

Praise Today

Contemporary Worship Forms in the Context of the Historical Service

Volume 5, Number 6

November/December 1999

In This Issue...

Salem's Thanksgiving Service

Rev. James R. Sonnemann, WELS, Milwaukee, WI

On 25 November, 1999, Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church on Milwaukee's lower east side celebrated Thanksgiving. In lieu of a sermon, the service followed a progression of thoughts on the blessings we have to be thankful for as people of God and sheep of His pasture. Space was provided in the bulletin throughout the service to write down items for one's Thanksgiving prayer list.

COME BEFORE HIM WITH JOYFUL SONGS!

WELCOME! Why approach God with joyful songs in our hearts and on our lips? Tonight we consider the reasons for giving thanks, as God presents them in Psalm 100

Greeting

Invocation

HYMN—#613: "Come, You Thankful People, Come"

(Unless otherwise noted, all hymns are from *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal* published by Northwestern Publishing House)

Approach to God- Confession of Sin and Absolution

THEME TEXT—Psalm 100

A psalm. For giving thanks.

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

HYMN—#233: "All People That on Earth Do Dwell"

PART ONE:

COME BEFORE HIM WITH JOYFUL SONGS!

Because We are His People

God uses the expression "my people" as a term of endearment.

HE IS OUR GOD—In response to God's having chosen us as his people, we acknowledge that he is "our God"—our own term of endearment for him. We give thanks that God is our God and that he has chosen us as his people.

SCRIPTURE—Leviticus 26:3-13

God details the meaning of our relationship with him.

SCRIPTURE—Exodus 34:6-7

God is patient and merciful

CONSIDER—What does it mean that God has chosen me to be his own? What purpose has he in mind for me? What does it mean that he is my God? **COME BEFORE HIM WITH JOYFUL SONGS!**

Our Prayer List.

HYMN—#609: "We Praise You, O God, Our Redeemer"

HE MADE US—We are not an accident of evolution, but the crowning masterpiece of God's creation. Even though sin has taken its toll in our souls and bodies and has disguised the perfection of his creation in us, we can still see in the human creature the excellence of his design.

SCRIPTURE—Psalm 8:3-9

The honored position God has given humankind in his creation is amazing to David. For his small size in contrast to the vastness of the universe, mankind holds a far greater position than would be expected.

SCRIPTURE—Psalm 139:13-17

The human body is fabulously complex, a tribute to God's loving care in making us.

CONSIDER—What amazing talents and abilities has God designed into my being? What has he enabled me to do in his service? What opportunities for service has God provided me? When has God enabled my body to recover from serious illness or injury? What purpose has he shown for me in my life, following that recovery? **COME BEFORE HIM WITH JOYFUL SONGS!**

Our Prayer List:

HYMN—#235: "Praise the Almighty, My Soul Adore Him"



WE ARE THE SHEEP OF HIS PASTURE—That we are called God's sheep tells us more about him than it does about us. It communicates his provision for us, his tender care, his patience, his loving discipline, his protection. We thank God that, in his care, we are, body and soul, completely at peace.

SCRIPTURE—Psalm 23

God's sheep are perfectly content, despite all the dangers that surround them.

SCRIPTURE—Romans 8:32

God sacrificed his own Son for us. Jesus became the guarantee of God's promise to provide everything we need for this life and the next.

CONSIDER—How has God provided for me and protected me, even in the most difficult circumstances? How has God used the negative things in my life to discipline and train me—to bring positive results—and to draw me closer to him? **COME BEFORE HIM WITH JOYFUL SONGS!**

Our Prayer List:

CHOIR—Psalm 148 (CW page 121)

PRAYER—We thank God that he has made us his people.

Praise Today is an independent publication serving pastors and worship leaders of confessional Lutheranism. It is published bi-monthly 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.

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Back issues are available by writing to the editor at the address above.

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PART TWO: COME BEFORE HIM WITH JOYFUL SONGS!

Because His Love Endures Forever

God's love is not a changing response to our behavior or attitude; God's love is no mere emotion. God's love is unconditional commitment to his people, unrelated to who they have been or what they have done. We give thanks that God's love for us is unchanging.

HE IS GOOD—Goodness is the nature of God. That is most clearly demonstrated in his impartial provision for all he has created, his even-handedness in providing for the evil and the good.

SCRIPTURE—Matthew 5:43-48

God's goodness is extended to all his creatures.

SCRIPTURE—Psalm 145:13b

God provides for every living thing he has made; his special favor rests on those he calls his own.

CONSIDER—God has given me much more than the necessities of life. What are the necessities I am thankful for? For what blessings beyond the necessities am I thankful? What motivates me to show thankfulness for his gifts with an even-handedness of my own in dealing with others? **COME BEFORE HIM WITH JOYFUL SONGS!**

Our Prayer List:

HYMN—#611: "For the Fruit of His Creation"



HIS FAITHFULNESS ENDURES THROUGH ALL GENERATIONS—

Throughout the Bible's history of God's relationship with his chosen people Israel, one thing remains consistent, despite Israel's inconsistency—God's faithful love. For the sake of the Savior's promise and for our salvation, God kept his chosen people as his own treasure, even when they did not deserve it. We thank God for his faithful love, which allows us always to know that we live in his forgiveness.

SCRIPTURE—2 Corinthians 5:21

In his faithful love, God accomplished for us the goal of his saving plan.

SCRIPTURE—1 Corinthians 10:13

God's faithful love sustains us through trials and temptations.

SCRIPTURE—2 Timothy 2:11-13

Because of God's faithfulness, we always know where we stand with him.

CONSIDER—What sins in my life continue to trouble my conscience? How is God's faithfulness, his enduring love through the sacrifice of Jesus, a comfort to my troubled soul? What opportunities has God provided for me to extend this comfort to other troubled souls? **COME BEFORE HIM WITH JOYFUL SONGS!**

Our Prayer List:

HYMN—#612: "Praise to God, Immortal Praise"

PRAYER—We thank God for his enduring, unconditional love for us in Jesus.



THE OFFERING—The congregation is welcome to come forward at the ushers' direction to place offerings and any food items brought for the food pantry on the table near the front.

CHOIR—"Give Thanks"

Duet on the refrain by Maija Hoh and Shirley Weber.

PRAYERS—We pray to our heavenly Father

Prayer of the Church

Lord's Prayer

CONFESSION OF FAITH—The Apostles' Creed, *CW* page 19.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION—

The Invitation and Exhortation

The Consecration

The Distribution

Distribution Hymns:

#614: "Sing to the Lord of the Harvest"

#616: "Feed Your Children, God Most Holy"

The Thanksgiving Hymn

#610: "Now Thank We All Our God"

THE BLESSING—

Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men

a Christmas children's service by Rev. Eugene Andrus, WELS, Ann Arbor, MI

This Christmas Eve service was written by Rev. Eugene Andrus when he served Trinity Lutheran (WELS) in Elkton, MI. As The Lutheran Hymnal was used in this service, I have noted the hymn numbers for The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) as well as Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal (CW) and Let All the People Praise You (LAPPY).

PRAYER—Almighty God, You made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through Your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

HYMN—TLH #75, CW #14: "Ye Sons of Men, Oh, Hearken"

The Call to Worship

PASTOR—Unto us the Christ is born.

PEOPLE—*Oh, come, let us worship Him!*

PASTOR—I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people.

PEOPLE—*Today a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord.*

PASTOR—Christ the Lord, our Savior, everlasting God and Mary's Son:

PEOPLE—*We praise you forever. Amen.*

Confession of Sins

ALL—O almighty God, merciful Father, I, a poor miserable sinner, confess unto Thee (You) all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended Thee (You) and justly deserve Thy (Your) temporal and eternal punishment. But I

am heartily sorry for them, and sincerely repent of them, and I pray Thee (You) of Thy (Your) boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Thy (Your) beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.

Absolution of Sins

PASTOR—Upon this, your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

The Christmas Creed

ALL—I believe in God the Father almighty, who sent His Son to be my Savior;

And I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, my Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, announced by the angels, worshiped by the shepherds, adored by the Wise Men, who lived to suffer, die, and rise again, to free me from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil;

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, who has brought me to faith in my Savior, and by whose continuous work in my heart I rejoice in my salvation, show forth His praises, and will one day live and reign with Him in all eternity. Amen.

The Promise Given

SCRIPTURE READING—Genesis 3:15

SCRIPTURE READING—Isaiah 59:20

HYMN—TLH #62, CW #23: “Oh, Come, OI, Come, Emmanuel”

The Promise Kept

SCRIPTURE READING—Luke 2:1-7

HYMN—CW #68: “Away in a Manger”

The Fulfillment Announced

SCRIPTURE READING—Luke 2:8-14

HYMN—“It Came Upon A Midnight Clear”

The Fulfillment Seen

SCRIPTURE READING—Luke 2:15-16

SCRIPTURE READING—Matthew 2:1-12

HYMN—CW #67: “What Child is This?”

The Fulfillment Proclaimed

SCRIPTURE READING—Luke 2:17-20

HYMN—“Good Christian Men, Rejoice”

Peace With God

SCRIPTURE READING—2 Corinthians 5:19-21

HYMN—TLH #646, CW #60, LAPPY #58
“Silent Night”

(Three English verses sung, followed by the two verses in German.)

Offering

Responsive Prayer

PASTOR—Dear Savior, we worship and praise you this night:

PEOPLE—*For You are the God of our salvation.*

PASTOR—Bless our hearts and homes and loved ones:

PEOPLE—*And cause your light to shine upon us.*

PASTOR—Instill in us the peace of Christmas:

PEOPLE—*So that our hearts may be filled with gladness.*

PASTOR—You came as the Hope of the world.

PEOPLE—*Illumine our hearts with the Gospel of your forgiveness.*

PASTOR—You, who came from heaven to earth at Christmas:

PEOPLE—*Come to each of us with your blessings.*

PASTOR—In the coming New Year, bless our country and church;

PEOPLE—*Bless our Christian schools and homes.*

PASTOR—Above all, bless and strengthen our faith in you:

PEOPLE—*And cause us to walk according to your Word. Amen.*

ALL—*The Lord’s Prayer*

Benediction

CONGREGATION—*Amen, Amen, Amen*

HYMN—TLH #99: “Now Are the Days Fulfilled”



O Come Let Us Adore Him!

a Christmas children's service by Rev. Eugene Andrus, WELS, Ann Arbor, MI

This Christmas Eve service was written by Rev. Eugene Andrus when he served Trinity Lutheran (WELS) in Elkton, MI. As The Lutheran Hymnal was used in this service, I have noted the hymn numbers for The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) as well as Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal (CW) and Let All the People Praise You (LAPPY).

HYMN–TLH #102, CW #55: “Oh Come, All Ye Faithful”

PASTOR–Unto Us a child is born, unto us a son is given.

PEOPLE–Hymn TLH #97, CW #64: “Let Us All With Gladsome Voice” (verse 1).

PASTOR–The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost.

PEOPLE–Hymn TLH #97, CW #64: “Let Us All With Gladsome Voice” (verse 2).

PASTOR–For your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

PEOPLE–Hymn TLH #97, CW #64: “Let Us All With Gladsome Voice” (verse 3).

PASTOR–Let us pray.

O God, who has made this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light, grant, that as we have known on earth the mysteries of that Light, we may also come to the fullness of its joys in heaven through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

PEOPLE–Amen

ADDRESS BY PASTOR–Text: John 3:16

HYMN–“Oh, Come, All Ye Children”

NARRATOR–The Lord has made and fulfilled many promises.

Tonight, we will let God's record speak for itself. Through the pages of Holy Scripture, we know that we are saved from eternal death, and given eternal life. That is God's will. We see that from his threat to the devil, just after Adam and Eve sinned:

Genesis 3:15

St. Paul tells us how it was fulfilled:

Galatians 4:4

HYMN–“When Time Had Fully Come”

By Rev. Eugene Andrus

Tune: TLH #58, CW #19

1. When time had fully come,
God sent His Son to die
To change what we'd become
And let us live on high.
He sent His Son to save us,
By living in our place.
Our Savior's name is Jesus,
He saved our fallen race.

2. The world became so evil
That death reigned over all.
When tempted by the devil
Mankind had chose to fall.
But we were not left lying
In helplessness of sin.
God promised that by dying
His Son, our lives would win.

3. He is our God and Father,
His promises are sure.
The Christ became our brother,
Our own flesh to endure.
Jesus was born of Mary
In little Bethlehem.
He came our sins to carry
And give life to all men.

NARRATOR–See how through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord gave us a special sign of His Son's arrival:

Isaiah 7:14

Luke, in his Gospel, tells us exactly how this was fulfilled:

Luke 1:28-35

HYMN–TLH #95, CW #2: “Savior of the Nations Come”

Children sing vv. 1 and 2;

Congregation sings vv. 3 and 4

NARRATOR—God even told us the exact city His Son would be born in:

Micah 5:2

Matthew and Luke both tell us that this is exactly where Jesus was born. Listen to Matthew's account:

Matthew 2:1

CHILDREN SING—CW #50: "Once in Royal David's City"

NARRATOR—God even told us that Jesus would have to flee to Egypt shortly after he was born to avoid being slaughtered by Herod:

Hosea 11:1

Matthew tells how God warned Joseph in a dream of the horrible act Herod was about to commit:

Matthew 2:14

All of these promises and prophecies were fulfilled when God sent His one and only Son to save the world from their sins. Join with us now as we recreate the events that changed history nearly 2000 years ago.

Luke 2:1-7

CHILDREN'S HYMN—CW #68: "Away in a Manger"

Luke 2:8-14

HYMN—TLH #94, CW #61: "Kark, the Herald Angels Sing"

Luke 2:15-20

HYMN—TLH #85, CW #38: "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come"

(Children sing first half of hymn, congregation second half. Rev. Andrus chose the four verses that testify to the angels and shepherds.)

NARRATOR—God's great love for us caused Him to send His one and only Son to die for us. If He loves us that much, and He is that faithful to His promises, then Christmas means that we can trust God in all our earthly problems, and rely on Him to take us to heaven. After all, we are told through the Apostle Paul:

Romans 8:28

Romans 8:32

Romans 8:37-39

HYMN—TLH #74, CW #17: "Once He Came in Blessing"

Offering

HYMN—TLH #646, CW #60, LAPPY #58: "Silent Night"

(Children sing verses 1 and 2 in English, then verse 1 in German; congregation then sings verse 3 in English followed by verse 2 in German.)

Responsive Prayer

PASTOR—Dear Savior, we worship and praise you this night:

PEOPLE—*For You are the God of our salvation.*

PASTOR—Bless our hearts and homes and loved ones:

PEOPLE—*And cause your light to shine upon us.*

PASTOR—Instill in us the peace of Christmas:

PEOPLE—*So that our hearts may be filled with gladness.*

PASTOR—You came as the Hope of the world.

PEOPLE—*Illumine our hearts with the Gospel of your forgiveness.*

PASTOR—You, who came from heaven to earth at Christmas:

PEOPLE—*Come to each of us with your blessings.*

PASTOR—In the coming New Year, bless our country and church;

PEOPLE—*Bless our Christian schools and homes.*

PASTOR—Above all, bless and strengthen our faith in you:

PEOPLE—*And cause us to walk according to your Word. Amen.*

ALL—*The Lord's Prayer*

Benediction

CONGREGATION—*Amen, Amen, Amen*

HYMN—TLH #87, CW #62: "Joy to the World"



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Praise Today

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

By John L. Hoh, Jr., editor

Once again we approach the Christmas season with joyful anticipation. Once again we review the fulfillment of God's promise to all people, first spoken to Adam and Eve—His Son sent to redeem us from our sin, to crush the head of Satan's power, to free us from sin and death and the clutches of the Devil! This heir of Abraham and Son of David would be betrayed by his own people to the Romans who would nail him to the cross. This death of an innocent man and the shedding of his precious blood would make total payment for all sins, for all time, just as He announced from the cross:

“IT IS FINISHED!”

Praise Today is pleased to bring you two fine Children's Eve services from Rev. Eugene Andrus. While it is late for them to be used for 1999, keep them in mind for next year or the following years.

Also included is Rev. James Sonnemann's Thanksgiving Service from 1999. In lieu of a sermon, the service followed along a review of God's blessings—even blessings in trial and tribulation—and allowed for people to write down their blessings for meditation and prayer. May you find this useful in corporate worship or in home devotionals!

Next year will see changes to *Praise Today*. Because of the response of people and their contributions, *Praise Today* will become a monthly periodical starting with the January 2000 issue. Again, only by the grace of God has this been able to happen.

May each and every one of you have a Joyous Christmas season and a Happy New Year! May God's promises remain our light and beacon as we forge into the future!

