



HYMN OF THE MONTH

SEPTEMBER 2025

DEAR CHRISTIANS, ONE AND ALL, REJOICE | LSB 556

Stanza 1

***Dear Christians, one and all, rejoice,
With exultation springing,
And with united heart and voice
And holy rapture singing,
Proclaim the wonders God has done,
How His right arm the vict'ry won.
What price our ransom cost Him!***

In this hymn, Luther invites us to sing the story of God's grace: "Sing the wonders He has done, how His right arm the victory won. What price our ransom cost Him." As we sing, we ask, why would God pay such a high price? And we ask, for whom would He pay such a price? The answer — He did it for us.

Stanza 2

***Fast bound in Satan's chains I lay;
Death brooded darkly o'er me.
Sin was my torment night and day;
In sin my mother bore me.
But daily deeper still I fell;
My life became a living hell,
So firmly sin possessed me.***

In stanzas 2-4, Luther shares his story and invites us to make it our own: "So firmly sin possessed me ... bound in chains, death brooded over me. Tormented by sin night and day, even born in sin, I fell deeper daily. My life was a living hell." This from a man, a monk, who devoted himself to a life of holiness. He saw that his devotion was never enough.

Stanza 3

***My own good works all came to naught,
No grace or merit gaining;
Free will against God's judgment fought,
Dead to all good remaining.
My fears increased till sheer despair
Left only death to be my share;
The pangs of hell I suffered.***

continued

Stanza 3 is a stanza of despair: "I tried to impress God with my best behavior but could not get hold of His grace. My 'free will' ultimately and always fought against God. My 'free will' to be righteous was dead. I watched myself and was left with fear and despair. Death and hell were inevitable."

Stanza 4

***But God had seen my wretched state
Before the world's foundation,
And mindful of His mercies great,
He planned for my salvation.
He turned to me a father's heart;
He did not choose the easy part
But gave His dearest treasure.***

The hymn now pivots with two beautiful words — "But God"! Then two more beautiful words — "He turned"! Even before creation, He planned for our salvation and turned toward us. In His turning, He made the hardest choice and gave His dearest treasure, His Son — *for me! But God turned for me!*

Stanza 5

***God said to His beloved Son:
"It's time to have compassion.
Then go, bright jewel of My crown,
And bring to all salvation.
From sin and sorrow set them free;
Slay bitter death for them that they
May live with You forever."***

Our Father said to His Son: "The time for compassion is now. Go! Bring salvation to all. Set them free from sin and sorrow. Slay bitter death. Grant them life forever."

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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 6

*The Son obeyed His Father's will,
Was born of virgin mother;
And God's good pleasure to fulfill,
He came to be my brother.
His royal pow'r disguised He bore;
A servant's form, like mine, He wore
To lead the devil captive.*

In this stanza, we see how Jesus obeyed and moved — for us. He was born of a virgin. He came to be our brother. He disguised His royal power in flesh and blood just like ours. He went to the cross and the grave, and there He led our enemy captive.

Stanza 7

*To me He said: "Stay close to Me,
I am your rock and castle.
Your ransom I Myself will be;
For you I strive and wrestle.
For I am yours, and you are Mine,
And where I am you may remain;
The foe shall not divide us.*

Jesus says: "Stay close to Me! I am your rock. I am your castle. I am your ransom. I am your champion. I am yours, and you are Mine. I will fight and wrestle for you. Remain in Me, and the foe cannot divide us. Stay close to Me!"

Stanza 8

*"Though he will shed My precious blood,
Me of My life bereaving,
All this I suffer for your good;
Be steadfast and believing.
Life will from death the vict'ry win;
My innocence shall bear your sin,
And you are blest forever."*

Jesus says: "The devil struck Me. I bled and died. I suffered in body and soul, but not for nothing. My Father's will and plan prevailed. My suffering was for you. When I walked out of the grave, I won! I won you! I won your redemption! I won your freedom! My innocence bore your sin! And you? You are blessed forever!"

Stanza 9

*"Now to My Father I depart,
From earth to heav'n ascending,
And, heav'nly wisdom to impart,
The Holy Spirit sending;
In trouble He will comfort you
And teach you always to be true
And into truth shall guide you.*

Our Lord says: "And now I am at the right hand of the Father, forever interceding for you, and now the Holy Spirit dwells in you, teaching, comforting, sustaining, and guiding you into all truth."

Stanza 10

*"What I on earth have done and taught
Guide all your life and teaching;
So shall the kingdom's work be wrought
And honored in your preaching.
But watch lest foes with base alloy
The heav'nly treasure should destroy;
This final word I leave you."*

The hymn concludes, "And now My beloved children, see all that I've done and hear all that I've taught and make it your own." We are reassured, "Your lives, your conversations, your teaching, and your preaching will be the answer to the prayer, 'Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.'"