

Prisoners of Hope

As We Gather

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion.” When we hear these words of the prophet Zechariah in the season of Advent, we are evermore ready to rejoice, especially as Christmas approaches. But to hear these words now in the middle of summer may strike us as a little more challenging. The pressures and doldrums of daily life can wear away momentary joys. In fact, the call to rejoice can seem pointless echoing against the hard walls of a prison of our own making. No matter how many Christmases we have celebrated, like the apostle Paul, we may continue to feel trapped by our unrelenting sinfulness. True joy comes only as we receive the comforting words of our Lord, “Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Herein is the goal of Christmas. Here today by means of the Word of God and the receiving of His body and blood, God gives you faith to believe and to receive eternal salvation. By God’s Word, even today “it’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas.” For here is where true joy is found.

Invocation

- P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Confession and Absolution

Romans 7:15; Matthew 11:28

- P** With the apostle Paul today we admit, “I do not understand my own actions.
C **For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.”**

- P** At the invitation of God our Savior, let us bring our weariness and burdens to Him, that His forgiveness may rescue us and restore to us the joy of His salvation.
C **For if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

- P** Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.
C **Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean and cannot free ourselves. Even though we rejoice at the joy of Christmas, daily our sins of thought, word, and deed cause us grief. We have forgotten You even when we needed You the most. Our love for our neighbors has faded. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, we come at His invitation seeking the true rest of the forgiveness of our sins. Amen.**

- P** “Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Upon this, your confession, I by virtue of my office as a called and ordained servant of the Word announce the grace of God to 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 Spirit.

C Amen.

349 Hark the Glad Sound

LSB 349



1 Hark the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, The Sav - ior
2 He comes the pris - 'ners to re - lease, In Sa - tan's
3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, The bleed - ing
4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of Peace, Thy wel - come



prom - ised long; Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare a
bond - age held. The gates of brass be - fore Him
soul to cure, And with the trea - sures of His
shall pro - claim, And heav'n's e - ter - nal arch - es



throne And ev - 'ry voice a song.
burst, The i - ron fet - ters yield.
grace To en - rich the hum - ble poor.
ring With Thy be - lov - ed name.

Text: Philip Doddridge, 1702–51

Tune: Thomas Haweis, 1734–1820

Text and tune: Public domain

Kyrie

LSB 152

A In peace let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

A For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

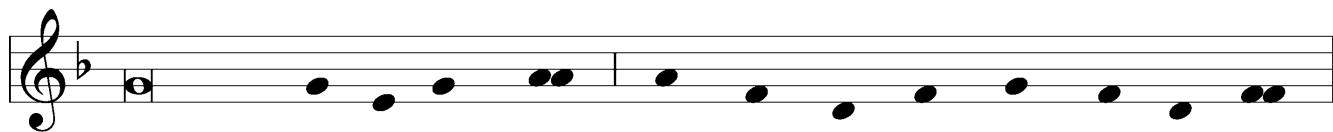
C Lord, have mercy.

A For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

A Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C Amen.



A Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His peo - ple on earth.



C Lord God, heav-en-ly king, al-might-y God and Fa - ther:



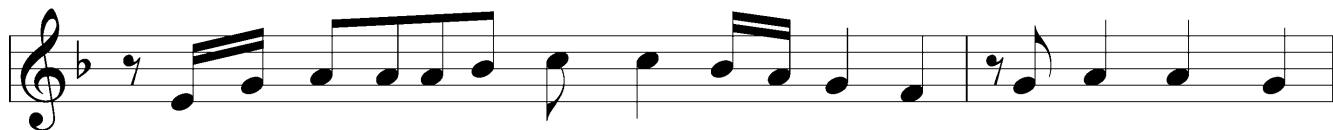
We wor-ship You, we give You thanks, we praise You for Your glo-ry.



Lord Je-sus Christ, on-ly Son of the Fa-ther, Lord God, Lamb of God:



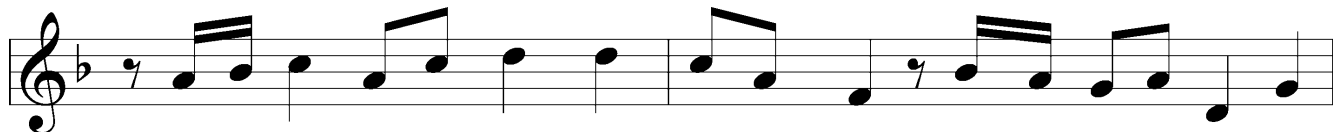
You take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.



You are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa-ther; re-ceive our prayer.



For You a-lone are the Ho-ly One, You a-lone are the Lord,



You a-lone are the Most High, Je-sus Christ, with the Ho-ly Spir-it,



in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

Salutation

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

P Let us pray.

Gracious God, our heavenly Father, Your mercy attends us all our days. Be our strength and support amid the wearisome changes of this world, and at life's end grant us Your promised rest and the full joys of Your salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Old Testament Reading

Zechariah 9:9–12

⁹Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Behold, your king is coming to you;

righteous and having salvation is he,

humble and mounted on a donkey,

on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

¹⁰I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim

and the war horse from Jerusalem;

and the battle bow shall be cut off,

and he shall speak peace to the nations;

his rule shall be from sea to sea,

and from the River to the ends of the earth.

¹¹As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,

I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

¹²Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;

today I declare that I will restore to you double.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Epistle

Romans 7:14–25a

¹⁴We know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. ¹⁵I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

¹⁶Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. ¹⁷So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to

carry it out. ¹⁹For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

²¹So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. ²²For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Gradual and Verse

Romans 11:33, 36; Matthew 11:28

P Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!

C How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways!

P For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.

C To Him be glory forever. Amen.

P Alleluia. Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden,

C and I will give you rest. Alleluia.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 11:25–30

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the eleventh chapter.

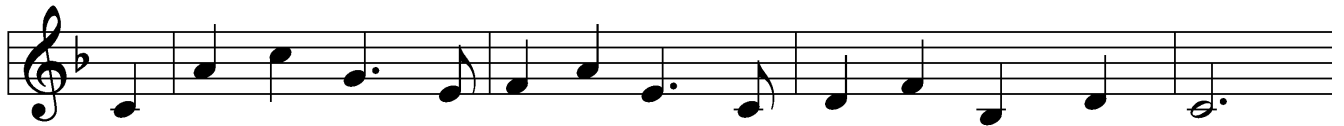
C Glory to You, O Lord.

²⁵At that time Jesus declared, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; ²⁶yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. ²⁷All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.



1 I heard the voice of Je - sus say, "Come un - to Me and rest;
 2 I heard the voice of Je - sus say, "Be - hold, I free - ly give
 3 I heard the voice of Je - sus say, "I am this dark world's light.



Lay down, thou wea - ry one, lay down Thy head up - on My breast."
 The liv - ing wa - ter; thirst - y one, Stoop down and drink and live."
 Look un - to Me; thy morn shall rise And all thy day be bright."



I came to Je - sus as I was, So wea - ry, worn, and sad;
 I came to Je - sus, and I drank Of that life - giv - ing stream;
 I looked to Je - sus, and I found In Him my star, my sun;



I found in Him a rest - ing place, And He has made me glad.
 My thirst was quenched, my soul re - vived, And now I live in Him.
 And in that light of life I'll walk Till trav - ling days are done.

Text: Horatius Bonar, 1808–89, alt.

Tune: Amanda Husberg, 1940

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Sermon

Apostles' Creed

Nicene Creed

**☐ I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
 maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
 born of the virgin Mary,
 suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified, died and was buried.
 He descended into hell.
 The third day He rose again from the dead.
 He ascended into heaven
 and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.**

From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life † everlasting. Amen.

Offering -We Thank the Lord with the Offering

Offertory

LSB 192

Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -
new a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a -
way from Thy pres - ence, and take not Thy Ho - ly Spir - it
from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of Thy sal - va -
tion, and up - hold me with Thy free spir-it. A - men.

Prayer of the Church

LSB 386:1

P O God of grace, God of glory, “Now sing we, now rejoice, Now raise to heaven our voice.” For having first come to us in the person of Your Son, You have lifted us out of our sorrowful bondage to sin and death and raised us to the freedom and newness of eternal life. You have washed us in baptismal waters and renewed us in faith given by Your Holy Spirit. We sing and rejoice in thankfulness and praise. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Cause the joy of Your gracious reign of peace and hope to continue to blossom and grow throughout the world by the proclamation of Your mighty Word. To that end, bless and sustain all pastors and ministers of Your Word and the witness of all who joyfully testify to Your grace. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Eternal Lord and ruler of all, save and defend our country. Graciously regard all who have been set in positions of authority among us, that, guided by Your Spirit, we may be governed in peace and safety. Strengthen and protect those who serve in the armed forces of our country that they be upheld in integrity and with honor. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Continue to bless the earth to make it fruitful, bringing forth in abundance all that is needed for the support of our lives. Bless our homes and families that we may dwell together in peace, sharing in Your blessings. Be with all who are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any adversity. Grant Your peace and healing, and above all, faith in Your never-failing promises. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P We commend to Your eternal protection, O Lord, all Your servants who have departed this life in faith and now rest in the sleep of peace. Grant to them Your mercy and everlasting peace. Teach us all to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom, and when our last hour comes, be with us and grant us a blessed end. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Lord's Prayer

LSB 162

P Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C **Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;**

and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

C Amen.

Announcements

966 Before You, Lord, We Bow

LSB 966



1 Be - fore You, Lord, we bow, Our God who reigns a - bove
2 The na - tion You have blest May well Your love de - clare,
3 May ev - 'ry moun - tain height, Each vale and for - est green,
4 Earth, hear your Mak - er's voice; Your great Re - deem - er own;
5 And when in pow'r He comes, Oh, may our na - tive land



And rules the world be - low, Bound - less in pow'r and love. Our thanks
From foes and fears at rest, Pro - tect - ed by Your care. For this
Shine in Your Word's pure light, And its rich fruits be seen! May ev -
Be - lieve, o - bey, re - joice, And wor - ship Him a - lone. Cast down
From all its rend - ing tombs Send forth a glo - rious band, A count -



we bring In joy and praise, Our hearts we raise To You, our King!
bright day, For this fair land—Gifts of Your hand—Our thanks we pay.
'ry tongue Be tuned to praise And join to raise A grate - ful song.
your pride, Your sin de - plore, And bow be - fore The Cru - ci - fied.
less throng, With joy to sing To heav'n's high King Sal - va - tion's song!

Text: Francis Scott Key, 1779–1843, alt.

Tune: John Darwall, 1731–89

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