

God-Given Hats: A Vocational Prayer Service

By Rev. Kristopher Whitby, LWML Pastoral Counselor (2009 – 2013)

Forward: Our Lord graciously has called us to various stations in life. They are the “hats we wear” in His world. We are His children, baptized into Jesus’ death and resurrection. We daily die to sin and rise as new creatures in Christ. Our Lord blesses us to take this amazing identity as His forgiven children into the vocations to which He has called us. We are members of our families, workers in the workplace, citizens, and members of our communities. Beyond our vocations, by His grace, we are members of the Bride of Christ – His Church, and members of the local gathering of the body of believers, the congregation. This service is designed to give worshipers the opportunity to lift up before our Lord their confessions, their supplications and petitions, and their praises as such prayers relate to the various God-given hats we wear. To Christ be the glory!

The theme Scripture passage for this service is 1 Timothy 2:1-4: *First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

Worship Notes

1. The hymns have been selected to reflect the theme of each section of the service. However, alternate hymns and songs that more appropriately fit the local congregation or worshipers’ needs may be substituted. It is recommended that the whole hymn be sung, but if time does not allow, the first verse of each hymn would be appropriate.
2. To help the focus for each section of the service, it may be helpful to place a hat, representing that section of the service, on a table near the front center of the worshipers, or, if possible, to project an image of the hat on a screen before the worshipers.
3. Rather than printing the common response, “Lord in Your mercy, Hear our prayer,” with each collect, the order of petitions may be established with a general written and oral instruction at the start of the service.

Our Identity as a Baptized Child of God

Opening Hymn

Come, My Soul, with Every Care (LSB 779) or
When Morning Gilds the Skies (LSB 807) or
Baptized into Your Name Most Holy (LSB 590)

Invocation

P: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

The Theme Scripture Reading – 1 Timothy 2:1-4

Reader: *First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

Narrative Image

[A Crown of Thorns is set before the worshipers.]

Narrator: While our Lord graces us to wear many hats in our lives, this first, the crown of thorns, while earned by us all, graciously is not placed upon our heads. The crown of thorns reminds us of the curse of the sinful nature we have inherited from the sin of Adam and Eve and of our daily sin that merits God's temporal and eternal wrath. Yet, at the same time, the crown of thorns reminds us of the unmerited mercy our Lord Jesus has won and given to us by taking the curse of our sin upon Himself, suffering and dying on the cross for us, and rising again, victorious over sin and death.

In the waters of Holy Baptism, our Lord daily drowns our old sinful Adam and raises up in us, new creatures, called by His name, and given the blessing of being called children of God.

[A moment of quiet reflection is observed.]

Confession

L: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another

[Silence for self-examination.]

Psalm of Confession – Psalm 51:1-12

L: *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.*

C: *Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!*

L: *For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.*

C: *Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.*

L: *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

C: Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

L: *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

C: Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

L: *Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.*

C: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

L: *Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.*

C: Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Amen.

Absolution [From Divine Service, Setting Three, LSB, page 185]

P: Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us and has given His only Son to die for us and for His sake forgives us all our sins. To those who believe on His name He gives the power to become the children of God and has promised them His Holy Spirit. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. Grant this, Lord, unto us all.

C: Amen.

The Scriptures

Reader: Romans 6:1-5 – *What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.*

Reader: Colossians 2:11-14 – *In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.*

Reader: 2 Corinthians 5:17 – *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

[A time of reflection on God's Word individually or in quiet discussion with a prayer partner is observed.]

Prayers

L: Lord Jesus, as Your baptized child, I praise You for Your forgiving grace that touches my life in these ways ... [silent or spoken petitions may be offered by worshipers. The petitions are concluded with the common response below.]

L: Lord, in Your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Lord Jesus, as Your baptized child, I ask for Your continued grace and help in these aspects of my walk with You ... [silent or spoken petitions may be offered by worshipers. The petitions are concluded with the common response below.]

L: Lord, in Your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

C: Merciful Father, through Holy Baptism You graciously preserve and enlarge Your family and have called us to be Your own children. Through this sacrament You have made us a member of Your Son, Jesus Christ, and heirs of Your heavenly kingdom. By the continued blessing of Your Word and Holy Spirit, may we be faithful to this gracious covenant and bear the fruit of faith in word and deed wherever You call us, to the glory of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Vocation of Family

The Hymn

Oh, Blest the House

(LSB 862)

Narrative Image

[A baby's bonnet is set before the worshipers.]

Narrator: The second hat, a baby's bonnet, is set before us to remind us that our Lord has placed us in our families. We are the children of our parents. Where the Lord blesses us, we are also the siblings of our brothers and sisters, the spouse of our spouse, the parents of our children. To our extended families we are the grandparents and great grandparents, the aunts and uncles and cousins. As His children, our Lord places us in our families both to receive the blessing of their care and love and to bless them in turn. Our Lord gives us the privilege of being used by Him to help care for the physical needs of our family. He further blesses us to be faithful witnesses of His grace, sharing His Word in our homes and bringing our families to the services of God's house. May we be faithful to the role Christ grants us in our families.

The Scriptures

Reader: Colossians 3:18-19 – *Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.*

Reader: Proverbs 23:22-26 – *Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old. Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding. The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice; he who fathers a wise son will be glad in him. Let your father and mother be glad; let her who bore you rejoice. My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways.*

Reader: I Timothy 5:3-4 – *Honor widows who are truly widows. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God.*

Reader: Ephesians 6:1-4 – *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

[A time of reflection on God’s Word individually or in quiet discussion with a prayer partner is observed.]

Prayers

L: Lord Jesus, I praise You for having placed me in my family. May my home always be a place where Your Word is known and Your grace is abundant. According to Your perfect will, hear my supplications for families.

L: For marriages and those who will be married: Gracious heavenly Father, You bring men and women together as husbands and wives to give a picture of the communion between Christ and His Bride, the Church. Hear us as we cry out to You for marriages... [silent or spoken thanksgivings and petitions may be offered by worshipers. The petitions are concluded with the common response below.]

L: Lord, in Your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: For children: Lord Jesus, You suffered the little children to come to You and blessed them. Hear us as we cry out to You for children in need of Your abiding love... [silent or spoken thanksgivings and petitions may be offered by worshipers. The petitions are concluded with the common response below.]

L: Lord, in Your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: For parents: Almighty God, heavenly Father, You have blessed us with the joy and care of children. Hear us as we cry out to You for their parents ... [silent or spoken

thanksgivings and petitions may be offered by worshipers. The petitions are concluded with the common response below.]

L: Lord in Your mercy,
C: Hear our prayer.

L: For the aged: Almighty and gracious Lord, You have blessed the aged with their many years, but with the years often come many challenges. Hear us as we cry to You for the aged in our families ... [silent or spoken thanksgivings and petitions may be offered by worshipers. The petitions are concluded with the common response below.]

L: Lord, in Your mercy,
C: Hear our prayer.

C: Lord Jesus, according to Your perfect will, keep our families safe from all harm and danger and keep each member of our families surrounded by Your grace. May our homes always be filled with Your peace and tender mercy for our families, friends, and neighbors. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Vocation of Worker

The Hymn

With the Lord Begin Your Task (LSB 869) or
Forth in Thy Name, O Lord, I Go (LSB 854)

Narrative Image

[A construction hard hat and/or nurses' cap is set before the worshipers.]

Narrator: The third hat is set before us to remind us that our Lord has called us to our places of work. We may be or have been business owners, laborers, executives, producers, or managers. As His children, our Lord has placed us in our positions of employment as a way to use us to provide the very daily bread He has promised which includes all we need to support this body and life. Our Lord has placed us in our stations of work to provide the goods and services needed by others. He has also placed us in our working vocations to be faithful witnesses of His Gospel to our fellow workers.

The Scriptures

Reader: Ecclesiastes 3:12-13 – *I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil – this is God's gift to man.*

Reader: Ephesians 6:5-9 – *Slaves obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good*

anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

[A time of reflection on God's Word individually or in quiet discussion with a prayer partner is observed.]

Prayers

L: Gracious Lord, I praise You for the workplace vocations to which You have called me. Through them, You have provided for my temporal needs, and given me the opportunity to care for the needs of others. In all my tasks, Lord, empower me with Your Word to always be ready to give an answer for the hope I have in Jesus and in my work place, let my light shine so that others may see my good works and give glory to You. According to Your perfect will, hear my prayers for those who labor and toil.

L: For those in agriculture: Gracious heavenly Father, You cause the rain to fall on the unrighteous as well as the righteous, allowing the earth to yield its abundance. Hear us as we cry to You for those who work the land ... [silent or spoken thanksgivings and petitions may be offered by worshipers. The petitions are concluded with the common response below.]

L: Lord, in Your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: For those in commerce, business, and industry: Lord Jesus, You once shared in our earthly toil. You are the source of blessing for our earthly labors. Hear us as we cry to You for those who work in business and industry ... [silent or spoken thanksgivings and petitions may be offered by worshipers. The petitions are concluded with the common response below.]

L: Lord, in Your mercy

C: Hear our prayer.

L: For the underemployed and unemployed: Merciful Lord, You are the Provider of all we need to support this body and life. Hear us as we cry to You for those who suffer from a lack of employment ... [silent or spoken thanksgivings and petitions may be offered by worshipers. The petitions are concluded with the common response below.]

C: Gracious heavenly Father, watch over all those who labor to provide for their families and to produce that which is needed by their neighbor. Protect them in their working. Bring forth the fruit of their labors according to Your will. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Vocation of Citizen

The Hymn

Eternal Father, Strong to Save (LSB 717)
God Bless Our Native Land (LSB 965)

Narrative Image

[A soldier, police officer, or fire fighter's hat is set before the worshipers.]

Narrator: The fourth hat is set before us to remind us that our Lord, being the God of order, has set people in positions of authority, and has given to each of us the vocation of citizen. We are members of our neighborhoods and towns, our state and nation, and the world. Our Lord has set people in positions of authority over others that we and our neighbors might be protected and served and that the cause of temporal justice might be preserved. As His children, the Lord has placed us in our given communities for our blessing, and that we might, in turn, serve our neighbor and be His light, shining forth His Gospel.

The Scriptures

Reader: Matthew 22:21 – *Then [Jesus] said to them, "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."*

Reader: 1 Peter 2:13-14 – *Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. (NIV)*

Reader: Titus 3:1 – *Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good. (NIV)*

Reader: Luke 10:29–37 – *But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "and who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."*

[A time of reflection on God's Word individually or in quiet discussion with a prayer partner is observed.]

Prayers

L: Gracious Lord, I praise You that You have placed authorities over me that I might be kept safe from harm and danger and be enabled to lead a peaceful, godly life. I also praise You that You have made me a citizen of my community, state, and nation where I might serve my neighbor to Your glory. According to Your perfect will, hear my prayers for my communities.

L: For neighborhoods: Lord Jesus Christ, You would have Your people love their neighbor as themselves, yet in our sinful state, we do not fulfill Your will. Bear the fruit of Your Gospel in our lives that we might be Your servants to our neighbors. Hear us as we cry to You for our neighborhoods ... [silent or spoken thanksgivings and petitions may be offered by worshipers. The petitions are concluded with the common response below.]

L: Lord, in Your mercy

C: Hear our prayer.

L: For the Armed Forces: Almighty God, according to Your will, protect and preserve the men and women of our armed forces, especially those who stand in harm's way. Let them be Your instruments of temporal justice and peace. Hear us as we cry to You for service men and women ... [silent or spoken thanksgivings and petitions may be offered by worshipers. The petitions are concluded with the common response below.]

L: Lord, in Your mercy

C: Hear our prayer.

L: For those who serve as police officers and fire fighters: Lord Jesus watch over those whom You have called to watch over us as police officers and fire fighters. Through their service, may our communities remain safe under Your care. Hear us as we cry to You for these community servants ... [silent or spoken thanksgivings and petitions may be offered by worshipers. The petitions are concluded with the common response below.]

L: Lord, in Your mercy

C: Hear our prayer.

L: For civil leaders of government: Gracious Lord, You have given us this bountiful land and the blessings of liberty. Grant Your wisdom to our leaders that they might seek Your will in carrying out the responsibilities of their offices. Hear us as we cry to You for our governmental leaders ... [silent or spoken thanksgivings and petitions may be offered by worshipers. The petitions are concluded with the common response below.]

L: Lord, in Your mercy

C: Hear our prayer.

Our Identity as Members of the Bride of Christ, the Church

The Hymn

The Church's One Foundation (LSB 644) or
Behold a Host, Arrayed in White (LSB 676)

Narrative Image

[The image of a glorious crown is set before the worshipers.]

Narrator: While there are church vocations such as pastors, teachers, missionaries...for whom we will lift our prayers, our final image reminds us of the honor our Lord has given us. As His disciples, baptized into His death and resurrection, our Lord has blessed us to be members of His Bride, the Church. Rather than the crown of God's wrath that we deserve, our Lord will, on the day of His return, place upon us the crown of righteousness, eternal salvation. We are reminded of the hope of everlasting life in Christ who also sustains His Bride with His gifts of grace during these days in which we serve Him in this troubled world of sin.

The Scriptures

Reader: Matthew 16:13-19 – *Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."*

Reader: I Corinthians 12:12-13, 26-27 – *For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and all were made to drink of one Spirit...If one members suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.*

Reader: Revelation 7:9-12 – *After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."*

[A time of reflection on God's Word individually or in quiet discussion with a prayer partner is observed.]

Prayers

L: Lord Jesus Christ, we rejoice that solely on account of Your all-availing sacrifice on the cross, You have so graced us to be identified with Your Bride, the holy Church. We thank You that through Your Word and Sacraments You care for Your Bride and lavish upon her Your unfailing love, both in this world and in eternity. We pray that You would preserve Your Church from all discord and error. May all that we think, say, and do, be in accordance with Your Word and for Your glory. According to Your perfect will, hear our prayers for Your Church and her servants.

L: For pastors and missionaries: Lord Jesus, You bless Your Bride with those who faithfully proclaim Your Word to Your children and to those who labor in Your harvest fields. Let Your Spirit rest upon our pastors and missionaries that they may ever hold fast to Your Word and rightly proclaim it. Hear us as we cry to You for our pastors and missionaries ... [silent or spoken thanksgivings and petitions may be offered by worshipers. The petitions are concluded with the common response below.]

L: Lord, in Your mercy

C: Hear our prayer.

L: For our persecuted brothers and sisters: Gracious Lord, even as You first suffered for us, at various times and places You call Your Bride to also suffer for the sake of Your saving Name. Hear us as we cry to You for persecuted Christians... [silent or spoken thanksgivings and petitions may be offered by worshipers. The petitions are concluded with the common response below.]

L: Lord, in Your mercy

C: Hear our prayer.

L: For those outside the church: Heavenly Father, You desire that all should be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. Hear us as we cry to You for those who do not know Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ ... [silent or spoken thanksgivings and petitions may be offered by worshipers. The petitions are concluded with the common response below.]

L: Lord, in Your mercy

C: Hear our prayer.

L: For the LWML: Blessed Lord, we give You thanks for the faithful work of the LWML and their support of Your kingdom's goals both locally and around the world. Hear us as we cry to You for our sisters in Christ who serve You with gladness ... [silent or spoken

thanksgivings and petitions may be offered by worshipers. The petitions are concluded with the common response below.]

L: Lord, in Your mercy

C: Hear our prayer.

L: For our congregation: Holy Spirit, You graciously call, gather, and enlighten Your people through Word and Sacraments in local congregations. We give You thanks for the brothers and sisters with which You have gathered us. Hear us as we cry to You for those in our congregation ... [silent or spoken thanksgivings and petitions may be offered by worshipers. The petitions are concluded with the common response below.]

L: Lord, in Your mercy

C: Hear our prayer.

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

The Lord's Prayer

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 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 erring into eternal fellowship with Him. Amen.

Authored by Rev. Harry Fricke © 1955 LWML

The Blessing

The Closing Hymn

Thine the Amen, Thine the Praise (LSB 680) or
Take My Life and Let it Be (LSB 783)

Resources:

The Lutheran Study Bible, Concordia Publishing House, 2009.

Lutheran Service Book, Concordia Publishing House, 2006.

Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation, Concordia Publishing House, 1986.

