



HYMN OF THE MONTH

OCTOBER 2026

A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD | LSB 656



“A Hymn of Comfort” | Martin Luther wrote this hymn between 1527 and 1529. It was a time of great trial for Luther, Germany, and the Reformation. An epidemic was ravaging Wittenberg and struck Luther. Turkish (Islamic) armies were at the borders of Germany, Roman Catholic armies were attacking Reformation territories, and radical Protestant and Roman Catholic theologians were raging against Lutherans. This hymn was sorely needed and was rightly called a hymn of comfort. We need the comfort of Jesus as much today as the church did in 1529.

Stanza 1

***A mighty fortress is our God,
A trusty shield and weapon;
He helps us free from ev'ry need
That hath us now o'ertaken.
The old evil foe
Now means deadly woe;
Deep guile and great might
Are his dread arms in fight;
On earth is not his equal.***

Our hymn begins with powerful encouragement to Christians facing torments. Our God is a fortress, a shield, and a weapon — for us. Even when we are overtaken, our Father is there to save. Luther weaves the promises of Psalm 46 into a hymn that has comforted the church for 450 years. In this life we face an *old evil foe* who wants nothing less than to destroy us. He uses lies, persuasion, and deception to separate us from Jesus. His power for terror and death is unrivaled. Luther warns us, *on earth is not his equal!*

Stanza 2

***With might of ours can naught be done,
Soon were our loss effected;
But for us fights the valiant One,
Whom God Himself elected.
Ask ye, Who is this?
Jesus Christ it is,
Of Sabaoth Lord,
And there's none other God;
He holds the field forever.***

“*With might of ours can naught be done / Soon were our loss effected*” — The opening line of stanza 2 is a warning: If we take on the old evil foe with our own wits and strength, we lose. The hymn directs us to a valiant One, whom God Himself appointed. Revelation 19 shows us a warrior named Faithful and True, the Word of God, and King of kings and Lord of lords. “*Ask ye, who is this?*” He is Jesus commanding the armies of heaven, called the Sabaoth, dethroning Satan.

continued on reverse

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At St. Paul's, the Hymn of the Month is sung in our worship each week. May these reflections, written by congregation member and retired LCMS pastor Rev. Tim Wilkins, enrich your worship and devotional focus. In our school, children sing the Hymn of the Month in Chapel, learn stanzas as memory work, and study the hymn in music classes.

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Stanza 3

*Though devils all the world should fill,
All eager to devour us,
We tremble not, we fear no ill;
They shall not overpow'r us.
This world's prince may still
Scowl fierce as he will,
He can harm us none.
He's judged; the deed is done;
One little word can fell him.*

This beautiful stanza gives us the one little word that cuts Satan down: Jesus! When Satan comes with his lies and might, we can say, “I’m baptized; I belong to Jesus! Leave!”

Stanza 4

*The Word they still shall let remain
Nor any thanks have for it;
He's by our side upon the plain
With His good gifts and Spirit.
And take they our life,
Goods, fame, child, and wife,
Though these all be gone,
Our vict'ry has been won;
The Kingdom ours remaineth.*

“The Word they still shall let remain | Nor any thanks have for it” — Stanza 4 begins with a confusing phrase that comes to us from *The Lutheran Hymnal*, published in 1941. So, an explanation: Our hymn is translated from late Medieval German, a language difficult to pin down. For a clearer translation, turn to hymn 657 in your hymnbook and read, “God’s Word forever shall abide | No thanks to foes, who fear it.”

Stanza 4 continued

Here “God’s Word” means both the written Word, and Jesus, the Word made flesh. He is by our side with His good gifts and Spirit. See the gifts of God in Ephesians 6:10–17. And remember, Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords, commanding all the armies of heaven. Yet, battles are real; suffering and loss are real.

“And take they our life | Goods, fame, child, and wife |
Though these all be gone | Our victory has been won | The
Kingdom ours remaineth” — Remember, Jesus always has the last word! Romans 8:31–39 tells us, “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us ... [nothing] in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” The message of this hymn of comfort is this: Jesus always wins. For us.