

We Sing –

“This is What We Are Baptized For ...” (based on the LWML Pledge)

Text and tune: Bernhard Seter, Used with permission.

Alternative closing hymn – “Go, My Children with My Blessing” – LSB 922.

Acknowledgements

i Matthew Harrison, *Christ Have Mercy*, (St. Louis, Concordia, 2008) 33

ii Online document - http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=3713

iii Op cite

iv Op Cite

v Op Cite

vi *Martin Luther: The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*. Multiple sources.

vii Op Cite

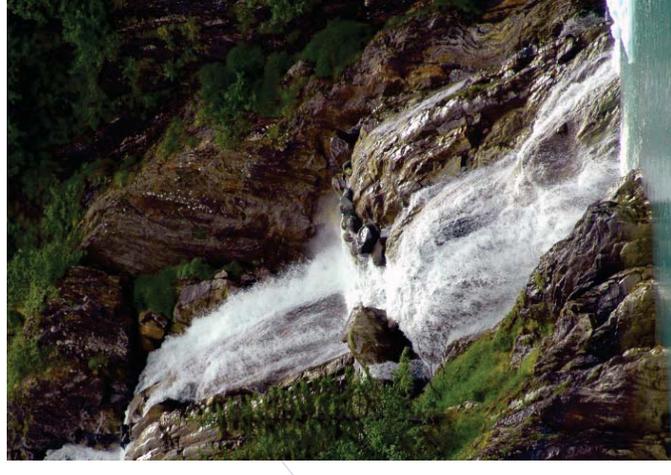
viii Online document - http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=3713

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This is What We Are Baptized For...

2014 LWML Prayer Service



You would keep us safe and secure in the holy ark of the Christian Church, being separated from the multitude of unbelievers and serving Your name at all times with a fervent spirit and a joyful hope, so that, with all believers in Your promise, we will be declared worthy of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Reader 3: Luther's Evening Prayer is also a remembrance of Baptism and a petition for that divine protection through the night.

All: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands, I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Leader: Of course as baptized children of God we are bold to pray the prayer that Jesus taught us:

All: The Lord's Prayer

We Speak – "The League Pledge"

In fervent gratitude for the Savior's dying love and His blood-bought gift of redemption we dedicate ourselves to Him with all that we are and have; and in obedience to His call for workers in the harvest fields, we pledge Him our willing service wherever and whenever He has need of us. We consecrate to our Savior our hands to work for Him, our feet to go on His errands, our voice to sing His praises, our lips to proclaim His redeeming love, our silver and our gold to extend His Kingdom, our will to do His will, and every power of our life to the great task of bringing the lost and the erring into eternal fellowship with Him. Amen.

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The woman that we have been following was named Margarethe Lindemann. She married a man by the name of Hans Luther and the son who wrote her this letter was named Martin.

Leader: Luther was grounded in Baptism because Baptism is pure Gospel, pure good news. It was the foundation of all of his life because it is the gift that begins our life in Christ. Almost everything that he writes and preaches will go back to Baptism.

Reader 1: Many believe that Luther’s Morning Prayer is the result of his understanding of Baptism and the daily dying to sin and rising to new life. In those prayers, he asks for protection in the struggle against the old evil foe.

All: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Reader 2: Luther’s Baptism Prayer can certainly be revisited and prayed everyday of our life.

All: Almighty and eternal God, according to Your strict judgment You condemned the unbelieving world through the flood, yet according to Your great mercy You preserved believing Noah and his family, eight souls in all. You drowned hard-hearted Pharaoh and all his host in the Red Sea, yet led Your people Israel through the water on dry ground, foreshadowing this washing of Your Holy Baptism. Through the Baptism in the Jordan of Your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, You sanctified and instituted all waters to be a blessed flood and a lavish washing away of sin. We pray that

This Is What We Are Baptized For ...

LWML Prayer Service 2014

2013 was an interesting year in our church body. It was a year of conventions. The Youth Gathering and the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League (LWML) Convention and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) Convention were all held in one summer. If you paid attention you could look at the themes and see your baptism in the background. The young people were challenged to “Live Loved.” They can live loved because when the “*kindness and generosity of God our Savior appeared He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit*” (Titus 3:4-5 author’s translation). The women of the LWML were “Quenched! by the Water” using the words of Jesus in John 4:14. He promises to be a well of water bubbling up to everlasting life, and that water starts in Baptism. The convention of the LCMS was “Baptized for this Moment.” This prayer service is designed to help us find out what we are baptized for and to ask for the strength and grace to do it.

Notes on the organization of the service: This prayer service is based upon a story of a dying woman. Into her story is interwoven the story of our baptism and prayers of thanksgiving to God for this marvelous gift. Understanding that many groups will adapt and change prayer services for time and local customs, the only request that the author makes is that you follow the women’s story to its conclusion and wait for the revealing ending.

It may be very effective to have a different voice read the Narrator sections.

Hymns are taken from the *Lutheran Service Book* except for the last one written by the author. The music score appears at the end of the service.

About the Author

Rev. Bernhard Seter serves three congregations in North Dakota: Zion English Lutheran in Grafton, Trinity Lutheran in Drayton, and St. John Lutheran in Crystal. He also serves as the Chaplain at the “Life Skills and Transition Center” in Grafton. He has served the congregations of Trinity and Zion since 1978. Seter is a former LWML Counselor for the LWML North Dakota District. He served on the Board of LCMS World Relief and Human Care for many years as the Chair and he is now serving as the Chair for the Board for International Missions. He has traveled to Africa and works with Project 24, a group of five laymen who are trying to build rescue centers for orphans in Kenya. He visited India, Southeast Asia, and the Dominican Republic to see firsthand the missions and ministries supported by the LWML. Seter chose this theme because of the convention themes of Baptism from the summer of 2013. Seter said, “I am convinced when I read the LWML pledge that works of mercy and service in support of Gospel proclamation is what all of us were baptized for. It may be bad grammar but it is great theology.” Seter is married to Faye, a former parochial school teacher and former Christian Growth Director in the local LWML.

O Christian, firmly hold this gift
And give God thanks forever!
It gives the power to uplift
In all that you endeavor.
When nothing else revives your soul,
Your Baptism stands and makes you whole
And then in death completes you.

So use it well! You are made new—
In Christ a new creation!
As faithful Christians, live and do
Within your own vocation,
Until that day when you possess
His glorious robe of righteousness
Bestowed on you forever!

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We are Baptized for – a Death

Narrator: We know nothing about the son’s reaction after the death of this woman that we have been following. We do know that at the time of her death, he had a two year old baby daughter and that 11 years later she would die, too. The daughters name was Magdelana and in a letter to a friend that had lost his wife and daughter, he would write of her passing that, “It may appear strange, but I am still mourning the death ... and I am not able to forget her. Yet I know surely that she is in heaven, that she has eternal life there, and that God has thereby given me a true token of his love in having, even while I live, taken my flesh and blood to his Fatherly heart.” ix

another, as Christ forgave us. But above all these we ask for love, which is the bond of perfection. We pray that the peace of God rule in our hearts, and that we be thankful. Heavenly Father, we ask that the Word of Christ dwell in us richly and that through Your Spirit You would give us all wisdom. Strengthen us through the ministry of the Word that we can be equipped to teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to You. Bless us, O Lord, so that whatever we do in word or deed, we may do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, just as we do in this prayer. Amen (a paraphrase from Colossians 3).

We Sing –

“All Christians Who Have Been Baptized” – LSB 596 (stanzas 1, 5, 6)

All Christians who have been baptized,
Who know the God of heaven,
And in whose daily life is prized
The name of Christ once given:
Consider now what God has done,
The gifts He gives to ev'ryone
Baptized into Christ Jesus!

In Baptism we now put on Christ –
Our shame is fully covered
With all that He once sacrificed
And freely for us suffered.
For here the flood of His own blood
Now makes us holy, right, and good
Before our heav'nly Father.

This Is What We Are Baptized For ...

Leader: This is what we're baptized for ... it's all about mercy. The kindness and generosity of God our Savior appeared in Jesus. By the sacrifice of our High Priest, our sins are forgiven. By the proclamation of our anointed Prophet through the church – the dispenser of His underserved love – we come to faith and are transferred into the Kingdom of Light where our risen King rules. It is all about mercy. As Luther says, Christ mercifully, “sinks and sticks Himself in to the water” as though He were any ordinary sinner, so when we go into the water we may pull Him out with us. We see in the account of Jesus' Baptism that the heavens are mercifully “*torn open*” (Mark 1:10 NIV) and the Father speaks. “Heaven which before was closed, is opened by Christ's baptism and a window and door now stand open for us to see through. No longer is there a barrier between God and us, since God himself descends at the Jordan. The Father lets His voice be heard, the Son sanctifies baptism with His body, and the Holy Spirit descends in the form of a dove.” In this life we find sin, death, and misery. In Baptism we find God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as the Triune God of mercy, life, and love, and we find that, mercifully, “heaven is nothing but windows and doors.”ⁱ

We are Baptized for – Life Together with the Holy Trinity

Narrator: A 72-year-old woman is lying on her death bed. We don't know much about her except that she was from “trading class

stock and middling means.” Common and tough, she had led a hard life, and her relationship with her children was not always the best. Her husband had been dead for a month. Her relationship with her husband was impossible to tell. In the days before Facebook and social media, those relationships were kept in-house. We cannot know what was in her mind and heart as she lay there preparing to breathe her last and trying to make sense of her life. We can imagine that she wondered if she had done enough. Had she cared for her children properly? Had she loved her husband enough? Had she been all that she could be in the duties and challenges that life had brought her? One of her sons is considered by many an outlaw and a rebel. We do not know what she thought of him.

What we do know is what one of her children, unable to come to her bedside, told her. He didn’t send a Hallmark© card and he didn’t call her on the phone. He didn’t send her flowers and tell her to get well soon. He sent her a letter. He reminded her of her Baptism. He reminded her of God’s mercy and love and care for her and all the world and he says,

“To such knowledge God has graciously called you, of that you possess his seal and letter, namely the Gospel, baptism, and the sacrament, as you hear preached, namely, so that you shall have no trouble or danger. Be of good cheer, then, and give thanks with joy for such great grace! For he who has started this with you will also end it graciously. For we cannot help ourselves in such matters, we cannot do anything to ward off sin, death, and the devil with our works, for this another appears in our stead and for our sake, one who can do it better, who gives us his victory and commands us to accept it, and not to question it, and who says: “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world;” and again: “I live, and you too will live, and no one shall rob you of your joy.”ⁱⁱ

created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:17-24).

Reader 2: Paul writes to the Colossians: “*But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator*” (Colossians 3:8-10).

Leader: Set your mind on things above. How marvelous. Put on Christ, have the mind of Christ, these are the things we are baptized for. The Rev. Dr. Leopoldo (Leo) Sánchez, Associate Professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and director of the Center for Hispanic Studies, preaching on Philipians 2:5-11 described what it means to have the mind of Christ. “Service was, with Christ, something assumed for our benefit and as an example for us to follow, teaching us to act in like manner toward others, to disrobe ourselves of the appearance of divinity as he did.” What a great way of putting it: “To disrobe ourselves of the appearance of divinity.” Christ, who is God, disrobed Himself, divested Himself, of the form of God, of the “God attitude” as it were, in order to serve us. What His life means for our lives is evident. How much more then should we, seeing what Christ has done for us, divest ourselves of the “God attitude,” which we cannot even claim for ourselves, in order to serve the lost, the poor, the lonely, the widow, the infant, the alien, and all the needy in our midst!

Leader: Therefore we are bold to pray:

All: We pray therefore, as God’s people, holy and beloved, an extra measure of the Holy Spirit that we may put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering. We pray for the strength to bear with one another, and forgive one

“This Jesus is the victor, the true hero, who thus gives and consigns to me his victory: ‘Be of good cheer!’ I shall remain by him, I shall cling to his word and consolation, no matter whether I stay here or journey yonder, for he does not lie to me. Death and the devils false terror would gladly deceive me and tear me from this victor and savior with lying thoughts. But they are all lies, just as certainly as it is true that he has overcome you, and has commanded us to be comforted. Saint Paul also boasts in this way and defies the terror of death: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?’ You can terrify and provoke like a wooden image of death, but you have no power to destroy. For your victory, sting, and power have been swallowed up in the victory of Christ. You may bare your teeth, but you cannot bite. For God has given us victory over you, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, praise and thanks be to him, Amen.”^{viii}

Leader: Paul says in Galatians chapter 3:27, “... for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (NIV). This image of putting on Christ like a new set of clothes means that we also have to take some other clothes off.

Reader 1: Paul says, “Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ! – assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self,

Reader 1: Baptism brings us into an intimate and blessed relationship with the Triune God. In Baptism He brings us into His name. By Baptism God established a covenant relationship with us. He promised to be our Father and adopted us as His children. He made us members of His family and sharers in all the blessings of His grace.

All: We are baptized for a relationship with the God who Jesus revealed as a gracious Father, so we can trustingly pray, “Our Father who art in Heaven.”

Reader 2: Baptism brings us into fellowship and consigns us to Jesus our merciful High Priest, so that our whole life is lived in that mercy. It was mercy that brought Jesus to a cross to take our sins and free us from sin and death and hell.

All: We are baptized into the death of Christ so that we might walk in a new life. Therefore we are bold to pray, Father, out of Your glorious riches strengthen us with power through Your Spirit in our inner being, so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith. And we pray, being rooted and established in love, we may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge, that we may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Amen (a paraphrase of Ephesians 3:14-21).

Reader 3: Baptism consigns us to the life-giving, life-sustaining ministry of the Holy Spirit, who descended upon Jesus at His Baptism.

Leader: Therefore we are bold to pray,

All: Merciful Lord we pray that our hearts will be flooded with light so that we can understand the confident hope You have given to those You called through Baptism who are Your rich and glorious inheritance. We also pray that we will understand the incredible greatness of Your power for us who believe by the power of the Spirit. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the place of honor at Your right hand in the heavenly realms. Now He is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else-not only in this world but also in the world to come and we thank You for this gift. In Jesus' name, Amen (a paraphrase of Ephesians 1:15-23).

We Sing –

“God’s Own Child I Gladly Say It” – LSB 594 (Stanza 1)

God's own child, I gladly say it:
I am baptized into Christ!
He, because I could not pay it,
Gave my full redemption price.
Do I need earth's treasures many?
I have one worth more than any
That brought me salvation free
Lasting to eternity!

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We are Baptized for – Service

Narrator: We have only a few pictures of our dying woman and they are not flattering. We see a stern gaze and a set jaw, as if she is grinding her teeth at some injustice or long-held grudge. We can put the best construction on things and say that her picture shows

We Sing –

“God’s Own Child I Gladly Say It” – LSB 594 (stanzas 2-3)

Sin, disturb my soul no longer:
I am baptized into Christ!
I have comfort even stronger:
Jesus' cleansing sacrifice.
Should a guilty conscience seize me
Since my Baptism did release me
In a dear forgiving flood,
Sprinkling me with Jesus' blood?

Satan, hear this proclamation:

I am baptized into Christ!
Drop your ugly accusation,
I am not so soon enticed.
Now that to the font I've traveled,
All your might has come unraveled,
And, against your tyranny,
God, my Lord, unites with me!

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We are Baptized for – a Change of Clothes and Heart

Narrator: Our dying woman does not know this but when her son's letter arrives she has less than two weeks to live. He senses her approaching death and seeks to use these comforting images to help. He talks about Jesus “consigning us to victory.” The image of the victors crown and the robe of righteousness are right there in the background and the crown of victory brightly shines. He says,

baptism because we have dealt with them in such a cold and casual way and prayed for them at the baptism without any zeal at all.”^{vi}

Reader 3: To those struggling with sin and depression and trials we can do nothing better than tell the person to go to their baptism. There, “His soul will find wondrous comfort, and will be encouraged to hope for mercy, when he considers that the divine promise which God made to him and which cannot possibly lie, still stands unbroken and unchanged, yes, unchangeable by any sins.” As Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:13, “*If we do not believe, He continues to be faithful, He cannot deny Himself.*” Yes, this truth of God will sustain him, so that if all else should sink in ruins, this truth, if he believes it, will not fail him. For in it, he has a shield against all assaults of the enemy, an answer to the sins that disturb his conscience, an antidote for the dread of death and judgment, and a comfort in every temptation — namely, this one truth, — he can say, “God is faithful that promised, Whose sign I have received in my baptism. If God be for me, who is against me?”^{vii}

Leader: We are bold to pray:

All: If all else should sink in ruins the truth of my Baptism remains. When the kindness and generosity of God my Savior appeared, He saved me by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit. I am baptized into the name of the One who said, ‘Don’t be afraid, I have overcome the world.’ In Baptism I have a good conscience before God because of Jesus’ death and resurrection. We thank and praise You Lord for this marvelous gift. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

us the wear and tear of life. On her death bed we can imagine that she is as white as her sheets and that stern gaze is looking into the distance to see what is ahead, or gazing backwards to see what she could have done differently. Did she do her duty to her family, her God, and her neighbors?

Her son obviously knows the ways of the human heart and understands the duty that binds together families and friends, neighbors and members of the body of Christ that comes about because of Baptism. So, he seeks to comfort her with these words,

“With this letter I come to you in person, and, together with all the members of our family, I shall not to be absent from you in spirit. Though I hope that your heart has long since been abundantly instructed, and that — God be praised — you have internalized His comforting Word, and that you are also everywhere provided with ample preachers and comforters, I will nevertheless seek to do my part and, in keeping with my duty, acknowledge myself as your child and you as my mother, as our God and Creator has made us and bound us to each other by mutual duties, so that I may add myself to the number of your comforters.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Leader: In the merciful washing of Baptism, we are freed to live a merciful life. We are free from completely focusing on ourselves because we have a Father in heaven that loves us, a Son that took our sins away, and a Spirit that created us in Baptism to be the temple where He lives. God binds us together by duties of our vocations and callings to care and lift one another up.

Reader 3: Colossians 3:12-13: “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”

Leader: Therefore we are bold to pray;

All: Lord Jesus, as we ponder Your compassion that gave us the gift of Baptism we recognize Your heart for the broken and suffering. Surely there’s no Savior like You: entering, not running from our fallen world; taking, not despising our shame; shouldering, not ignoring our burdens. So help us go with You into the sufferings of friends and family, partners around the world, the poor and needy, the dispossessed and homeless. We don’t like difficulties and would like our baptism to be an antidote for all discomfort and distress. Yet this is what we are baptized for. We are baptized to be Your compassionate hands and feet and voices. In our baptism You tell us as You did the young lawyer in the story of the Good Samaritan to “go and do likewise.” You give us the strength to do so. Strengthen us and continually give us hearts of compassion as we put on the robe of righteousness that You won for us on the cross. In Your name Lord Jesus we pray, Amen.

of our sin? But since death and sin have now been overcome, we may listen with joy and comfort to the sweet word: ‘Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.’ And let us not doubt this word, it is surely true, and what is more, we are also commanded to accept this comfort with joy and thanksgiving.”^v

Leader: In Baptism we place in front of the baptized, an implacable foe. “Baptism works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this” (The Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther), and because we are delivered from the devil, he is all the more going to confront us and tempt us and seek our separation from God. The devil has the unbelievers and the world and the pagans, so he must go after the baptized.

Reader 1: *Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever (1 Peter 5:6-11). Amen.*

Reader 2: One of our Father’s in the faith has written about witnessing a baptism that, “it is extremely necessary to stand by this poor child in baptism with all our heart and with a strong faith and plead with great devotion to God, that He, in accordance with these prayers, would not only free the child from the Devils power but also strengthen the child, so that the child might resist him valiantly in life and death. I fear that people turn out so badly after

I want to see the brightness of God.
I want to look at Jesus.

Clear Sun of Righteousness shine on my path,
And show me the way to the Father.

Chorus

I'm looking for the coming of Christ.

I want to be with Jesus.

When we have run with patience the race,

We shall know the joy of Jesus.

Chorus

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We are Baptized for – a Struggle

Narrator: Our dying woman is beset by the same fears and concerns and doubts that beset all human beings in the face of death. The struggles of life don't end when we lay on the death bed. Sometimes that is where they are the worst. Her son knows this and he points her to the Savior who puts all the blessings of His sacrificial death into Baptism. He tells her to:

“Know the true center and foundation of your salvation, the one in whom you should seek your consolation in this and all distress, namely the cornerstone, Jesus Christ, who will never waiver or fail us, nor let us sink or perish. For he is the Savior and is called the Savior of all poor sinners and of all who are in a state of suffering and near death, provided they trust in him and invoke his name. He says: ‘Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.’ If he has overcome the world, he has certainly also overcome the prince of the world, with all his power. And what is his power but death, with which he has made us his subjects, held us captive on account

We Sing –

“Lord of Glory You Have Bought Us” – LSB 851 (stanza 1)

Lord of glory, You have bought us
With Your life-blood as the price,
Never grudging for the lost ones
That tremendous sacrifice;
And with that have freely given
Blessings countless as the sand
To th' unthankful and the evil
With Your own unsparing hand.

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We are Baptized for – Fellowship with One Another

Narrator: What we do know about our dying woman is that her family was not as close as it could have been. Whether she tried to keep it close and failed, or if she was the reason it was fractured, we may never know. We know that she was quick to anger and once beat her son until he bled because he stole a nut from the kitchen table. That son now tries to remind her of the life that they once had together and the life that she had brought him to by giving him birth. He tries to remind her of the hearth and home, the food and the fellowship of family lived in the grace of God. He says,

“The Father and God of all consolation bestows upon you through His Holy Word and Spirit a solid, joyful, and grateful faith, so that you may blessedly overcome this and all danger, and may once and for all taste and experience that what he says of himself is true: ‘Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.’ And with this I

commend your body and soul to His mercy, Amen. All your children and my dear wife pray for you as well. Some weep, some dine and say: ‘Grandmother is very sick. God’s grace be with us all, Amen.’”^{iv}

Leader: We have a life together because of our Baptism. Baptized into the Father, we are also baptized into His family. The family of God is the body of Christ and we are all individually members of it. Just like any other family, we may not always get along but we are in this together and our Baptism is the means that we can use to forgive one another, be reconciled to one another, and to live in peace. Our daily baptismal remembrance reminds us of God’s forgiveness for us so that we can be forgiving to one another. In this merciful washing we are free to live a merciful life.

Reader 1: 1 John 1-4: *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.*

Reader 2: 1 John 1:5-7: *This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*

Leader: 1 John 1:8-10: *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

Therefore we are bold to pray:

All: **Merciful God make Your Word dwell in us richly that we may not be liars but truth speakers about our own sin and the sin of our neighbors. Help us to be forgiving to them as You have been forgiving to us. Help us to live in our earthly families that we can in truth commend each other to Your Fatherly care, and help us live in Your family the church in such a way that exercises our baptismal faith. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.**

We Sing –

“I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light” – LSB 411

I want to walk as a child of the light.

I want to follow Jesus.

God set the stars to give light to the world.

The star of my life is Jesus.

Chorus:

In Him there is no darkness at all.

The night and the day are both alike.

The Lamb is the light of the city of God.

Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.