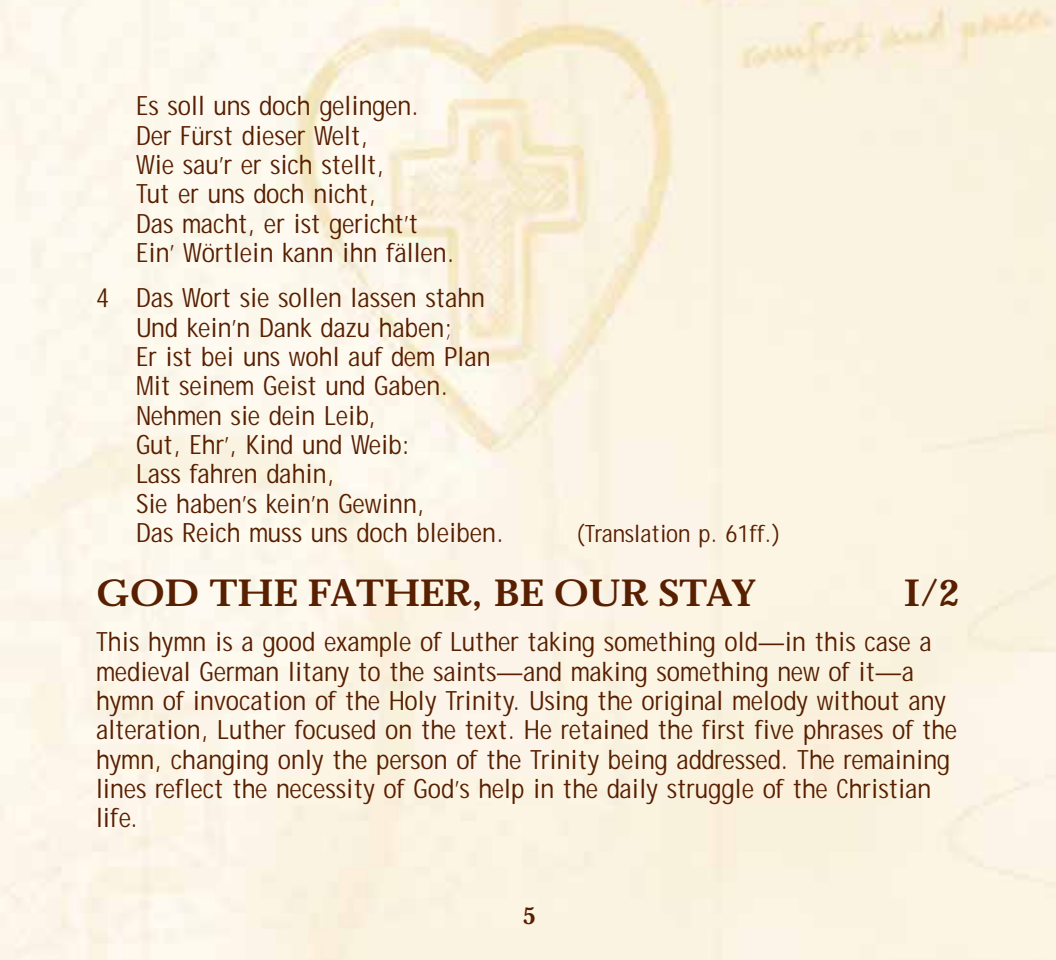
# EIN FESTE BURG

I/1

*Prelude: Ein feste Burg*

*Johann Walter, 1496–1570  
Publisher: Bärenreiter-Verlag, Kassel*

- 1 Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott,  
Ein gute Wehr und Waffen;  
Er hilft uns frei aus aller Not,  
Die uns jetzt hat betroffen.  
Der alt' böse Feind,  
Mit Ernst er's jetzt meint,  
Gross' Macht und viel List  
Sein' grausam' Rüstung ist,  
Auf Erd' ist nicht seinsgleichen.
- 2 Mit unsrer Macht ist nichts getan,  
Wir sind gar bald verloren;  
Es streit't für uns der rechte Mann,  
Den Gott hat selbst erkoren.  
Fragst du, wer der ist?  
Er heisst Jesus Christ,  
Der Herr Zebaoth,  
Und ist kein andrer Gott,  
Das Feld muss er behalten.
- 3 Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär'  
Und wollt' uns gar verschlingen,  
So fürchten wir uns nicht so sehr,



Es soll uns doch gelingen.  
Der Fürst dieser Welt,  
Wie sau'r er sich stellt,  
Tut er uns doch nicht,  
Das macht, er ist gericht't  
Ein' Wörtlein kann ihn fällen.

- 4 Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn  
Und kein'n Dank dazu haben;  
Er ist bei uns wohl auf dem Plan  
Mit seinem Geist und Gaben.  
Nehmen sie dein Leib,  
Gut, Ehr', Kind und Weib:  
Lass fahren dahin,  
Sie haben's kein'n Gewinn,  
Das Reich muss uns doch bleiben.

(Translation p. 61ff.)

## **GOD THE FATHER, BE OUR STAY**

**I/2**

This hymn is a good example of Luther taking something old—in this case a medieval German litany to the saints—and making something new of it—a hymn of invocation of the Holy Trinity. Using the original melody without any alteration, Luther focused on the text. He retained the first five phrases of the hymn, changing only the person of the Trinity being addressed. The remaining lines reflect the necessity of God's help in the daily struggle of the Christian life.

- 1 God, the Father, be our Stay; Oh, let us perish never!  
Cleanse us from our sins, we pray, And grant us life forever.  
Keep us from the evil one; Uphold our faith most holy,  
Grant us to trust Thee solely With humble hearts and lowly.  
Let us put God's armor on, With all true Christians running  
Our heav'nly race and shunning the devil's wiles and cunning.  
Amen, amen, this be done; So sing we alleluia!
- 2 Jesus Christ, be Thou our Stay; Oh, let us perish never.  
Cleanse us, from our sins, we pray, And grant us life forever.  
Keep us from the evil one; Uphold our faith most holy,  
Grant us to trust Thee solely. With humble hearts and lowly.  
Let us put God's armor on, With all true Christians running  
Our heav'nly race and shunning The devil's wiles and cunning.  
Amen, amen, this be done; so sing we alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!
- 3 Holy Ghost, be Thou our Stay, Oh, let us perish never!  
Cleanse us from our sins, we pray, And grant us life forever.  
Keep us from the evil one; Uphold our faith most holy,  
Grant us to trust Thee solely with humble hearts and lowly  
Let us put God's armor on, With all true Christians running  
Our heav'nly race and shunning the devil's wiles and cunning  
Amen, amen, this be done; So sing we alleluia!

*Tr. Richard Massie, 1800–87 alt.*

*Setting by Jan Bender, 1904–94*

*Publisher: Concordia Publishing House*

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D. Mart. Luth.

## COME, GOD CREATOR, HOLY GHOST 1/3

The original source of this hymn was a 9th century Latin hymn attributed to Rhabannus Maurus (c. 735–804). From at least the 11th century the hymn has been included in ordinations and other church rites. Luther translated the text into German, restructuring it into three sections of two stanzas each along with a concluding doxology. Johann Walter, Luther's musical coworker and friend, simplified the plainsong form when he included it in his 1524 collection of polyphonic motets.

Prelude: *Komm Gott Schöpfer, Heiliger Geist* *Johann Walter,*  
1496–1570  
*Publisher: Bärenreiter-Verlag, Kassel*

- 1 Come, God, Creator, Holy Ghost, and visit Thou the souls of men;  
Fill them with graces, as Thou dost Thy creatures make pure again.
- 2 For Comforter Thy name we call, sweet Gift of God most high above,  
A holy Unction to us all, a living Fount, Fire, and Love.
- 3 Our minds enlighten and refresh, deep in our hearts let love burn bright;  
Thou know'st the weakness of our flesh; O strengthen us with Thy might.
- 4 Thou with Thy wondrous sevenfold gifts, the Finger art of God's right hand;  
The Father's Word Thou sendest swift on tongues of fire to each land.
- 5 Drive far from us our wily foe; grant us Thy blessed peace within,  
That in Thy footsteps we may go and shun the dark ways of sin.

- 6 Teach us to know the Father well and Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord,  
That in our hearts true faith may dwell, Spirit of both, aye adored!
- 7 To God the Father, God the Son, who from the dead is ris'n again,  
And God the Spirit, Three in One, be evermore praise. Amen.

*Tr. L. W. Bacon, 1830–1907*

## **A NEW SONG NOW SHALL BE BEGUN** I/4

On July 1, 1523, the infant Reformation saw executed in the Brussels market place Heinrich Voes and Johann Esch, two Belgian Augustinian monks and followers of Luther. Since wandering minstrels and their ballads served as the mass media of the day, Luther wrote this first hymn of the Reformation as a ballad recounting the martyrdom of these witnesses. First appearing in 1523 in broadsheet form, it, along with Luther's tune, was published in Johann Walter's 1524 Wittenberg hymnal.

- 1 A new song now shall be begun,  
Lord, help us raise the banner  
Of praise for all that God has done,  
For which we give Him honor.  
At Brussels in the Netherlands  
God proved Himself most truthful  
And poured His gifts from open hands  
On two lads, martyrs youthful  
Through whom He showed His power.

- 2 One was named John, a name to show  
He stood in God's high favor.  
His brother Henry, well we know,  
Was salt of truest savor.  
This world they now have left behind  
And wear bright crowns of glory.  
These sons of God had fixed the mind  
Upon the Gospel story,  
For which they died as martyrs.
- 3 From where the Foe in ambush lay,  
He sent to have them taken  
To force them God's Word to betray  
And make their faith be shaken.  
Louvain sent clever men, who came  
In twisting nets to break them.  
Hard played they at their crooked game,  
But from faith could not shake them.  
God made their tricks look foolish.
- 4 Oh, they sang sweet, and they sang sour,  
They tried all their devices.  
The youths stood firmly like a tow'r  
And overcame each crisis.  
It filled the Foe with raging hate  
To know himself defeated

By these two lads, and he so great.  
His rage flared high, and heated  
His plan to see them burning.

5 Their cloister-garments off they tore,  
Took off their consecrations;  
All this the youths were ready for,  
They said Amen with patience.  
They gave to God the Father thanks  
That He would them deliver  
From Satan's scoffing and the pranks  
That make men quake and shiver  
When he comes masked and raging.

6 The God they worshiped granted them  
A priesthood in Christ's order.  
They offered up themselves to Him  
And crossed His kingdom's border  
By dying to the world outright,  
With ev'ry falsehood breaking.  
They came to heaven pure and white;  
All monkery forsaking,  
They turned away from evil.

7 A paper given them to sign—  
And carefully they read it—  
Spelled out their faith in ev'ry line

As they confessed and said it.  
Their greatest fault was to be wise  
And say, "We trust God solely,  
For human wisdom is all lies,  
We should distrust it wholly."  
This brought them to the burning.

8 Then two great fires were set alight,  
While men amazed did ponder  
The sight of youths who showed no fright;  
Their calm filled men with wonder.  
They stepped into the flames with song,  
God's grace and glory praising.  
The logic choppers puzzled long  
But found these new things dazing  
Which God was here displaying.

9 They now regret their deed of shame,  
Would like to slough it over;  
They dare not glory in their blame,  
But put it under cover.  
They feel their gnawing infamy,  
Their friends hear them deplore it.  
God's spirit cannot silent be,  
But on Cain's guilty forehead  
He marks the blood of Abel.

10 The ashes of the lads remain  
And scatter to all places.  
They rise from roadway, street, and lane  
To mark the guilty faces.  
The Foe had used a bloody hand  
To keep these voices quiet,  
But they resist in ev'ry land  
The Foe's rage and defy it.  
The ashes go on singing.

11 And yet men still keep up their lies  
To justify the killing;  
The Foe with falsehood ever tries  
To give to guilt clean billing.  
Since these young martyrs' holy death  
Men still continue trying  
To say, the youths with their last breath  
Renounced their faith when dying  
And finally recanted.

12 Let men heap falsehoods all around,  
Their sure defeat is spawning.  
We thank our God the Word is found,  
We stand in its bright dawning.  
Our summer now is at the door,  
The winter's frost has ended,  
Soft bud the flowers more and more,

By our dear Gard'ner tended  
Until He reaps His harvest.

*Tr. F. Samuel Janzow, 1913–2001*

*Setting by Carl Schalk*

*Publisher: Concordia Publishing House © 1982*

## **OUR FATHER, WHO FROM HEAVEN ABOVE**

**I/5**

Having completed at least one hymn for each section of the catechism, Luther set out to write a versification of the Lord's Prayer in 1539. Unique to his paraphrase is that almost every stanza is catechetical in form: first, a literal statement of the petition, second, an explanation and application. Though Luther himself wrote a tune for the text, it was never well received. Rather, Schumann's 1539 hymnal uses a revised tune from the Bohemian Brethren. It is uncertain how much Luther was involved in revising the tune.

*Prelude: Vater unser im Himmelreich Johann Krieger, 1651–1735*

- 1 Our Father, who from heav'n above bids all of us to live in love  
As members of one family and pray to You in unity,  
Teach us no thoughtless words to say, but from our inmost heart to pray.
- 2 Your name be hallowed. Help us, Lord, in purity to keep Your Word  
That to the glory of Your name we walk before You free from blame.  
Let no false teaching us pervert; All poor deluded souls convert.

- 3 Your kingdom come. Guard Your domain And Your eternal righteous reign.  
The Holy Ghost enrich our day with gifts attendant on our way.  
Break Satan's pow'r, defeat his rage; preserve Your Church from age to age.

*Interlude:                    Onse Vader in hemelryck                    Nicolas Vallet, 1683–c. 1642*  
*Le Secret des Muses Vol. II, Variation 1*

- 4 Your gracious will on earth be done as it is done before Your throne,  
That patiently we may obey throughout our lives all that You say.  
Curb flesh and blood and ev'ry ill that sets itself against Your will.
- 5 Give us this day our daily bread and let us all be clothed and fed.  
Save us from hardship, war, and strife; in plague and famine, spare our life,  
That we in honest peace may live, to care and greed no entrance give.
- 6 Forgive our sins, Lord, we implore that they may trouble us no more;  
We too will gladly those forgive who hurt us by the way they live.  
Help us in our community to serve each other willingly.

*Interlude:                    Onse Vader in hemelryck                    Nicolas Vallet, 1683–c. 1642*  
*Le Secret des Muses Vol. II, Variation 2*

- 7 Lead not into temptation, Lord, where our grim foe and all his horde  
Would vex our souls on ev'ry hand. Help us resist, help us to stand  
Firm in the faith, a mighty host, through comfort of the Holy Ghost.
- 8 From evil, Lord, deliver us; the times and days are perilous.  
Redeem us from eternal death, and when we yield our dying breath,  
Console us, grant us calm release, and take our souls to You in peace.

- 9 Amen, that is, So shall it be. Make strong our faith in You that we  
May doubt not, but with trust believe that what we ask we shall receive.  
Thus in Your name and at Your Word we say: Amen. Oh, hear us, Lord!

*Tr., F. Samuel Janzow, 1913–2001*

## COME HOLY GHOST

I/6

This hymn has its origins in an old German liturgical antiphon, which in turn was based on an 11th century Latin antiphon for Pentecost. The first stanza of the German antiphon was loved so much by Luther that he amplified it by adding two stanzas. Luther's version, along with the chant-based tune, was printed in two hymn collections in 1524. Throughout the hymn Luther extols the gifts of the Holy Spirit and how that Spirit brings us to faith in Jesus Christ.

- 1 Come Holy Ghost, God our Friend, the fullness of Your graces send  
To fill each faithful mind and heart; Your radiant love to them impart.  
Lord, welded by Your fire and light, men's souls in living faith unite  
And learn to speak a common tongue.  
For this, O Lord, Your highest praise be sung.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!
- 2 O Light divine, Dawn of day, Your Word of life shine on our way,  
Reveal the true God, teach the art to call Him Father from the heart.  
All alien words keep from the throne, that, ruled by Jesus Christ alone,  
We live the faith, walk in the light,  
And trust our gracious Lord with all our might.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

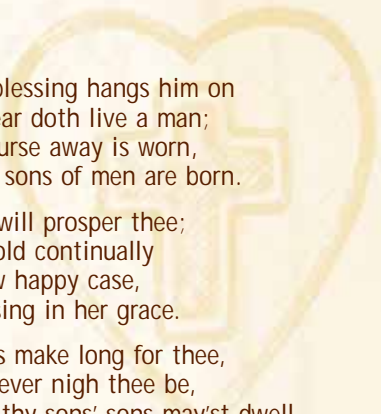
- 3 O Sacred Love, holy Fire, with trust and joy our hearts inspire,  
That loyal servants we remain, despite all tension, trial, and pain.  
The Gospel's pow'r in us ignite, give courage for our faith's good fight  
To take each challenge by God's grace  
Till we, triumphant, stand before Your face.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

*Tr. F. Samuel Janzow, 1913–2001*  
*Setting by Richard Hillert*  
*Publisher: Concordia Publishing House © 1978*

## **HAPPY WHO IN GOD'S FEAR DOTHTH STAY<sup>1/7</sup>**

With the Reformation came the extolling of the married estate as a divine institution. Thus Luther paraphrased Psalm 128 in German and in Latin. Since some of Luther's earliest attempts at writing hymns were psalm paraphrases, it is thought that this hymn was written in 1524. The tune is the one used in Klug's 1533 hymnal.

- 1 Happy who in God's fear doth stay,  
And in it goeth on his way;  
Thine own hand shall thee find thy food,  
So liv'st thou right, and all is good.
- 2 So shall thy wife be in thy house  
Like vine with clusters plenteous,  
Thy children sit thy table round  
Like olive plants all fresh and sound.

- 
- 3 See, such rich blessing hangs him on  
Who in God's fear doth live a man;  
From him the curse away is worn,  
With which the sons of men are born.
- 4 From Zion God will prosper thee;  
Thou shalt behold continually  
Jerusalem's now happy case,  
To God so pleasing in her grace.
- 5 He will thy days make long for thee,  
With goodness ever nigh thee be,  
That thou with thy sons' sons may'st dwell.  
And there be peace in Israel.

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## **IF GOD WERE NOT BESIDE US NOW**

**I/8**

Luther's friend Justus Jonas in 1524 wrote an eight-stanza paraphrase of Psalm 124. In contrast to the smooth-flowing style of Jonas, Luther also undertook the paraphrasing of the same psalm, his being shorter, more rugged, and closer to the text of the psalm. After Luther's version was published in Walter's Wittenberg hymnal of 1524, both his and Jonas' paraphrases were included in early Lutheran hymnals. Walter's tune is the one most associated with this text.

- 1 If God were not beside us now, so Israel is saying,  
If God were not beside us now, our state would be dismaying.

We are a weak and shrinking band looked down upon on ev'ry hand  
By those bent to destroy us.

2 So set against us is their will that, if God's help had tarried,  
They would have ground us in their mill and long since had us buried,  
Like victims of a rolling tide when sudden dark waves inland ride  
To trample all beneath them.

3 Thanks be to God, who did not let their eager jawbones snatch us.  
Like birds our souls escaped their net, no snare of theirs can catch us.  
Their traps are broken, we are free; God stands beside us with the key  
To His good earth and heaven.

*Tr. F. Samuel Janzow, 1913–2001*

*Setting by Richard Hillert*

*Publisher: Concordia Publishing House © 1979*

## IN THE VERY MIDST OF LIFE

I/9

A popular Latin hymn, dating from the 11th century, was the basis for Luther's hymn. The original was a frantic cry for help; Luther's version expanded on this by focusing on the source of all help in any danger, including death. That help is found only in the holy, most righteous, the most mighty, the most merciful God and Savior. Luther used the original first stanza in a recast form and then added two more stanzas to reflect the Christian's confidence in the grace of God through the blood of Christ. Using the original tune, Luther altered it to underscore the text. In 1524 Luther's version of the text and tune were presented in Walter's Wittenberg hymnal.

*Prelude: Mitten wir im Leben sind*

*Johann Ludwig Krebs, 1713–80*

*Publisher: Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden*

- 1 In the very midst of life snares of death surround us;  
Who shall help us in the strife lest the foe confound us?  
Thou only, Lord, Thou only! We mourn that we have greatly erred,  
That our sins Thy wrath have stirred.  
Holy and righteous God! Holy and mighty God!  
Holy and all merciful Savior! Eternal Lord God!  
Save us lest we perish in the bitter pang of death.  
Have mercy, O Lord!
  
- 2 In the midst of death's dark vale pow'rs of hell o'ertake us.  
Who will help when they assail, who secure will make us?  
Thou only, Lord, Thou only! Thy heart is moved with tenderness,  
Pities us in our distress.  
Holy and righteous God! Holy and mighty God!  
Holy and all merciful Savior! Eternal Lord God!  
Save us from the terror of the fiery pit of hell.  
Have mercy, O Lord!
  
- 3 In the midst of utter woe when our sins oppress us,  
Where shall we for refuge go, where for grace to bless us?  
To Thee, Lord Jesus, only! Thy precious blood was shed to win  
Full atonement for our sin.  
Holy and righteous God! Holy and mighty God!  
Holy and all merciful Savior! Eternal Lord God!  
Lord, preserve and keep us in the peace that faith can give.  
Have mercy, O Lord!

*Tr. composite*

# WE PRAISE, O CHRIST, YOUR HOLY NAME

I/10

A one-stanza, pre-Reformation (1370) *Leise* (a vernacular hymn ending with *Kyrie eleison*) became the façade for Luther's Christmas hymn. He added five additional stanzas plus a doxology to explore the meaning of the Incarnation of Christ. The new hymn was probably written for Christmas 1523 and first printed in a 1524 hymnal. The tune most likely is that from the medieval *Leise* original.

*Prelude: Gelobet seist du, Jesu*

*J. S. Bach, 1685–1750*

- 1 We praise, O Christ, Your holy name.  
Truly human child You came,  
From virgin born; this Word is true.  
Your angels are rejoicing, too. Kyrieleis!
- 2 Now in the manger one may see  
God's Son from eternity,  
The Gift from God's eternal throne  
Here clothed in our poor flesh and bone. Kyrieleis!
- 3 The virgin mother lulls to sleep  
Him who rules the cosmic deep;  
This Infant is the Lord of day,  
Whom all the turning worlds obey. Kyrieleis!
- 4 The Light Eternal, breaking through,  
Made the world to gleam anew;

comfort and peace

His beams have pierced the core of night,  
He makes us children of the Light! Kyrieleis!

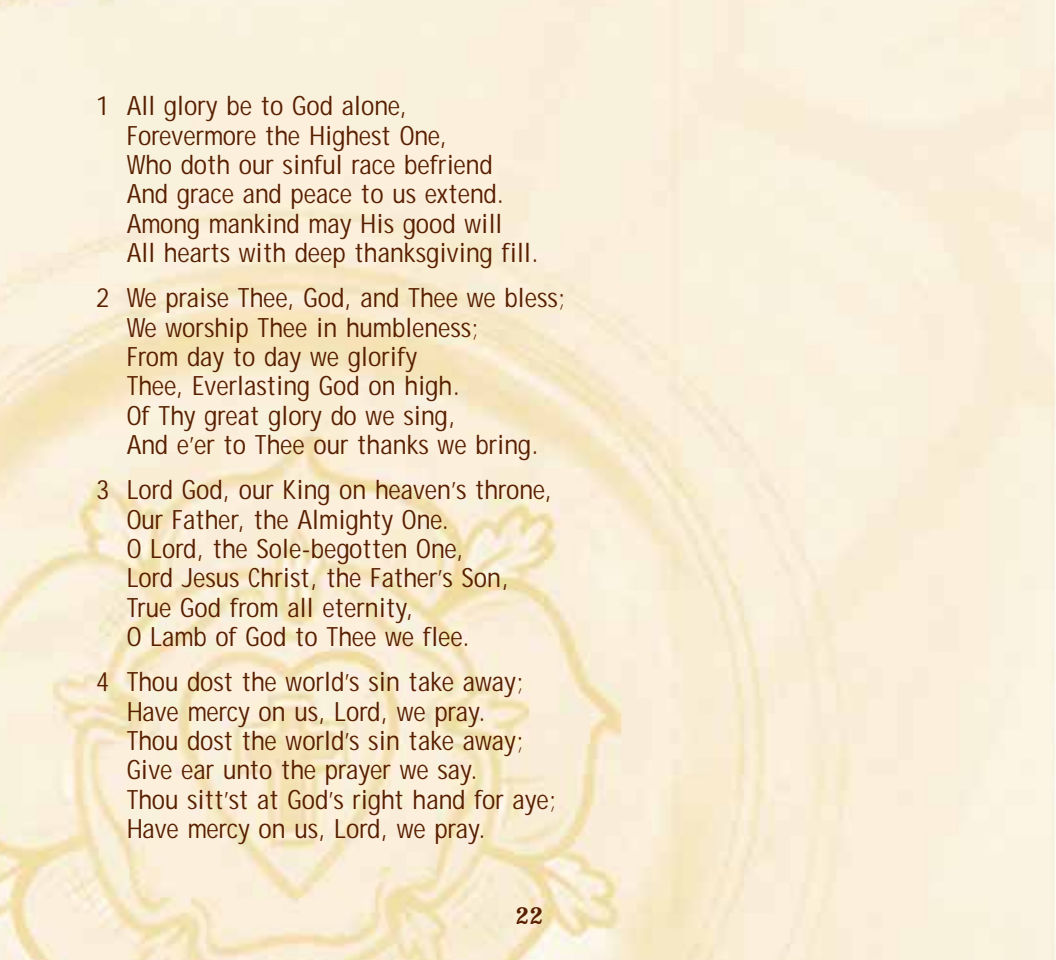
- 5 The Prince, God's very Son, came here,  
Guest among the sons of fear.  
His banner leads us out of woe,  
And to His royal hall we go. Kyrieleis!
- 6 To earth He came so poor to bring  
Great compassion as our King  
That rich in glory we might stand  
With angels in the heav'nly land. Kyrieleis!
- 7 Such grace toward us now fills with light  
Length and breadth and depth and height!  
O endless ages, raise your voice;  
O Christendom, rejoice, rejoice! Kyrieleis!

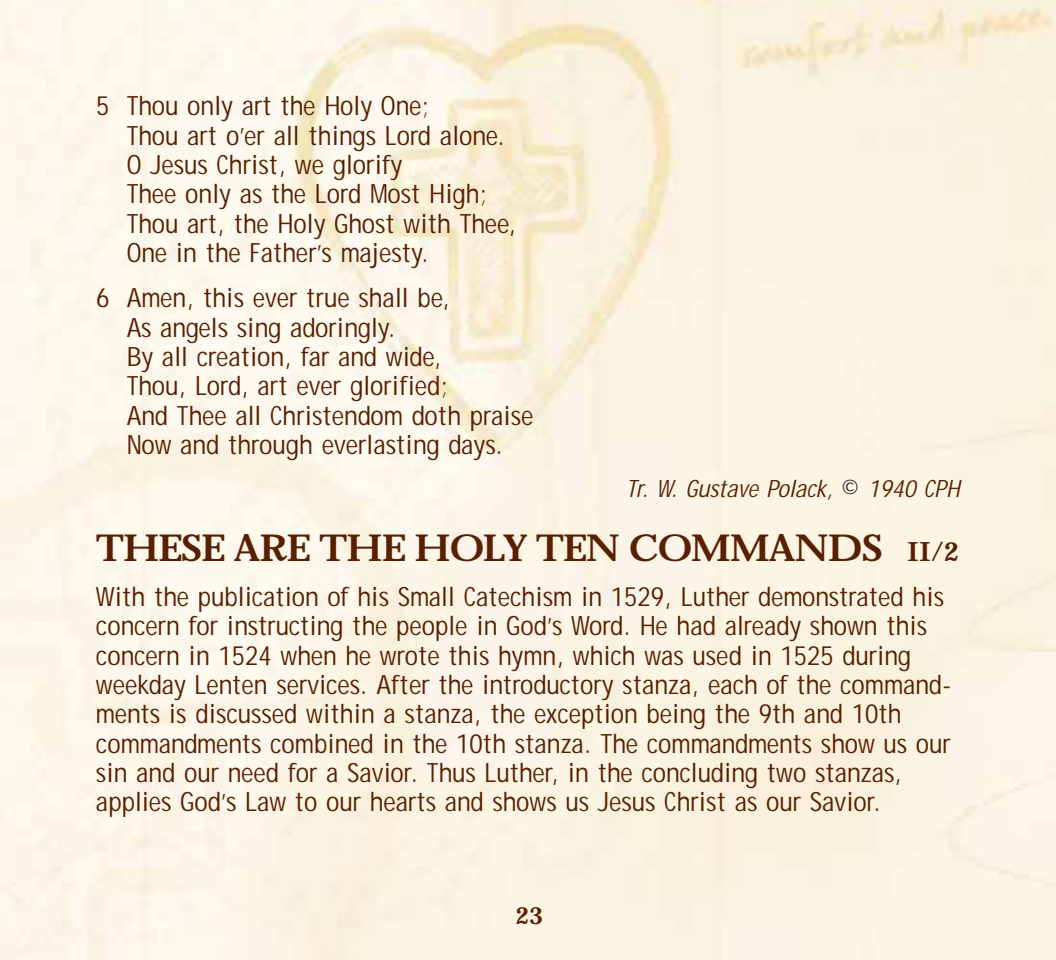
*Tr. F. Samuel Janzow, 1913–2001*

## **ALL GLORY BE TO GOD ALONE**

**II/1**

This hymn is a close paraphrase of the canticle *Gloria in Excelsis* (*Glory to God in the highest*), attributed to Luther in the 1537 Divine Service in Naumburg. Only circumstantial evidence supports this attribution. While Luther may have also written the original chant for two choirs, the tune used in this recording is by an unknown composer of Strassburg in 1541.

- 
- 1 All glory be to God alone,  
Forevermore the Highest One,  
Who doth our sinful race befriend  
And grace and peace to us extend.  
Among mankind may His good will  
All hearts with deep thanksgiving fill.
- 2 We praise Thee, God, and Thee we bless;  
We worship Thee in humbleness;  
From day to day we glorify  
Thee, Everlasting God on high.  
Of Thy great glory do we sing,  
And e'er to Thee our thanks we bring.
- 3 Lord God, our King on heaven's throne,  
Our Father, the Almighty One.  
O Lord, the Sole-begotten One,  
Lord Jesus Christ, the Father's Son,  
True God from all eternity,  
O Lamb of God to Thee we flee.
- 4 Thou dost the world's sin take away;  
Have mercy on us, Lord, we pray.  
Thou dost the world's sin take away;  
Give ear unto the prayer we say.  
Thou sitt'st at God's right hand for aye;  
Have mercy on us, Lord, we pray.

- 
- 5 Thou only art the Holy One;  
Thou art o'er all things Lord alone.  
O Jesus Christ, we glorify  
Thee only as the Lord Most High;  
Thou art, the Holy Ghost with Thee,  
One in the Father's majesty.
- 6 Amen, this ever true shall be,  
As angels sing adoringly.  
By all creation, far and wide,  
Thou, Lord, art ever glorified;  
And Thee all Christendom doth praise  
Now and through everlasting days.

*Tr. W. Gustave Polack, © 1940 CPH*

## **THESE ARE THE HOLY TEN COMMANDS II/2**

With the publication of his Small Catechism in 1529, Luther demonstrated his concern for instructing the people in God's Word. He had already shown this concern in 1524 when he wrote this hymn, which was used in 1525 during weekday Lenten services. After the introductory stanza, each of the commandments is discussed within a stanza, the exception being the 9th and 10th commandments combined in the 10th stanza. The commandments show us our sin and our need for a Savior. Thus Luther, in the concluding two stanzas, applies God's Law to our hearts and shows us Jesus Christ as our Savior.

- 1 These are the holy Ten Commands  
God gave to us by Moses' hands  
When high on Sinai's mount he stood,  
Receiving them for our good. Have mercy, Lord!
- 2 "I am alone your God, the Lord;  
No other gods shall be adored.  
But you shall fully trust in Me  
And love Me whole-heartedly." Have mercy, Lord!
- 3 "Do not My holy name disgrace,  
Do not My Word of truth debase.  
Praise only that as good and true  
Which I myself say and do." Have mercy, Lord!
- 4 "You shall observe the worship day  
That peace may fill your home, and pray,  
And put aside the work you do  
So that God may work in you." Have mercy, Lord!
- 5 "You are to honor and obey  
Your father, mother, ev'ry day.  
Serve them each way that comes to hand;  
You'll then live long in the land." Have mercy, Lord!
- 6 "You shall not murder, hurt, nor hate;  
Your anger dare not dominate.



Be kind and patient; help, defend,  
And treat your foe as your friend." Have mercy, Lord!

7 "Be faithful to your marriage vow;  
No lust or impure thoughts allow.  
Keep all your conduct free from sin  
By self-controlled discipline." Have mercy, Lord!

8 "You shall not steal or cheat away  
What others worked for night and day,  
But open up a gen'rous hand  
To feed the poor in the land." Have mercy, Lord!

9 "Bear no false witness nor defame  
Your neighbor, nor destroy his name,  
But view him in the kindest way;  
Speak truth in all that you say." Have mercy, Lord!

10 "You shall not crave your neighbor's house  
Nor covet money, goods, or spouse.  
Pray God He would your neighbor bless,  
As you yourself wish success." Have mercy, Lord!

11 You have this law to see therein  
That you have not been free from sin  
But also that you clearly see  
How pure toward God life should be. Have mercy, Lord!

12 Our works cannot salvation gain;  
They merit only endless pain.  
Forgive us, Lord! To Christ we flee,  
Who pleads for us endlessly. Have mercy, Lord!

*Tr. Concordia Publishing House © 2004*

*Setting by Richard Hillert*

*Publisher: Concordia Publishing House © 1980*

## **O LORD, LOOK DOWN FROM HEAVEN, BEHOLD**

**II/3**

A paraphrase of Psalm 12, this hymn was written in 1523, the same time as many of Luther's other psalm-hymns. It was published in the first Lutheran hymnal, *Achtliederbuch*, of 1524. Luther's version of the psalm reflects much of his own experience in the early days of the Reformation. Though several different tunes were used for this text with various levels of success, the present tune dates from 1524 and is possibly by Luther himself.

*Prelude: Ach Gott vom Himmel*

*Georg Friedrich Kauffmann, 1679–1735*

*Publisher: Bärenreiter-Verlag, Kassel*

1 O Lord, look down from heav'n, behold and let Thy pity waken;  
How few are we within Thy fold, Thy saints by men forsaken!  
True faith seems quenched on ev'ry hand, men suffer not Thy Word to stand;  
Dark times have us o'er taken.

- comfort and peace
- 2 With fraud which they themselves invent Thy truth they have confounded;  
Their hearts are not with one consent on Thy pure doctrine grounded.  
While they parade with outward show, they lead the people to and fro,  
In error's maze astounded.
  - 3 May God root out all heresy and of false teachers rid us  
Who proudly say: "Now, where is he that shall our speech forbid us?  
By right or might we shall prevail; what we determine cannot fail;  
We own no lord and master."
  - 4 Therefore saith God, "I must arise, the poor My help are needing;  
To Me ascend My people's cries, and I have heard their pleading.  
For them My saving Word shall fight and fearlessly and sharply smite,  
The poor with might defending."
  - 5 As silver tried by fire is pure from all adulteration,  
So through God's Word shall men endure each trial and temptation.  
Its light beams brighter through the cross, and, purified from human dross,  
It shines through ev'ry nation.
  - 6 Defend Thy truth, O God, and stay this evil generation;  
And from the error of its way keep Thine own congregation.  
The wicked ev'rywhere abound and would Thy little flock confound;  
But Thou art our Salvation.

*Tr. composite*

## TO YOU WE PRAY, GOD THE HOLY GHOST II/4

The tune and first stanza of this hymn are not by Luther, but rather are a popular medieval sacred folk song ending in *Kyrie eleison* and thus called a *Leise*. Luther's high regard for this hymn impelled him to commend it for congregational singing and to add three stanzas to it. This version was included in Walter's 1524 choral book. The folk nature of the tune is brought out with its use of the pentatonic scale.

*Prelude: Nun bitten wir den heiligen Geist* Johann Gottfried Walther,  
1684–1748  
Henry V. Gerike, editor

- 1 To You we pray, God the Holy Ghost, for the true faith,  
which we need the most,  
And Your presence guarding our journey's ending,  
When our road homeward will be bending. Kyrieleis!
- 2 O precious Light, Bringer of the day, show us Jesus as the one true Way,  
That we know the Truth and the Life that sought us  
And again to our homeland brought us. Kyrieleis!
- 3 O sacred Love, set our hearts aglow,  
Send tongues of fire, words by which to grow,  
That with hearts united we love each other  
And remain at peace with our brother. Kyrieleis!
- 4 O highest Comfort in deepest need,  
Save from fear of shame and death, we plead.

When at least the Foe comes up to assail us,  
Let the faith You gave then not fail us. Kyrieleis!

*Tr. F. Samuel Janzow, 1913–2001*

*Setting by Richard Hillert*

*Publisher: Concordia Publishing House © 1979*

## **FROM DEPTHS OF WOE I CRY TO THEE II/5**

Psalm 130, of which this hymn is a paraphrase, portrays the deepest repentance, the highest assurance of forgiveness, and the strongest hope of the believer in Christ. In 1523 Luther used this hymn as an example of the type of German hymn he hoped poets would write for congregational singing. When the hymn was printed in 1523, it was associated with two tunes. Not until 1524 was it paired with Luther's own, new, descriptive tune.

*Prelude: Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir Samuel Scheidt, 1587–1654*

- 1 From depths of woe I cry to Thee, in trial and tribulation;  
Bend down Thy gracious ear to me, Lord, hear my supplication.  
If Thou remembrest ev'ry sin, who then could heaven ever win  
Or stand before Thy presence?
- 2 Thy love and grace alone avail to blot out my transgression;  
The best and holiest deeds must fail to break sin's dread oppression.  
Before Thee none can boasting stand, but all must fear Thy strict demand  
And live alone by mercy.
- 3 Therefore my hope is in the Lord and not in mine own merit;  
It rests upon His faithful Word to them of contrite spirit

That He is merciful and just; this is my comfort and my trust.  
His help I wait with patience.

- 4 And though it tarry through the night and till the morning waken,  
My heart shall never doubt His might nor count itself forsaken.  
O Israel, trust in God your Lord born of the Spirit and the Word,  
Now wait for His appearing.
- 5 Though great our sins, yet greater still is God's abundant favor;  
His hand of mercy never will abandon us, nor waver.  
Our Shepherd good and true is He, who will at last His Israel free  
From all their sin and sorrow.

*Tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1829–78, alt.*

## **MY BRIDE, THE CHURCH, IS DEAR TO ME II/6**

Written in complex meter and set to an intricate tune, this is more of a ballad for a soloist or small group rather than a hymn for the congregation. The text, first published in 1535 (without a tune), builds on the scriptural images of the Church being described as Christ's bride and "elect lady" (Ephesians 5 and Revelation). Luther provided the melody in 1545. The form of the song is patterned after courtly 16th century love lyrics, much as the tune is patterned after a popular singing game.

- 1 My Bride, the Church, is dear to me, I never will forget her.  
Her lovely graces all can see. I in my heart have set her,  
My jewel fair has all my care. When troubles come, I have a home

Made lovely by her presence. Her love and trust stand at my side,  
Her service never lessens, she makes my will her guide.

- 2 She wears a coronet of gold in which twelve stars are beaming.  
Pure like the sun her garments fold about her, bright and gleaming.  
The moon tides meet beneath her feet. She is the Bride at her Lord's side.  
At last there comes the hour when she brings forth her noble Son  
In whom all see the power of God, the Holy One.
- 3 The dragon, full of ancient rage, would now the child devour  
But all the warfare he can wage ends in God's vict'ry hour.  
The battle won, God takes His Son to heaven high beyond the sky.  
The dragon fumes in fury. Alone, what will the mother do?  
Her God will guard her surely, her Father great and true.

*Tr. F. Samuel Janzow 1913–2001*

*Setting by Carl Schalk*

*Publisher: Concordia Publishing House © 1982*

## **JESUS CHRIST, OUR MIGHTY KING**

**II/7**

This Easter hymn of Luther's utilizes the form of the *Leise*, medieval vernacular songs ending with *Kyrieleison*, to proclaim the Good News of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. In 1524 the text was matched with the tune used here.

- 1 Jesus Christ, our mighty King,  
Conquered death, broke its sting;  
Now He is risen.

Our sin He left in prison.  
Kyrieleison!

2 This Man born without a stain  
Took God's wrath, bore our pain,  
Won restoration,  
God's peace, a free salvation.  
Kyrieleison!

3 Sin and death He holds at bay,  
Opens up life's new day.  
He can deliver  
For He is our life-giver.  
Kyrieleison!

*Tr. F. Samuel Janzow, 1913–2001, alt.  
Setting by Carl Schalk  
Publisher: Concordia Publishing House © 1978*

## **LORD GOD, WE SING YOUR PRAISE** **II/8** **(THE TE DEUM)**

Having its origins in the earliest days of the Church (5th century), the Te Deum canticle reached its zenith of popularity in the Middle Ages. As a confession of faith, the Te Deum praises God for His mercies in Christ Jesus and asks for His help. Around 1529 Luther provided the Church with a rhymed translation that he intended to have sung antiphonally between the choir and the congrega-

tion. In recasting the text into German Luther simplified the phrases just as he did with the music.

Lord God, we sing Your praise; Lord God, our thanks we raise.  
Father eternal, true, all creation worships You.  
All angels and heav'nly throngs serve Your glory with their songs.  
All cherubim and seraphim with soaring voices sing the hymn:  
Holy is God our Lord, Holy is God our Lord,  
Holy is God our Lord, the Lord of Sabaoth.

Your glory, might, eternity fill heav'n and earth with majesty.  
The twelve apostles raise their voice, the holy prophets, too, rejoice.  
Armies of noble martyrs throng to glorify You, God, in song.  
The holy Church throughout the world keeps Your high glory's praise unfurled.  
To God the Father on the throne, to You, only-begotten Son,  
To You, the Spirit, comfort true, we bring our praise and worship due.

O King of glory, blessed One, You are the Father's only Son.  
From a virgin You took Your birth to save mankind in all the earth.  
You trod on death for its defeat that Your own at Your throne might meet.  
You rule at the Father's right hand with equal glory and command.  
You will come back to earth again to judge with majesty all men.

O Lord, then in the final flood save those You bought with Your own blood.  
Bring us to heav'n to celebrate with all those who Your help await.  
Save us, Lord, with Your healing glance, and bless Your own inheritance.  
Watch over us and guard our day, raise us to glory, Lord, we pray.  
To You our daily praise we bring, to Your name constant honor sing.

Guard us, O Lord, we humbly pray, and keep us safe from sin today.  
O Lord, have mercy on us all, have mercy on us when we call.  
Lord, turn us toward Your kindly face, our hope is only in Your grace.  
Lord, on You we build all our trust, let us not perish in the dust. Amen.

*Tr. F. Samuel Janzow, 1913–2001*  
*Setting by Richard Hillert*  
*Publisher: Concordia Publishing House © 1979*

## **YOU WANT TO LIVE YOUR LIFE ARIGHT II/9**

In 1524 Luther wrote this concise hymn on the Ten Commandments. After the introductory first stanza, the second stanza focuses on the First Commandment only. The third stanza covers the next two Commandments, the fourth stanza covers the next four, and the fifth stanza Commandments 7 through 10. Such an arrangement shows that no matter what other Commandments may have been kept, the First Commandment is always broken with our sin of self-idolatry, thus making the sinner guilty of all. Published in 1524, the hymn has been associated with a tune that may have been written by Luther.

- 1 You want to live your life aright Now and forever in God's sight?  
Then these holy, these ten commands Keep pure as God's will demands.  
Kyrieleis!
- 2 I am your Lord, and I alone; so worship at no other throne.  
Trust me fully, and set apart as My domain your own heart. Kyrieleis!
- 3 In ev'ry need call on My name, and in the world declare My fame.  
Honor Me with your worship true. My grace will then work in you. Kyrieleis!

- 4 Your parents honor and obey; serve Me by serving them each day.  
Be not angry and do not kill. In marriage keep My pure will. Kyrieleis!
- 5 The goods of others do not steal. Speak truthful words, speak no one ill.  
Covet nothing that's unallowed. Give heed to God, not the crowd. Kyrieleis!

*Tr. F. Samuel Janzow, 1913–2001*

*Setting by Carl Schalk*

*Publisher: Concordia Publishing House © 1980*

## SAVIOR OF THE NATIONS, COME

II/10

This hymn, a 1523 translation of St. Ambrose's *Veni redemptor gentium*, experienced Luther's deft hand of revision in text and tune. In translating the hymn into German, Luther changed the original Long Meter (8.8.8.8.) into a meter of 7.7.7.7. The last stanza was turned into a Trinitarian doxology, while the plainsong chant was transformed into a chorale. Luther's version first appeared in two hymnals of 1524.

*Prelude: Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*

*Dietrich Buxtehude,  
1637–1707*

- 1 Savior of the nations, come, virgin's Son, make here Thy home!  
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth, that the Lord chose such a birth.
- 2 Not by human flesh and blood, by the Spirit of our God,  
Was the Word of God made flesh—woman's offspring, pure and fresh.
- 3 Here a maid was found with child, yet remained a virgin mild.  
In her womb this truth was shown: God was there upon His throne.

- 4 Then stepped forth the Lord of all from His pure and kingly hall;  
God of God, yet fully man, His heroic course began.
- 5 God the Father was His source, back to God He ran His course.  
Into hell His road went down, back then to His throne and crown.
- 6 For You are the Father's Son who in flesh the vict'ry won.  
By Your mighty pow'r make whole all our ills of flesh and soul.
- 7 From the manger newborn light shines in glory through the night.  
Darkness there no more resides; in this light faith now abides.
- 8 Glory to the Father sing, glory to the Son, our king,  
Glory to the Spirit be now and through eternity.

*Tr. F. Samuel Janzow, 1913–2001, alt.*

## **DEAR CHRISTIANS, ONE AND ALL REJOICE III/1**

This, Luther's first congregational hymn, appeared in print in 1524. It is almost autobiographical in nature, for the first stanzas reveal the guilt and frustration Luther felt, especially in the monastery. What is true of Luther is true of every human being—all are sinners, as this hymn shows. Yet there is reason to rejoice. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to take on our flesh and bone, to live, die, and rise from death for our justification. The exuberant, original tune is agile enough to reflect the joy of the redeemed sinner.

*comfort and peace*

*Prelude:*

*Dear Christians, One and All Rejoice*

*Christopher A. Loemker*

*Publisher: Concordia Publishing House © 2003*

- 1 Dear Christians, one and all, rejoice, with exultation springing,  
And with united heart and voice and holy rapture singing,  
Proclaim the wonders God has done, How His right arm the vict'ry won.  
What price our ransom cost Him!
- 2 Fast bound in Satan's chains I lay, death brooded darkly o'er me,  
Sin was my torment night and day; in sin my mother bore me.  
But daily deeper still I fell; my life became a living hell,  
So firmly sin possessed me.
- 3 My own good works all came to naught, no grace or merit gaining;  
Free will against God's judgment fought, dead to all good remaining.  
My fears increased till sheer despair left only death to be my share;  
The pangs of hell I suffered.
- 4 But God had seen my wretched state before the world's foundation,  
And mindful of His mercies great, He planned for my salvation.  
He turned to me a father's heart; He did not choose the easy part  
But gave His dearest treasure.
- 5 God said to His beloved Son: "It's time to have compassion.  
Then go, bright jewel of My crown, and bring to all salvation;  
From sin and sorrow set them free; slay bitter death for them that they  
May live with You forever."
- 6 The Son obeyed His Father's will, was born of virgin mother;  
And God's good pleasure to fulfill, He came to be my brother.

His royal pow'r disguised He bore, a servant's form, like mine, He wore  
To lead the devil captive.

- 7 To me He said: "Stay close to me, I am your rock and castle.  
Your ransom I myself will be; for you I strive and wrestle;  
For I am yours, and you are Mine, and where I am you may remain;  
The foe shall not divide us.
- 8 "Though He will shed My precious blood, of life Me thus bereaving,  
All this I suffer for your good; be steadfast and believing.  
Life will from death and vict'ry win; My innocence shall bear your sin;  
And you are blest forever.
- 9 "Now to My Father I depart, from earth to heav'n ascending,  
And, heav'nly wisdom to impart, the Holy Spirit sending;  
In trouble He will comfort you and teach you always to be true  
And into truth shall guide you.
- 10 "What I on earth have done and taught guide all your life and teaching;  
So shall the kingdom's work be wrought and honored in your preaching.  
But watch lest foes with base alloy the heav'nly treasure should destroy;  
This final word I leave you."

*Tr. Richard Massie, 1800–87, alt.*

## GRANT PEACE, WE PRAY, IN MERCY, LORD III/2

The political climate within the Holy Roman Empire and the threat of invasion were reason enough for Luther to translate this 10th century Latin antiphon. The hymn may have appeared in a 1529 hymnal (now long lost); copies of Andrew Rauscher's 1531 Erfurt hymnal contain the hymn. The tune incorporates the first phrase of the Latin antiphon's tune. The remaining phrases bear a resemblance to "Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word" and "Savior of the Nations, Come." The first stanza is that of Martin Luther; the second stanza is not Luther's but has come into common use.

Grant peace, we pray in mercy, Lord;  
Peace in our time, oh, send us!  
For there is none on earth but You,  
None other to defend us.  
You only, Lord, can fight for us.

To this our land and government  
Give justice, peace, and order.  
On life in Christ make us intent  
To walk in our land's border  
Ever upright, true, and godly. Amen.

*comfort and peace.*

*Latin antiphon, 10th century*  
© *The Lutheran World Federation. Used by permission.*  
*Tr. F. Samuel Janzow, 1913–2001*  
*Setting by Carl Schalk (Stanza 2 only)*  
*Publisher: Concordia Publishing House © 1982*

# WE ALL BELIEVE IN ONE TRUE GOD

III/3

An early medieval hymn summarized the entire Nicene Creed in one stanza. Luther took that hymn's text and music as a foundation on which he built his own three-stanza versification of the Creed, one stanza for each Person of the Holy Trinity. Even the medieval tune was reshaped in places to strengthen its support of the text. Appearing first in print with Walter's 1524 hymnal, the hymn served a liturgical function within the *Deutsche Messe* (1526) and a catechetical function in teaching Christians the basics of the faith.

*Prelude: Wir glauben all' an einen Gott* Michael Praetorius, c. 1571–1621  
*Publisher: Georg Kallmeyer Verlag*

- 1 We all believe in one true God,  
Who created earth and heaven, the Father, who to us in love  
Hath the right of children given. He in soul and body feeds us;  
All we need His hand provides us; through all snares and perils leads us.  
Watching that no harm betide us. He careth for us day and night,  
All things are governed by His might.
- 2 We all believe in Jesus Christ,  
His own Son, our Lord, possessing an equal Godhead, throne, and might,  
Source of ev'ry grace and blessing. Born of Mary, virgin mother,  
By the power of the Spirit, Word made flesh, our elder brother  
That the lost might life inherit; was crucified for all our sin  
And raised by God to life again.
- 3 We all confess the Holy Ghost,  
Who, in highest heaven dwelling with God the Father and the Son,

Comforts us beyond all telling; who the Church, His own creation,  
Keeps in unity of spirit. Here forgiveness and salvation  
Daily come thro' Jesus merit. All flesh shall rise, and we shall be  
In bliss with God eternally.

*Tr. composite*

## ISAIAH, MIGHTY SEER, IN DAYS OF OLD III/4

Based on Isaiah 6:1–4, Luther wrote this metrical paraphrase that was to be known as his German *Sanctus*, used first in October 1525 and then incorporated into his German Mass of 1526. To support his text Luther freely adapted a plainsong chant of an old *Sanctus*, meaning *holy*. Johann Walter, Luther's friend and music advisor, noted that this hymn demonstrates Luther's great ability of adapting the musical notes to the text.

Isaiah, mighty seer, in days of old  
The Lord of all in spirit did behold  
High on a lofty throne, in splendor bright,  
With robes that filled the temple courts with light.  
Above the throne were flaming seraphim;  
Six wings had they, these messengers of Him.  
With two they veiled their faces as was right,  
With two they humbly hid their feet from sight,  
And with the other two aloft they soared;  
One to the other called and praised the Lord:  
"Holy is God, the Lord of Sabaoth!  
Holy is God, the Lord of Sabaoth!"

Holy is God, the Lord of Sabaoth!  
His glory fills the heavens and the earth!"  
The beams and lintels trembled at the cry,  
And clouds of smoke enwrapped the throne on high.

*Tr. composite*

## THE UNWISE TONGUE OF MAN MAY SAY III/5

As a paraphrase of Psalm 14, Luther uses this hymn to refute the "enthusiasts," who, because they thought they were filled directly with the Holy Spirit, felt they had no need for submitting to authority or specific teachings of Scripture. This hymn was first published in the *Achtliederbuch* of 1524. Several tunes have been used for the hymn, but it is a tune found in Walter's 1524 hymnal that found it widest use.

- 1 The unwise tongue of man may say, "We give God honor royal,"  
But by their actions men display a heart that is disloyal,  
To God's most holy will untrue.  
Our God abhors the things they do when they abandon virtue.
- 2 Then God Himself from heav'n looks down to make a full inspection  
Of city, country, hamlet, town,  
To see if man's affection is centered in His Word and will  
And if some can be found who still hold to His words and do them.
- 3 He sees none choosing His right way, but finds them always swerving;  
To left and right they go astray, false trends and habits serving.

*comfort and peace*

Not one of them lives truly right,  
And yet they think their actions might receive God's benediction.

- 4 How long will man be self-deceived with man-made works and striving?  
They have too long God's people grieved with sin-directed living.  
In God they do not place their trust, nor kneel repentant in the dust.  
Each thinks himself his savior.
- 5 The heart of man finds no true rest in self-directed living.  
Faith sees God's love is manifest and imitates such giving.  
The world, however, scorns this way,  
Rejects all that God's people say, and spurns the Lord we trust in.
- 6 Who helps God's people in their need? Who rescues them from prison?  
God comes with might in word and deed; we live since Christ is risen.  
For God has saved us through His Son, and for His people Christ has won  
The help for which we praise Him.

*Tr. F. Samuel Janzow, 1913–2001*  
*Setting by Richard Hillert*  
*Publisher: Concordia Publishing House © 1979*

## **LORD, KEEP US STEADFAST IN YOUR WORD**

**III/6**

Though the earliest publication of this hymn is in 1543, it most likely was written in 1541 or 1542. The threat of Turkish invasion along with complicity of the papacy informed the original lines of the first stanza ("Restrain the

murderous pope and turk"). When the threat had subsided, the words were altered to be applicable to all threats. The tune, most likely by Luther, bears strong resemblance to "Savior of the Nations, Come" and "Grant Peace We Pray in Mercy, Lord."

*Prelude/Interludes:                      Erhalt uns Herr                      Dietrich Buxtehude, 1637–1707*

- 1 Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word;  
Curb those who by deceit or sword  
Would wrest the kingdom from Your Son  
And bring to naught all He has done.
- 2 Lord Jesus Christ, Your pow'r make known,  
For You are Lord of lords alone;  
Defend Your holy Church that we  
May sing Your praise eternally.
- 3 O Comforter of priceless worth,  
Send peace and unity on earth;  
Support us in our final strife  
And lead us out of death to life.

*Tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.*

## **MAY GOD BESTOW ON US HIS GRACE    III/7**

Often called the first Protestant hymn of mission because of its thrust of proclaiming the Gospel throughout the world, this is Luther's paraphrase of Psalm 67. It was included with Paul Speratus' German translation of Luther's *Formula*

*Missa* (1524). Since Luther allowed for the use of Psalm 67:6–7 as one form of the benediction, the conclusion of some is that this hymn was used at the close of service. The tune is an adaptation of an older German hymn.

- 1 May God bestow on us His grace, with blessings rich provide us,  
And may the brightness of His face to life eternal guide us  
That we His saving health may know, His gracious will and pleasure,  
And also to the heathen show Christ's riches without measure  
And unto God convert them.
- 2 Thine over all shall be the praise and thanks of ev'ry nation,  
And all the world with joy shall raise the voice of exultation;  
For Thou shalt judge the earth, O Lord, nor suffer sin to flourish;  
Thy people's pasture is Thy Word their souls to feed and nourish,  
In righteous paths to keep them.
- 3 Oh, let the people praise Thy worth, in all good works increasing;  
The land shall plenteous fruit bring forth, Thy Word is rich in blessing.  
May God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit bless us!  
Let all the world praise Him alone, let solemn awe possess us.  
Now let our hearts say, Amen.

*Tr. Richard Massie, 1800–87, alt.*

*Setting by Carl Schalk*

*Publisher: Concordia Publishing House © 1979*

# TO JORDAN CAME THE CHRIST, OUR LORD

III/8

Luther wrote this hymn in 1541, though the earliest existing copy is from a 1543 hymnal. Finishing the cycle of catechetical hymns, this hymn reflects the teaching in Luther's Small and Large Catechisms. The tune, perhaps written by Luther, was associated with his paraphrase of Psalm 67 and had been so used in a 1524 hymnal. Beginning with the Gospel account of Christ's baptism, Luther quickly goes on to explore the riches of God's Word-drenched water of Baptism in which Christians are reborn and receive forgiveness of sins and faith.

- 1 To Jordan came the Christ, our Lord, to do His Father's pleasure;  
Baptized by John, the Father's Word was given us to treasure.  
This heav'nly washing now shall be a cleansing from transgression  
And by His blood and agony release from death's oppression.  
A new life now awaits us.
- 2 Oh, hear and mark the message well, for God Himself has spoken.  
Let faith, not doubt, among us dwell and so receive this token.  
Our Lord here with His Word endows pure water, freely flowing.  
God's Holy Spirit here avows our kinship wile bestowing  
The Baptism of His blessing.
- 3 These truths on Jordan's banks were shown by mighty word and wonder.  
The Father's voice from heav'n came down, which we do well to ponder:  
"This man is My beloved Son, in whom My heart has pleasure.

Him you must hear, and Him alone, and trust in fullest measure  
The word that He has spoken.”

- 4 There stood the Son of God in love, His grace to us extending;  
The Holy Spirit like a dove upon the scene descending;  
The triune God assuring us, with promises compelling,  
That in our Baptism He will thus among us find a dwelling  
To comfort and sustain us.
- 5 To His disciples spoke the Lord, “Go out to ev’ry nation,  
And bring to them the living Word and this My invitation:  
Let ev’ryone abandon sin and come in true contrition  
To be baptized and thereby win full pardon and remission  
And heav’nly bliss inherit.”
- 6 But woe to those who cast aside this grace so freely given;  
They shall in sin and shame abide and to despair be driven.  
For born in sin, their works must fail, their striving saves them never;  
Their pious acts do not avail, and they are lost forever,  
Eternal death their portion.
- 7 All that the mortal eye beholds is water as we pour it.  
Before the eye of faith unfolds the pow’r of Jesus’ merit.  
For here it sees the crimson flood to all our ills bring healing;  
The wonders of His precious blood the love of God revealing,  
Assuring His own pardon.

*Tr. Elizabeth Quitmeyer, 1911–88, alt.*  
*Setting by Paul Bunjes, 1915–98*  
*Publisher: Concordia Publishing House © 1980*

# IN PEACE AND JOY I NOW DEPART

III/9

Far from being a mere versification of the Nunc Dimittis canticle from Luke 2:29–32, Luther's version highlights the Christ who is God's gift, our Savior, life, friend, hope, and light. Originally written for use on the Presentation of our Lord (February 2) and included in Walter's Wittenberg hymnal of 1524, the hymn has also found use within the Christian funeral and even after receiving the Lord's Supper. The tune, the only one ever wedded to this text, has all the hallmarks of Luther's compositional ability.

*Prelude:*

*Mit Fried' und Freud'*

*J. S. Bach, 1685–1750*

- 1 In peace and joy I now depart since God so wills it.  
Serene and confident my heart; stillness fills it.  
For the Lord has promised me that death is but a slumber.
- 2 Christ Jesus brought this gift to me, my faithful Savior.  
Whom You have made my eyes to see by Your favor.  
Now I know He is my Life, my friend when I am dying.
- 3 You sent the people of the earth their great salvation;  
Your invitation summons forth ev'ry nation  
By Your holy, precious Word, in ev'ry place resounding.
- 4 Christ is the hope and saving light of those in blindness;  
He guides and comforts those in night by His kindness.  
For Your people Israel in Him find joy and glory.

*Tr. F. Samuel Janzow, 1913–2001, alt.*

# O LORD, WE PRAISE THEE

III/10

In 1533 Luther quoted the original pre-Reformation form of this hymn to underscore his argument that communion under both forms (the body and the blood) had been known and accepted even before the Reformation. It was, however, in 1524 that Luther adapted this German folk hymn by retaining the first stanza with some changes and then adding two more stanzas. When Walter published the text in 1524, no music was given. Later, the tune for the original 15th century folk hymn was used without alteration.

*Prelude: Gott sei gelobet*

*Michael Praetorius, c. 1571–1621  
Publisher: Möseler Verlag Wolfenbütel*

- 1 O Lord, we praise Thee, bless Thee, and adore Thee  
In thanksgiving bow before Thee.  
Thou with Thy body and Thy blood didst nourish  
Our weak souls that they may flourish: O Lord, have mercy!  
May Thy body, Lord, born of Mary,  
That our sins and sorrows did carry, and Thy blood for us plead  
In all trial, fear, and need: O Lord, have mercy!
- 2 Thy holy body into death was given, life to win for us in heaven.  
No greater love than this to Thee could bind us;  
May this feast thereof remind us! O Lord, have mercy!  
Lord, Thy kindness did so constrain Thee  
That Thy blood should bless and sustain me.  
All our debt Thou hast paid;  
Peace with God once more is made: O Lord, have mercy!

3 May God bestow on us His grace and favor  
That we follow Christ our Savior  
And live together here in love and union  
Nor despise this blest Communion! O Lord, have mercy!  
Let not Thy good Spirit forsake us;  
Grant that heav'nly minded He make us;  
Give Thy Church, Lord, to see  
Days of peace and unity: O Lord, have mercy!

*Tr. The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941, alt.*

*Reprise: Gott sei Gelobet*

*Scott Witzke*

## **NOW PRAISE WE CHRIST, THE HOLY ONE IV/1**

While several German translations of Coelius Sedulius' ancient Latin hymn were available at the time of Luther, he made his own version that in the first stanza reverses the first two lines with the last two. He did this to place the name of Jesus at the beginning of the hymn in order to inform the remaining stanzas. The tune was simplified from the plainsong chant, possibly by Luther himself.

- 1 Now praise we Christ, the Holy One,  
The blessed virgin Mary's Son,  
Far as the glorious sun doth shine  
E'en to the world's remote confine.
- 2 He who Himself all things did make  
A servant's form vouchsafed to take

That He as man mankind might win  
And save His creatures from their sin.

- 3 The grace and pow'r of God the Lord  
Upon the mother was outpoured;  
A virgin pure and undefiled  
In wondrous wise conceived a child.
- 4 The noble mother bore a Son  
For so did Gabriel's promise run,—  
Whom John confessed and leaped with joy  
Ere yet the mother knew her Boy.
- 5 Upon a manger filled with hay  
In poverty content He lay;  
With milk was fed the Lord of all  
Who feeds the ravens when they call.
- 6 The heavenly choirs rejoice and raise  
Their voice to God in songs of praise.  
To humble shepherds is proclaimed  
The Shepherd who the world hath framed.
- 7 All honor unto Christ be paid,  
Pure Offspring of the favored maid,  
With Father and with Holy Ghost,  
Till time in endless time be lost.

*Tr. Richard Massie, 1854, alt*

# FROM HEAVEN CAME THE ANGELS BRIGHT

IV/2

This Christmas hymn was written by Luther in 1542 and first published in Joseph Klug's hymnal of 1543. Stating the Christmas story in concise manner, the hymn moves on to show us the victory this Child will have over sin, death, and Satan. In doing so, this hymn reflects the ruggedness of Luther's own faith. Since several tunes have been associated with this text, the one used here is from the singing game that Luther had originally used for his longer Christmas hymn.

- 1 From heaven came the angels bright  
To shepherds watching through the night.  
A newborn royal Child, they said,  
Lies yonder in a manger bed.
- 2 To Bethlehem, King David's town,  
As Micah saw, comes great renown;  
Your Lord Christ is incarnate there  
To save you all from sin and care.
- 3 Rejoice, therefore, that through His Son  
Your God with you is now at one.  
He took on human flesh and bone,  
And you, His brothers, are God's own.
- 4 God came to share Himself with you,  
Your sin and death He overthrew.

*comfort and peace*

The foe his fiery darts may send;  
Your shield is God the Son, your Friend.

5 He never will abandon you.  
Trust Him, He's faithful, strong, and true.  
Though all men scorn you, tempt, and mock,  
God loves you; build upon that Rock.

6 Then in the end you will prevail;  
God's friends and brothers cannot fail.  
In praise to God then raise your voice,  
Prepare forever to rejoice.

*Tr. F. Samuel Janzow, 1913–2001*

*Setting by Carl Schalk*

*Publisher: Concordia Publishing House © 1978*

## **THIS BODY IN THE GRAVE WE LAY** **IV/3**

For a number of years this hymn's authorship was ascribed to Luther. In his preface to the 1545 *Babst Hymnal*, Luther stated that though his name had been attached to it, the hymn was not his and should not be credited to him. The reason given was not his dislike of the hymn (he, in fact, did like it), but the fact that it was by someone else—a Michael Weisse (c. 1480–1534) a Bohemian Brethren hymn writer. This preface, the last Luther did for a hymnal, must not have had much influence on the editing of the book, for it continued to associate his name with this hymn. The tune first was printed in Georg Rhau's 1544 hymnal.

*Prelude: Nun lasst uns den Leib*

*J. S. Bach, 1685–1750*

*Publisher: Bärenreiter-Verlag, Kassel*

- 1 This body in the grave we lay there to await that solemn Day  
When God Himself shall bid it rise to mount triumphant to the skies.
- 2 And so to earth we now entrust what came from dust and turns to dust  
And from the dust shall rise that Day in glorious triumph o'er decay.
- 3 The soul forever lives with God, who freely hath His grace bestowed  
And through His Son redeemed it here from ev'ry sin, from ev'ry fear.
- 4 All trials and all griefs are past; a blessed end has come at last.  
Christ's yoke was borne with ready will; who dieth thus is living still.
- 5 We have no cause to mourn or weep; securely shall this body sleep  
Till Christ Himself shall death destroy and raise the blessed dead to joy.
- 6 For they who with Him suffered here shall there be healed from  
woe and fear;  
And when eternal bliss is won, they'll shine in glory like the sun.
- 7 Then let us leave this place of rest and homeward turn, for they are blest  
Who heed God's warning and prepare lest death should find them unaware.
- 8 So help us, Jesus, Ground of faith; Thou hast redeemed us by Thy death  
From endless death and set us free. We laud and praise and worship Thee.

*Tr. William M. Czamanske, 1873–1964*

# WHY WOULD FOE HEROD AND HIS HORDE

IV/4

Coelius Sedulius (d. 540) wrote a Latin hymn on the whole life of Christ. Shorter hymns were extracted from the long work, as Luther did with “Now Praise We Christ, the Holy One” and this hymn, which he translated in 1541 and published in Klug’s 1543 hymnal. The text highlights the visit of the Magi, the baptism of Jesus, and the wedding feast miracle at Cana—all key elements of the Epiphany season. The tune is a modified form of the plainsong chant used for the Latin hymn.

- 1 Why would foe Herod and his horde so fear the birth of Christ our Lord?  
Our Savior wants no earthly throne. He reigns in faithful hearts alone.
- 2 A star led wise men from afar to find the bright and morning star.  
The threefold noble gift they bring declares this Child God, Man, and King.
- 3 When baptized in the Jordan’s wave, God’s spotless lamb assurance gave  
That He had come to take our place, wash sin away and bring us grace.
- 4 The living Word at Cana spoke and water into wine awoke.  
His Gospel word wakes hearts of men to serve God’s purposes again.
- 5 In jubilation thanks we bring to virgin-born Lord Christ our King.  
The Father, Holy Ghost, and He receive our praise eternally.

*Tr. F. Samuel Janzow, 1913–2001*  
*Setting by Carl Schalk*  
*Publisher: Concordia Publishing House © 1979*

# CHRIST JESUS LAY IN DEATH'S STRONG BANDS

IV/5

Luther never tired of singing this Easter hymn that he wrote in 1524. The roots of this hymn extend back to 1050 and the *"Victimae paschali laudes"* ("Christians to the Paschal Victim"), a sequence hymn by Wipo of Burgundy. In true Luther form, the first half of the hymn proclaims the mighty deed of God raising Christ from the dead. The last half applies Christ's resurrection to our lives.

*Prelude: Christ lag in Todesbanden*

*J. S. Bach, 1685–1750*

- 1 Christ Jesus lay in death's strong bands for our offenses given;  
But now at God's right hand He stands and brings us life from heaven.  
Therefore let us joyful be and sing to God right thankfully  
Loud songs of alleluia! Alleluia!
- 2 No son of man could conquer death, such ruin sin had wrought us.  
No innocence was found on earth, and therefore death had brought us  
Into bondage from of old and ever grew more strong and bold  
And held us as its captive. Alleluia!
- 3 Christ Jesus, God's own Son, came down, His people to deliver;  
Destroying sin, He took the crown from Death's pale brow forever:  
Stripped of pow'r, no more he reigns; an empty form alone remains;  
His sting is lost forever. Alleluia!
- 4 It was a strange and dreadful strife when life and death contended;  
The victory remained with life, the reign of death was ended.

*comfort and peace*

Holy Scripture plainly saith that death is swallowed up by death,  
Its sting is lost forever. Alleluia!

- 5 Here our true Paschal Lamb we see, whom God so freely gave us;  
He died on the accursed tree so strong His love to save us.  
See, His blood now marks our door; faith points to it; death passes o'er,  
And Satan cannot harm us. Alleluia!
- 6 So let us keep the festival to which the Lord invites us;  
Christ is Himself the joy of all, the sun that warms and lights us.  
Now His grace to us imparts eternal sunshine to our hearts;  
The night of sin is ended. Alleluia!
- 7 Then let us feast this Easter day on Christ, the Bread of heaven;  
The Word of grace has purged away the old and evil leaven.  
Christ alone our souls will feed; He is our meat and drink indeed;  
Faith lives upon no other! Alleluia!

*Tr. Richard Massie, 1800–87, alt*

## **TRUE GOD FROM ALL ETERNITY**

**IV/6**

The last hymn Luther wrote is a German version of the ancient Latin Vesper hymn, "*O lux beata Trinitas*," most often ascribed to St. Ambrose (340–97). It was included in Klug's Wittenberg hymnal of 1543, but without a tune. The tune associated with the text is a simplified version of the plainsong chant used for the Latin hymn.

- 1 True God from all eternity, three Persons in the Unity,  
The sun departs at eve of day; oh, shed Your light upon our way.
- 2 We worship You when wakes the sun, we kneel to You when day is done,  
Our song ascends to praise Your name, now and forevermore the same.
- 3 To God the Father glory be, and to the Son eternally,  
And to our comfort, Holy Ghost, from Your redeemed and faithful host.

*Tr. F. Samuel Janzow, 1913–2001*

*Setting by Carl Schalk*

*Publisher: Concordia Publishing House © 1982*

## **FROM HEAVEN ABOVE TO EARTH I COME IV/7**

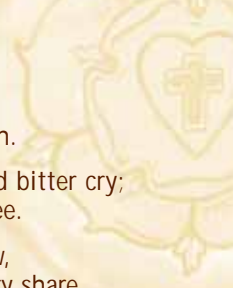
Reflecting the joy within his family, Martin Luther wrote this hymn for his children's Christmas Eve celebration either in 1534 or 1535. The pattern of a pre-Reformation singing game gave Luther's simple hymn structure. The first five stanzas report what the angels said. Stanzas 6 and 15 give voice to the family's response, while stanzas 7 through 14 make application of the angel's Good News. Originally Luther used the tune of the singing game for this tune, especially since the hymn was sung in the family. When the hymn began to be used in church services, Luther provided as a new tune the one used here.

*Prelude:*

*Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her*

*Max Reger, 1873–1916*

- 1 "From heav'n above to earth I come to bear good news to ev'ry home;  
Glad tidings of great joy I bring whereof I now will say and sing:

- 
- 2 "To you this night is born a child of Mary, chosen virgin mild;  
This little child, of lowly birth, shall be the joy of all the earth.
- 3 "This is the Christ, our God most high, who hears your sad and bitter cry;  
He will Himself your Savior be from all your sins to set you free.
- 4 "He will on you the gifts bestow prepared by God for all below,  
That in His kingdom, bright and fair, you may with us His glory share.
- 5 "These are the signs that you shall mark: The swaddling clothes and  
manger dark;  
There you will find the infant laid by whom the heav'ns and earth were  
made."

*Interlude: Von himmel hoch da kom ich her from Esaias Rousner (fl. c. 1645)*

- 6 How glad we'll be to find it so! then with the shepherds let us go  
To see what God for us has done in sending us His own dear Son.
- 7 Come here, my friends, lift up your eyes, and see what in the manger lies.  
Who is this child, so young and fair? The blessed Christ-child lieth there.
- 8 Welcome to earth, O noble Guest, through whom the sinful world is blest!  
You came to share my misery that You might share Your joy with me.
- 9 Ah, Lord, though You created all! How weak art Thou, how poor and small,  
That You should choose to lay Your head, where humble cattle lately fed!
- 10 Were earth a thousand times as fair beset with gold and jewels rare,  
It would be far too poor and small a cradle for the Lord of all.

*Interlude: Von himmel hoch da kom ich her from Esaias Rousner (fl. c. 1645)*

- 11 Instead of soft and silken stuff You have but hay and straw so rough  
On which as King, so rich and great, to be enthroned in royal state.
- 12 And so it pleases You to see this simple truth revealed to me:  
That worldly honor, wealth, and might are weak and worthless in Your sight.
- 13 Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child, prepare a bed, soft, undefiled,  
A quiet chamber set apart for You to dwell within my heart.
- 14 My heart for very joy doth leap, my lips no more can silence keep;  
I, too, must sing with joyful tongue that sweetest ancient cradle-song:
- 15 “Glory to God in highest heav’n, who unto us His Son has giv’n.”  
While angels sing with pious mirth a glad new year to all the earth.

*Tr. Lutheran Book of Worship, 1978*

## **I SHALL NOT DIE**

**IV/8**

Luther was a musician as well as being a theologian, enjoying music—singing, playing instruments. His high regard for music as a gift from God was matched by his high regard for composers—he especially prized Josquin des Prez and Ludwig Senfl—and counted Kantor Johann Walter and music publisher Georg Rhau as his friends. While encouraging their efforts, Luther also tried his hand at composing, using Psalm 118:17 as the text for his motet.

I shall not die, but live,  
And declare the works of the Lord.

*Edited by William Braun*

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*Publisher: Concordia Publishing House © 1995*

# A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD

IV/9

The earliest available source for this, the most popular of Luther's hymns, is a 1531 hymnal; though some sources place the hymn as early as 1528. The hymn's text, based on the Psalm 46, epitomizes Luther's thought and experience. It is supported by its rugged and vigorous tune, also by Luther.

- 1 A mighty fortress is our God,  
A trusty shield and weapon;  
He helps us free from ev'ry need  
That hath us now o'er taken.  
The old evil Foe now means deadly woe;  
Deep guile and great might are his dread arms in fight;  
On earth is not his equal.
- 2 With might of ours can naught be done,  
Soon were our loss effected;  
But for us fights the valiant One,  
Whom God Himself elected.  
Ask ye, Who is this? Jesus Christ it is,  
Of Sabaoth Lord, and there's none other God;  
He holds the field forever.
- 3 Though devils all the world should fill,  
All eager to devour us,  
We tremble not, we fear no ill,

They shall not overpower us.  
This world's prince may still scowl fierce as he will,  
He can harm us none, he's judged; the deed is done;  
One little word can fell him.

- 4 The Word they still shall let remain  
Nor any thanks have for it;  
He's by our side upon the plain  
With His good gifts and Spirit.  
And take they our life, goods, fame, child, and wife,  
Though these all be gone, they yet have nothing won;  
The Kingdom ours remaineth.

*Tr. Composite*

comfort and peace

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Engineer: Michael Graham

Studio: The Lodge Recording Studios, Indianapolis, Indiana

Consultants: Henry Gerike, Paul Grime, Philip Spray, Daniel Zager

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