

# Praise Today

## Contemporary Worship Forms in the Context of the Historical Service

Volume 5, Number 2

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## Funny Isn't It?

*Submitted by Rev. Matthew Grunewald, Mount Olive, Detroit (WELS)*

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Funny how a \$10 bill looks so big when you take it to church, but so small when you take it to the market.

Funny how long it takes to serve God for an hour, but how quickly a team plays 60 minutes of basketball.

Funny how long a couple of hours spent at church seem, but how short it seems when watching a movie.

Funny how we can't think of anything to say when we pray, but don't have difficulty thinking of things to talk about to a friend.

Funny how we get thrilled when a baseball game goes into extra innings, but we complain when a sermon is longer than the regular time.

Funny how hard it is to read a chapter in the Bible, but how easy it is to read 100 pages of a best selling novel.

Funny how people want to get a front seat at any game or concert, but scramble to get a back seat at church services.

Funny how we need 2 or 3 weeks advance notice to fit a church event into our schedule, but can adjust our schedule for other events at the last minute.

Funny how much difficulty some people have learning a simple gospel well enough to tell others, but how simple it is for the same people to understand and repeat gossip about someone.

Funny how we believe what the newspapers say, but question what the Bible says.

Funny, how everyone wants to go to heaven, provided they don't have to believe, or to think, or to say, or to do anything.

Funny, isn't it? It's all in how you look at it.!?

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## New Year's Benediction

*by Missionary Guy Marquardt, Igreja Luterana Monte Belo, Gravataí, Brazil (WELS)*

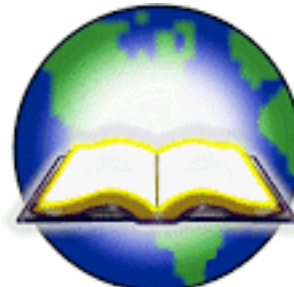
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May the Lord bless and keep you, safe in his loving arms, and secure in the knowledge of his salvation.

May the Lord make his face shine upon you, like a proud parent beaming in love at his children, and be gracious to you, pouring out his spiritual gifts in abundance.

May the Lord turn his face toward you, forgetting your sins and forgiving your faults in Christ Jesus, and give you his peace, not as the world gives, but a peace to last forever.

A blessed new year to you all!



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# Ash Wednesday Baptismal Font

Dave Walker

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We did something a little different this year for Ash Wednesday. In years past of course we have always had the imposition of ashes as a part of the service.

This year, pastor (Joseph Ardy, Ascension Lutheran [LC-MS], Cleburne, Tx) had the imposition of ashes but then at the end of the service the baptismal font was placed at the back of the church. When the congregation exited the service, they passed the font and wiped the ashes off with water from the font saying as they did, "I have been baptised in the name of the Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit." This is a reminder of how important our baptism is to our daily lives, that we are forgiven of our sin and, no marks of sin remain on us



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## The King of Glory Sends His Son

Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

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Isaac Watts is well known for his Christmas carol, "Joy to the World." Here is another gem by Isaac Watts which you want to consider for Christmas as well. It uses an 8888 (Long) meter. Tunes with Long Meter in Christian Worship include "Angelus" (274), "Fox Valley" (621), "Morning Hymn" (582), "Laurel" (583) and "Puer Nobis Nascitur" (5).

You could use "Gelobet Seist du, Jesu Christ (CW #33) and add the Alleluias at the end of each verse.

1. The King of glory sends his Son,  
To make his entrance on this earth;  
Behold the midnight bright as noon,  
And heav'nly hosts declare his birth!
2. About the young Redeemer's head,  
What wonders, and what glories meet!  
An unknown star arose, and led  
The eastern sages to his feet.
3. Simeon and Anna both conspire  
The infant Saviour to proclaim;  
Inward they felt the sacred fire,  
And bless'd the babe, and own'd his name.
4. Let pagan hordes blaspheme aloud,  
And treat the holy child with scorn;  
Our souls adore th' eternal God  
Who condescended to be born.

*Praise Today* is an independent publication serving pastors and worship leaders of confessional Lutheranism. It is published quarterly and relies heavily on the submissions of subscribers to share their ideas of worship framed in the historical orders of service with application to the needs of Christians today.

Comments and submissions may be sent to:

John L. Hoh, Jr., Editor  
*Praise Today*  
7731 N. 60th. St., Unit H-204  
Milwaukee, WI 53223

Phone: 1-414-365-6470

e-mail: [johnhoh@ns.moneng.mei.com](mailto:johnhoh@ns.moneng.mei.com)

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Agora/5814>

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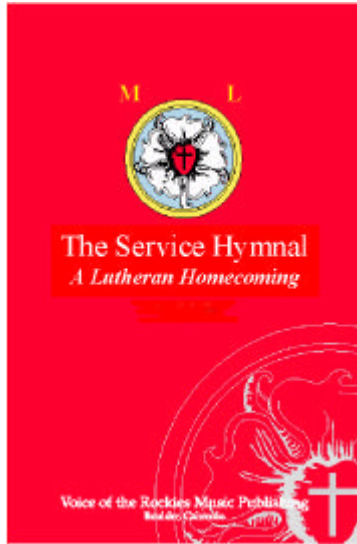
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# Service Hymnal: A Lutheran Homecoming

James G. Sucha

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James G. Sucha, an ELCA Lutheran in Denver, CO, is publishing *The Service Hymnal, A Lutheran Homecoming*. This hymnal supplement is being produced by Patricia Holmberg of Voice of the Rockies Music Publishing in Boulder, Colorado, and is expected to be finished in the year 2000.



liturgy of the red 1958 Service Book and Hymnal. The Third Setting is a contemporary setting featuring the melodies of Sucha, Dvorak, Bach, and John Merbecke.

The best feature of the hymnal is the 200+ hymns, carols, and canticles that are restorations, newly written, or from other denominations. Many of these are restored hymns that have recently been modernized or altered in current Lutheran hymnbooks, and many that currently do not sing like they used to. The harmonies and texts have been carefully researched and lovingly restored to continue with the original integrity and splendor. Included is a section of 32 J.S. Bach hymns and chorales honoring the greatest Lutheran composer of all time. Remember when hymns had Amens afterward? These have also been restored to hymns that were prayers.

A small bio on the composer, and the history of the hymn has been included to educate and inspire. For example: "I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day," by Longfellow, was written the day after he received word that his son had been killed in the American Civil War. Did you know that "Thank the Lord," the Ronald A. Nelson post-communion canticle in Setting 2 in the *LBW & LW* is actually an African rowing song, and not an Irish Jig? These are the little bits of information that enable people to learn about how important these gems are.

Voice of the Rockies has been accepting donations for sponsorship of these hymns from individuals and churches. This way, people from the church body can participate, and have a hand in the project. For a donation of \$25, those that sponsor can have their name on the hymn, and it goes to a good cause of preserving the Lutheran liturgical/hymn heritage for future generations to come.



James G. Sucha

If you would like to help preserve the Lutheran heritage of hymns, and would like sponsor one for \$25, please send a check or money order to:

Voice of the Rockies Music Publishing  
P.O. Box 1043  
Boulder, Colorado 80306

or visit their web site at

<http://www.voiceoftherock.com>



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# Humor

*Assorted*

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A farmer who lived on the Great Plains had never traveled to a city of any size, but one day a trip allowed him to do just that.

When he got home, his wife asked him what he saw and what he learned. He told her all about it, including the fact that their group had attended church on Sunday in a large congregation which has a really big choir.

"They sang an anthem," he told her.

"What is an anthem?" she asked.

"Well," he replied, "you know we sing hymns here at home. If I were to say to you, 'Martha, the cows are in the corn, Amen,' that would be a hymn. But if I were to say, 'Martha, Martha, Martha, the cows - the big cows, the little cows, the black cows, the red cows, the green cows, all the cows, all the cows, all the cows - are in the corn, the corn, the corn, the corn, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen,' - that would be an anthem!"



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## Footprints with a Twist

*Author Unknown*

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Imagine you and the Lord Jesus walking down the road together. For much of the way, the Lord's footprints go along steadily, consistently, rarely varying the pace. But your footprints are a disorganized stream of zigzags, starts, stops, turnarounds, circles, departures and returns. For much of the way, it seems to go like this, but gradually your footprints come more in line with the Lord's soon paralleling His consistently. You and Jesus are walking as true friends!

This seems perfect, but then an interesting thing happens: your footprints, that once etched the sand next to Jesus', are now walking precisely in His steps. Inside His larger footprints are your smaller ones, safely you and Jesus are becoming one.

This goes on for many miles but gradually you notice another change. The footprints inside the larger footprints seem to grow larger. Eventually they disappear altogether. There is only one set of footprints; they have become one.

This goes on for a long time, but suddenly the second set of footprints is back. This time it seems even worse! Zigzags all over the place. Stops. Starts. Deep gashes in the sand. A veritable mess of prints. You are amazed and shocked. Your dream ends.

Now you pray: "Lord, I understand the first scene with the zigzags and fits. I was a new Christian; I was just learning. But you walked on through the storm and helped me learn to walk with you."

"That is correct."

"... and when the smaller footprints were inside of Yours, I was actually learning to walk in Your steps; I followed you very closely."

"Very good. You have understood everything so far."

"...when the smaller footprints grew and filled in Yours, I suppose that I was becoming like you in every way."

"Precisely."

"So, Lord, was there a regression or something? The footprints separated, and this time it was worse than at first."

There is a pause as the Lord answers with a smile in His voice.

"You didn't know? That was when we danced."

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# Christmas Carol

by Phil Schupmann

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*Christmas Carol came from Phil Schupmann Aurora Illinois (pschupmann@msn.com).*

## THE ORDER OF SERVICE

### CALL TO WORSHIP

I was glad when they said to me; Let us go into the house of the Lord. Psalm 122:1

### OPENING HYMN

1. Praise God the Lord, ye sons of men  
Before His highest throne; Today He opens heav'n again  
And gives us His own Son, And gives us His own Son.
2. He leaves His heav'nly Father's throne,  
Is born an Infant small, And in a manger, poor and lone  
Lies in a humble stall, Lies in a humble stall.
3. He veils in flesh His pow'r divine  
A servant's form to take; In want and lowliness must pine  
Who heav'n and earth did make, Who heav'n and earth did make.

P- In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C-AMEN.

P- Gross darkness covers the earth.

C- WE DWELL IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

P- Rise, shine, for Thy light has come!

C- THE PEOPLE WHO SAT IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT.

P- That Light is Jesus, born of Mary; the glory of Israel and a Light to lighten the Gentiles.

C- WE HAVE SEEN HIS STAR.

P- Come to the brightness of His shining!



## INVITATION TO CONFESS OUR SINS - TLH 61

1. Comfort, comfort, ye My people,  
Speak ye peace, thus saith our God  
Comfort those who sit in darkness,  
Mourning 'neath their sorrow's load.  
Speak to them of salvation,  
And the peace that waits for them.  
Tell them that their sins I cover  
And their warfare now is over.
  2. Yea, your sins our God will pardon,  
Blotting out each dark misdeed.  
All that well deserved His anger  
He no more will see or heed.  
You have suffered many a day,  
Now your griefs have passed away;  
God will change your pining sadness  
Into ever springing gladness.
  3. Make ye straight what long was crooked,  
Make the rougher places plain.  
Let your hearts be true and humble,  
As befits His holy reign.  
For the glory of the Lord  
Now o'er earth is shed abroad,  
And all flesh shall see the token  
That His Word is never broken.
- P- Assured of God's love in Christ and the forgiveness of sins which comes in him, let us now confess our sins to God.
- C- O Almighty God, merciful Father, I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto you all my sins with which I have offended you and for which I justly deserved death in hell. But I am truly sorry for them and sincerely repent of them. I pray that in your mercy and for the sake of the innocent sufferings and death of your beloved Son Jesus Christ, you would cleanse me of all my sins and grant me all the promised blessings of life in him.
- P- Our heavenly Father has sent his only Son into the world to pay for our sins on the cross. In him we have the forgiveness of all our sins, and the power to live as the children of God. Therefore, I announce to you the forgiveness of all your sins and exhort you to use the help of God's Holy Spirit for a changed and God pleasing life.

C- (sing) AMEN

## OUR RESPONSE TO FORGIVENESS

(Sing tune of "Angels We Have Heard On High")

1. Glory be to God above! Glory to the Lord we love!  
Blessing, worship, thanks and praise Sing we now and all  
our days!  
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!
2. Lord, you take our sin away; Send your mercy now we pray.  
Lord, you take our sins away; Listen to the prayer we say.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!
3. O Lord God, be glorified By your church both far and wide!  
Now we sing adoringly, Praise to you, great Trinity!  
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

## THE GREETING

**P**— The Lord be with you

**C**— (sing) AND WITH THY SPIRIT.

## THE PRAYER

**P**— Almighty and eternal God, be merciful to us in our weakness. In all our dangers and necessities stretch out the right hand of your majesty to help and defend us from all danger, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

**C**— (sing) AMEN

## SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 2:21-38

## SONG - As Each Happy Christmas

1. As each happy Christmas Dawns on earth again,  
Comes the holy Christ child To the hearts of men.
2. Enters with His blessings Into ev'ry home,  
Guides and guards our footsteps, As we go and come.
3. All unknown beside me He will ever stand,  
And will safely lead me, With His own right hand.

## THE MESSAGE FOR CHILDREN

## SONG

1. In His Temple now behold Him, See the long expected Lord;  
Ancient prophets had foretold Him,  
God has now fulfilled word.  
Now, to praise Him, His redeemed, Shall break forth with  
one accord.
2. In the arms of her who bore Him,  
Virgin pure, behold Him lie,  
While His aged saints adore Him  
Ere in faith and hope they die.  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah. Lo, the incarnate Son most high.
3. Jesus, by thy presentation, Thou, who didst for us endure,  
Make us see our great salvation, Seal us with Thy promise  
sure.  
And present us in Thy glory To Thy Father, cleansed and  
pure.
4. Prince and Author of salvation, Be thy boundless love our  
theme!  
Jesus, praise to Thee be given By the world Thou didst  
redeem,  
With the Father and the Spirit, Lord of majesty supreme!

## THE MESSAGE FOR THE WEEK

### HYMN OF RESPONSE TLH #23

1. Hallelujah! Let Praises Ring To God the Father let us Bring  
Our songs of adoration. To Him thro everlasting days  
Be worship, honor, pow'r and praise  
Whose hand sustains creation  
Singing, Ringing: Holy, holy, God is holy, Spread the story  
Of our God, the Lord of Glory.

## A GATHERING OF OFFERINGS

- Part of the response of God's people to his many gifts, is to bring their gifts of love for him. The offerings presented to the Lord at the altar are used for the sharing of the Good News of God's love for people both in our community and throughout the world.

## PRAYERS

## LITURGY OF HOLY COMMUNION

### THE PREFACE

**P**— The Lord be with you:

**C**— (sing) AND WITH THY SPIRIT.

**P**— Let us give thanks unto the Lord our God.



**C-** (sing) IT IS MEET AND RIGHT SO TO DO.

**P-** Now we praise you that you sent us your only Son and that in him, being found in fashion as a man, you manifested the fullness of your love.

### HYMN: TLH #94

1. Holy, holy holy Lord! God of hosts, by all adored!  
Heaven and earth cannot contain All the glory of your name!  
Hail, hosanna, God most high! Blest is he who now draws  
nigh  
In the name of God the King! Hallelujahs glad we sing:  
'Hail hosanna! Praises due Be forever, Lord, to you!'

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

**P-** Our Father...

**C-** (sing) FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM AND THE  
POWER AND THE GLORY FOREVER AND EVER.  
AMEN.

### HYMN: TLH #61

1. Faithful Father, now before you Do I come with fervent plea.  
Though unworthy, I implore you Still be merciful to me.  
Let your face upon me shine When before you I recline;  
Let your sacrament give gladness, And relieve my soul's  
sadness.

### WORDS OF INSTITUTION (Spoken)

**C-** 'Twas on that dark, that doleful night When pow'rs of earth  
and hell arose Against the Son of God's delight And friends  
betrayed him to his foes.

Before the mournful scene began, He took the bread, and  
blessed and brake. What love through all his actions ran!  
What wondrous words of grace he spake!

**MEN-** "This is my body, broke for sin; Receive and eat the living  
food"; Then took the cup and blessed the wine: "'Tis the new  
cov'nant in my blood."

"Do this," he said, "till time shall end, In mem'ry of your  
dying Friend. Meet at my table and record The love of your  
departed Lord."

**WOMEN-** Jesus, your feast we celebrate; We show your death, we  
sing your name, Till you return and we shall eat The  
marriage supper of the Lamb.

### THE DISTRIBUTION

### THE THANKSGIVING TLH #85

1. Oh, thank the Lord, whose goodness sure  
And steadfast love fore'er endure!  
Our eyes have seen, our ears have heard,  
And we have tasted of his word.
2. As his own servants we depart  
With his salvation in our heart.  
His saving power he has made known;  
His love through all the earth is shown.
3. Lord, let us show the world your light  
Let us declare your glory bright,  
Proclaim your death until you come  
To take your ransomed servants home.
4. Glory to God, the Father, Son,  
And Holy Spirit, three-in-one!  
Oh, thank the Lord, whose goodness sure  
And steadfast love fore'er endure!

### BENEDICTION

**P-** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the  
fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C-** (sing) AMEN. AMEN. AMEN.

### THE CLOSING HYMN TLH # 136

1. Angels from the realms of glory  
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
Ye who sang creation's story,  
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:  
Come and worship, come and worship;  
Worship Christ the newborn King!
2. Saints before the altar bending,  
Watching long in hope and fear,  
Suddenly the Lord, descending,  
In His Temple shall appear:  
Come and worship, come and worship;  
Worship Christ the newborn King!



# *Praise Today*

## *Anniversary Hymns*

*by Mark S. Bergemann and Rev. John R. Hildebrant*

*For its 150th anniversary, WELS held a hymn competition. Those whose hymns were not selected have been notified. Praise Today is proud to be able to share some of those hymns with its readers.*

“Forward in Christ, Our Faithful Savior,” 1998 by Mark S. Bergemann. Based on Psalm 111

1. Glorious, majestic, wondrous,  
Every work You do succeeds.  
LORD You always have been gracious,  
Let us contemplate Your deeds.  
Faithful Savior, Faithful Savior,  
You have fulfilled all our needs.
2. LORD You’ve showered blessings untold,  
On the WELS, our ministry,  
Now one hundred fifty years old,  
Still Your love is plain to see.  
Faithful Savior, Faithful Savior,  
Your love knows no boundary.
  - ..[alternate second line with revised years on line 4: ..  
“On our church, our ministry,”]
  - ..[alternate last line: “Bless this anniversary.”]
3. Even though we now have entered,  
The twenty first century,  
All the problems we’ll encounter,  
You have solved at Calvary.  
Forward in Christ, Forward in Christ,  
Christ provides full victory.
  - ..[alternate last line: “Bless this anniversary.”]
4. God Jehovah You’re the “I AM,”  
All else changes, You’re the same.  
Timeless, changeless, faithful Guardian,  
Praise and honor to your name.  
Forward in Christ, Forward in Christ,  
Let this be our life long aim.

“Forward March the Sons of Heaven” Copyright ©1998, John R. Hildebrant, Sung to “Praise My Soul” or “Lauda Anima”

1. Forward march the sons of heaven, Guided by a glorious sight.  
See the pillared cloud of fire, Leading onward; beaming bright.  
God is faithful! God is faithful To his children day and night!
2. Forward tho we wish to tarry At the place he blessed us so.  
In his wisdom; by his pleasure, He has other fields to show.  
God is faithful! God is faithful! Where he leads us, we will go.
3. Forward leaving cares behind us, Sin and sorrow that dismayed.  
All our troubles; all our trials, At the cross our burdens laid.  
God is faithful! God is faithful! By his blood the price was paid!
4. Forward through relentless ages, As we mark each milestone.  
Still the sands of time continue, ‘Til we know as we are known.  
God is faithful! God is faithful! He is ever with his own!
5. Forward march the sons of heaven, Toward a glorious victory.  
We, as heirs with Christ forever, Are no longer slave but free.  
God is faithful! God is faithful! Praise him for eternity!