My Soul Rejoices

2023 LWML Prayer Service

By Rev. Dr. Mitchel Schuessler
Service Directions
This service is a balance of God’s Word, hymns, and prayers. The Leader (L) is meant be the same person throughout the service. The zone pastoral counselor or the pastor of the hosting congregation would best serve in this role. The biblical selections may be read by women of the zone or congregation. All (A) the worshipers are welcome to join together in the prayers. The prayers incorporate a hymn verse from the preceding hymn. This verse may be spoken or sung. If sung, it may be accompanied by the organist/pianist, entering at the appropriate time. It may also be sung a cappella. If a cappella, a song leader would be beneficial for worshipers to sing at the appropriate time. The worship leader may decide if accompanied or a cappella, informing the worshipers before the beginning of the service. There is a time of spiritual reflection before each prayer, the length of time determined by the worship leader.
But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy (Psalm 5:11a).

OPENING PRAYER

Lord God, heavenly Father, You have given to us all good gifts to be used to Your glory and for the edification of Your people. As we join together in this prayer service, may our hearts rejoice as we hear Your Word and join together in prayer. May Your Holy Spirit strengthen our faith, opening the eyes of our hearts to see You and to praise Your name. In Jesus’ most blessed name we pray. Amen.

READING

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

The Lord calls us into His presence to hear His Word. As we come to Him, we do so with our hearts filled with songs of praise for He has saved each of us from sin, death, and the power of the devil. When we raise our voices in song, we remember the God that we worship. He is the Triune God who reaches out to us with words of life and hope. Our hymn points us to our Triune God, reminding us of all that He has done for us.

HYMN: The Lord, My God, Be Praised

1 The Lord, my God, be praised, My light, my life from heaven; My maker, who to me Has soul and body given; My Father, who will shield And keep me day by day And make each moment yield New blessings on my way.
2  The Lord, my God, be praised,  
   My trust, my life from heaven,  
   The Father’s own dear Son,  
   Whose life for me was given,  
   Who for my sin atoned  
   With His most precious blood  
   And gives to me by faith  
   The highest heav’nly good.

3  The Lord, my God, be praised,  
   My hope, my life from heaven,  
   The Spirit, whom the Son  
   In love to me has given.  
   His grace revives my heart  
   And gives my spirit pow’r,  
   Help, comfort, and support  
   In sorrow’s gloomy hour.

TIME OF SPIRITUAL REFLECTION
Some suggestions for individual reflection:
• the power of the Triune God working in your daily life;
• the wonder of the Creator who also cares for you daily;
• the power of the Holy Spirit who brought you into a right relationship with God.

Knowing the wonder of all that our Triune God has done for us, we join our voices in prayer.

Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we thank You for creating, redeeming, and sanctifying us. And yet we know our words of thanks can never be enough for the blessings of life and salvation that You have given to us. Yes, even as we say this, we pray:

4  The Lord, my God, be praised,  
   My God, the ever-living,  
   To whom the heav’nly host  
   Their laud and praise are giving.  
   The Lord, my God, be praised,  
   In whose great name I boast,  
   God Father, God the Son,  
   And God the Holy Ghost.  
   Amen.
We live in a grand world that God has created. And yet, we know, because of the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, that goodness has been lost. The world we see, with all its grandeur, is but a shadow of what it was at creation, and what it will be again when our Lord returns and makes all things new. With the sin passed down to us from our parents, we are born sinful and are in need of our God to save us, making us His own. It is in the waters of Baptism that we are made new. Baptized into Jesus’ death, we are raised to a new life with Him.

READING

Galatians 3:26–27

26 For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

READING

Romans 6:3–4

3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 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.

HYMN: Baptized Into Your Name Most Holy

LSB 590

1 Baptized into Your name most holy, O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I claim a place, though weak and lowly, Among Your saints, Your chosen host. Buried with Christ and dead to sin, Your Spirit now shall live within.

2 My loving Father, here You take me To be henceforth Your child and heir. My faithful Savior, here You make me The fruit of all Your sorrows share. O Holy Spirit, comfort me When threat’ning clouds around I see.
3 My faithful God, You fail me never;  
Your promise surely will endure.  
O cast me not away forever  
If words and deeds become impure.  
Have mercy when I come defiled;  
Forgive, lift up, restore Your child.

**TIME OF SPIRITUAL REFLECTION**

Some suggestions for individual reflection:
• think of the importance of your Baptism in your own life;  
• ask the Lord to help you assist others to consider their Baptism;  
• pray for someone you know that needs to be brought to the baptismal font.

Living in the waters of our Baptism is a daily venture for us. We need the power of the Holy Spirit working through our Baptism to help us in our daily lives. Without Him working through the waters of our Baptism, we would fall back into the old, sinful life. Let us pray for the guidance of the Spirit as we live in our Baptism.

Powerful, guiding Spirit, we praise You for the new life that You have given to us through the waters of our Baptism. We raise our voices and say:

4 All that I am and love most dearly—  
Receive it all, O Lord, from me.  
Let me confess my faith sincerely;  
Help me Your faithful child to be!  
Let nothing that I am or own  
Serve any will but Yours alone.  
Amen.

Living as a child of God is a joy-filled life while at the same time is extremely difficult. Following the will of God in our lives is not always easy for us as the children of God. It calls for faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and a trust in the Word of God. Mary, the mother of Jesus, exhibits that faith and trust when the angel Gabriel told her of God’s will for her life.
And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy — the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

Mary believed the message of the angel Gabriel, trusting in the Word of God for her life. Following the example shown by Mary, we listen to the Word of God, trust in that Word, and live each day in faith in Jesus Christ.

HYMN: I Am Trusting Thee, Lord Jesus

1 I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus, 
    Trusting only Thee; 
    Trusting Thee for full salvation, 
    Great and free.

2 I am trusting Thee for pardon; 
    At Thy feet I bow, 
    For Thy grace and tender mercy 
    Trusting now.

3 I am trusting Thee for cleansing 
    In the crimson flood; 
    Trusting Thee to make me holy 
    By Thy blood.
4 I am trusting Thee to guide me;
Thou alone shalt lead,
Ev’ry day and hour supplying
All my need.

5 I am trusting Thee for power;
Thine can never fail.
Words which Thou Thyself shalt give me
Must prevail.

TIME OF SPIRITUAL REFLECTION
Some suggestions for individual reflection:
• think of a situation in which you struggled to trust in the Lord, asking God to forgive you;
• ask God to help you to trust and follow His will in your life;
• seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in a situation with which you are struggling at this time.

Lord God, we do not always know the fullness of Your will for our lives. Often, like Mary, we are called to trust in Your Word, even when we do not understand where You are leading us. Therefore, living in the faith You have given through the waters of our Baptism, and strengthened through Your Word, we pray:

6 I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus;
Never let me fall.
I am trusting Thee forever
And for all.
Amen.

In that life of faith, trusting our Lord, we find that we are often led to lift our voices in songs of praise. Knowing the life we have been given, holding fast in faith each day, we praise our Lord for all that He does for us. We respond as Mary did when she received the Word of the Lord from Elizabeth as she proclaimed the praise of God when Mary came to visit her. We sing songs of joy like Simeon as he held the Christ-child. We sing songs of praise for all that our God has done for us in our lives.
Psalm 98

1 Oh sing to the Lord a new song,  
for he has done marvelous things!  
His right hand and his holy arm  
have worked salvation for him.  

2 The Lord has made known his salvation;  
he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.  

3 He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness  
to the house of Israel.  

All the ends of the earth have seen  
the salvation of our God.  

4 Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;  
break forth into joyous song and sing praises!  

5 Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre,  
with the lyre and the sound of melody!  

6 With trumpets and the sound of the horn  
make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord!  

7 Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;  
the world and those who dwell in it!  

8 Let the rivers clap their hands;  
let the hills sing for joy together  

9 before the Lord, for he comes  
to judge the earth.  
He will judge the world with righteousness,  
and the peoples with equity.  

Many times, the new song that we think of with this Psalm is “Joy to the World.” Indeed, there is great joy in this world as the Son of God is incarnate. The new song we sing is the song that brings forth the message of life and hope that is given through faith in Jesus Christ, the One who suffered and died upon the cross. This Gospel is proclaimed when we celebrate the incarnation at Christmas. It is also proclaimed as we worship through faithful praises focused on our Triune God. Today, we sing a song of praise to God for all that He continues to do for us.

HYMN: O Worship The King  

1 O worship the King, all-glorious above.  
O gratefully sing His pow’r and His love;  
Our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,  
Pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise.
2 O tell of His might, O sing of His grace,
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space;
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,
And dark is His path on the wings of the storm.

3 This earth, with its store of wonders untold,
Almighty, Thy pow’r hath founded of old,
Established it fast by a changeless decree,
And round it hath cast, like a mantle, the sea.

4 Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light,
It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,
And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

5 Frail children of dust and feeble as frail,
In Thee do we trust, nor find Thee to fail.
Thy mercies, how tender, how firm to the end,
Our maker, defender, redeemer, and friend!

TIME OF SPIRITUAL REFLECTION
Some suggestions for individual reflection:
• think of a time when your heart overflowed with praise for what God had given you;
• think of a special moment in worship when a song that was sung lifted your heart;
• ask God to help you share the joy of a new song with someone whose heart is weighed down with the cares of life.

We praise You, dearest Jesus, for You have given to us the priceless treasure of faith. As we continue through each day, we pray that the Holy Spirit would lead us to sing songs of praise for Your love shown in Your death and resurrection. Like Mary, Simeon, and many others who have gone before us, we praise You and pray:

6 O measureless Might, ineffable Love,
While angels delight to hymn Thee above,
Thy humbler creation, though feeble their lays,
With true adoration shall sing to Thy praise.
Amen.
Life is not always easy. Even though we are God’s children, we face many trials and tribulations, many temptations. Some of them come to us as the crosses we bear because we are children of God.

**READING**  
Luke 9:23–24

23 And [Jesus] said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.”

As God’s children in a fallen world, we know that we will face many struggles. Our sinful nature rears its ugly head, causing us much trouble. We struggle with that sinful nature, desiring to follow God but facing many temptations that weigh heavily upon us day after day.

As we face both the crosses we must bear as children of God and the struggle we face because of our sinful natures, we join with Paul in proclaiming: Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Romans 7:25). It is to this Jesus that we turn in the difficult times of our lives.

**HYMN: What A Friend We Have In Jesus**  
*LSB 770*

1 What a friend we have in Jesus,  
All our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry  
Ev’rything to God in prayer!  
Oh, what peace we often forfeit;  
Oh, what needless pain we bear—  
All because we do not carry  
Ev’rything to God in prayer!

2 Have we trials and temptations?  
Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged—  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Can we find a friend so faithful  
Who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our ev’ry weakness—  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
TIME OF SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

Some suggestions for individual reflection:
• think of a time when you lifted up your heavy heart to God and He strengthened you, giving thanks to Him for that time;
• pray for someone you know who is going through a challenging time in their life.

Lord Jesus Christ, we praise You for the strength You give to each one of us throughout our trials and temptations. We look to Your cross and see that You carried all we face to that wretched tree. Then we turn to the empty tomb and see the victory You won for us. We bring to You all that we face, knowing You are with us and will help us. We lift our voices and sing:

Are we weak and heavy laden, Cumbered with a load of care? Precious Savior, still our refuge— Take it to the Lord in prayer. Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer. In His arms He’ll take and shield thee; Thou wilt find a solace there. Amen.

Each morning we immerse ourselves in the waters of our Baptism, praising God for the new life He has given to us, entering the new day fully assured that the Lord is with us, even as we are His children. Our Lord is our Shepherd, leading us along the road of life, calling us by name, reminding us of His love, and showing us how we are to live.

READING Psalm 23

1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. 3 He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.
4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

READING John 10:1–16

1 “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. 2 But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. 5 A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” 6 This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

7 So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. 11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13 He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. 15 And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.”

Jesus is our Good Shepherd, leading and guiding us through our daily lives. We listen to the voice of our Shepherd as we go through both good and bad times in our lives. We listen
to His voice as He speaks to us through His Word. Often, we, like sheep, wander from the path and our loving Shepherd seeks and finds us. With His nail-scarred hands, He picks us up, binds our wounds, heals our brokenness, and forgives our sins. With songs of praise, we speak of the love our Shepherd has for us.

**HYMN: Savior, Like A Shepherd Lead Us**

1. Savior, like a shepherd lead us; Much we need Your tender care. In Your pleasant pastures feed us, For our use Your fold prepare. Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus, You have bought us; we are Yours. Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus, You have bought us; we are Yours.

2. We are Yours; in love befriend us, Be the guardian of our way; Keep Your flock, from sin defend us, Seek us when we go astray. Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus, Hear us children when we pray. Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus, Hear us children when we pray.

3. You have promised to receive us, Poor and sinful though we be; You have mercy to relieve us, Grace to cleanse, and pow’r to free. Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus, Early let us turn to You. Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus, Early let us turn to You.

**TIME OF SPIRITUAL REFLECTION**

Some suggestions for individual reflection:
- think of a time when you were in need of the Good Shepherd to seek you out and help you out of a difficult situation, and then give thanks for His coming to you;
- pray for someone you know that has strayed from the path and needs the Shepherd to find them.
Dear Jesus, You are the Good Shepherd. You lead and guide us through each day. We praise Your name for all that You do for us. We know that in all we face, we have You, our Shepherd, to lead us through the daily joys and sorrows. We rejoice that You always seek us out when we wander from Your path. You find us, take us up in Your arms, bind our wounds, heal our brokenness, and forgive our sins. For all this we pray:

4 Early let us seek Your favor, Early let us do Your will; Blessèd Lord and only Savior, With Your love our spirits fill. Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus, You have loved us, love us still. Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus, You have loved us, love us still. Amen.

Living our lives as the children of God, listening to the voice of the Good Shepherd, strengthened by the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacrament, we can go through each day filled with joy and hope. It is through the death and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ, that we are assured of the greatest joy we will ever receive, the gift of life eternal with our Lord in heaven. We listen to the words of the Psalmist, being filled with hope and praise because of what our Lord has done for us.

READING

Psalm 118:14–24

14 The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.
15 Glad songs of salvation are in the tents of the righteous: “The right hand of the Lord does valiantly,
16 the right hand of the Lord exalts, the right hand of the Lord does valiantly!”
17 I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord.
18 The Lord has disciplined me severely, but he has not given me over to death.
Open to me the gates of righteousness,  
that I may enter through them  
and give thanks to the Lord.

This is the gate of the Lord;  
the righteous shall enter through it.

I thank you that you have answered me  
and have become my salvation.

The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone.

This is the Lord’s doing;  
it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day that the Lord has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

HYMN: I Am Content! My Jesus Ever Lives  

1 I am content! My Jesus ever lives,  
In whom my heart is pleased.  
He has fulfilled the Law of God for me,  
God’s wrath He has appeased.  
Since He in death could perish never,  
I also shall not die forever.  
I am content! I am content!

2 I am content! My Jesus is my head;  
His member I shall be.  
He bowed His head when on the cross He died  
With cries of agony.  
Now death is brought into subjection  
For me by Jesus’ resurrection.  
I am content! I am content!

3 I am content! My Jesus is my light,  
My radiant sun of grace.  
His cheering rays beam blessings forth for all,  
Sweet comfort, hope, and peace.  
This Easter sun has brought salvation  
And everlasting exultation.  
I am content! I am content!
We have this blessed assurance of the resurrection because of all that Jesus did for us — His life, His death, and His resurrection. Given faith by the working of the Holy Spirit in the waters of our Baptism and strengthened through Word and Sacrament, we live each day with the joy of the Lord filling our hearts and our lives. It is important for us to remember these things because life is not always filled with joyful events. There are days of trials and tribulations. Calling on the name of the Lord, as we have done in this service, helps us to stay focused in our lives. Looking to the Lord’s resurrection keeps us connected with the one event that changes sorrow to joy, suffering to hope, and emptiness to fullness.

TIME OF SPIRITUAL REFLECTION
Some suggestions for individual reflection:
• recall the power of the resurrection in your life;
• ask God to bring the power of the resurrection into the life of someone who is struggling with loss and grief.

Jesus Christ, we praise Your name this day as we remember that You suffered, died, and rose again for our salvation. There will be days when we shall be tempted to let the struggles of the day blind us to the hope that we have in our lives. Living in the waters of our Baptism, we are given hope and peace, so that we can lift up our voices and pray:

4 I am content! At length I shall be free,  
Awakened from the dead,  
Arising glorious evermore to be  
With You, my living head.  
The chains that hold my body, sever;  
Then shall my soul rejoice forever.  
I am content! I am content!  
Amen.

Throughout this service, we have lifted our voices in song and our hearts in prayer. So often we feel like the disciples when they came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples” (Luke 11:1b). He then gave to them the wonderful prayer we call The Lord’s Prayer. Let us join in praying:
A 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.

L We have journeyed through many passages of God’s Word and hymns of our church. We have lifted our hearts in reflection and prayer. We have asked the Lord to be our Shepherd, asking Him to guide us daily and to rescue us from our sinful situations. We have prayed to the Holy Spirit to work within the waters of our Baptism, helping us to live as children of God each day. As we come to the close of this service, we do so once again turning to God’s Word for guidance.

READING  
Psalm 85:8–9

8Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,  
for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints;  
but let them not turn back to folly.  
9Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him,  
that glory may dwell in our land.

HYMN: Savior, Again To Thy Dear Name We Raise  
LSB 917

1 Savior, again to Thy dear name we raise  
With one accord our parting hymn of praise;  
Once more we bless Thee ere our worship cease,  
Then, lowly bending, wait Thy word of peace.

2 Grant us Thy peace upon our homeward way;  
With Thee began, with Thee shall end, the day.  
Guard Thou the lips from sin, the hearts from shame,  
That in this house have called upon Thy name.

3 Grant us Thy peace, Lord, through the coming night;  
Turn Thou for us its darkness into light.  
From harm and danger keep Thy children free;  
For dark and light are both alike to Thee.
TIME OF SPIRITUAL REFLECTION
Some suggestions for individual reflection:
• ask the Lord to guide you in reaching out to others with the word of peace;
• ask the Lord to open your eyes to see those in need of His love, and then to give you the words to share so they might hear that good news.

Lord God, heavenly Father, as we close our service today, we do so knowing that we will continue to be blessed through Your Word and through the music of our church. We ask that You will continue to lead and guide us in our witnessing to others concerning the Good News of salvation shown to us through the life, death, and resurrection of Your Son. We lift our voices once more as we pray:

4 Grant us Thy peace throughout our earthly life, Our balm in sorrow and our stay in strife; Then, when Thy voice shall bid our conflict cease, Call us, O Lord, to Thine eternal peace. Amen.

READING Numbers 6:22–27

22 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 23 “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them,

24 The Lord bless you and keep you;
25 the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;
26 the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.
27 “So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.”

Go in the peace of Christ, guided by the Spirit, and lifting your voices in prayer and praise.

Amen.
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