

Praise Today

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The Ascension Service: Rising to the Occasion

By John L. Hoh, Jr.

A festival in the Church year seems to fallen into disuse. That festival is Ascension Day. The proper color of this day is white—thus it is one of the high festivals of the Church year! Yet it remains a relative “unknown” in the Church year. Some churches abandon it altogether and combine it with their Pentecost service. I feel that this is unfortunate. Part of Ascension is the promise that Christ will go to prepare a place for us; Pentecost tells us that He keeps us in His grace through the Spirit until He returns to take us to heaven. I believe that the two ought to remain separate.

The observance of Ascension then begs the question: How do we observe the festival and how can people get excited about this festival? What can we do besides have a children’s service (thus enticing the parents to also be present)? Perhaps several suggestions in the following paragraphs will be helpful.

When I vicared in Burlington, Wisconsin, we had a review of the Church year, beginning with the Advent season. Much like a Tenebrae service, Rev. Richard Weeks and I alternated reading the portions on Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, and Trinity. The children from the Christian Day School presented musical selections and there was congregational participation. The response indicated that the service was edifying and a good review of the Church year and the life of our Savior here on earth. If you would like more information, let me know and I’ll send copies of the material we used.

Ascension



This last Spring, Mt. Olive in Mankato, Minnesota (Rev. Richard Newgard, ELS) presented the Evangelical Lutheran Synod anniversary children’s slide show. While various slides of paintings relating to Synod history were displayed on the wall, the children presented recitations and musical selections. The service was well attended. Obviously a Synod anniversary does not happen very often, but maybe a congregation can have its special anniversary service on Ascension Day. What a great way to remember that, though Jesus ascended into heaven, He remains with His Church, blesses it, and preserves it! For more information I am sure that Rev. Newgard will be more than happy to share any details.

If you have any other ideas for Ascension Day services, please pass them along so that others may benefit from your ideas. With the help of God and through His Spirit may we reclaim the rich heritage and promised blessings that are a part of Ascension.

Praise Today

Praise Today is an independent publication which seeks to share worship ideas among Confessional Lutherans. The basis of our worship is the Historical Order of Service which embodies the Word of God for our people. This publication seeks and fulfills as its goal the sharing of ideas, prayers, hymns and other matters of worship among our readership. Material may be submitted to the following:

Praise Today
c/o John L. Hoh, Jr.
1176 Waterville Rd
Waterville, IA 52170

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Folk Christmas Carol

By John L. Hoh, Jr.

Sung to the tune of "Michael, Row Your Boat Ashore"

John L. Hoh, Jr.-1993

1. Shepherds see the shining light-*Alleluia!*
Streaming down from heaven bright-*Alleluia!*
It was bitter cold that night-*Alleluia!*
When they beheld a glorious sight-*Alleluia!*
2. Angels singing with great delight-*Alleluia!*
"Peace to you and have no fright"-*Alleluia!*
"For unto you is born this night"-*Alleluia!*
"A Babe who saves us with his might."-*Alleluia!*
3. Wise men come to see the King-*Alleluia!*
And to him their praise they bring-*Alleluia!*
Gold and myrrh and frankincense-*Alleluia!*
Given from men of intelligence-*Alleluia!*
4. Mary ponders on these things-*Alleluia!*
Shepherds looking, angel sings-*Alleluia!*
Son of God is born today-*Alleluia!*
God made flesh we sing for aye-*Alleluia!*
5. Born a Babe in Bethlehem-*Alleluia!*
Because our race was all condemned-*Alleluia!*
Died upon the tree for us-*Alleluia!*
And rose again victorious-*Alleluia!*



When Time Had Fully Come

Rev. Eugene Andrus

The following hymn was submitted by Rev. Eugene Andrus (Elkton, MI, WELS). The tune is found in The Lutheran Hymnal, hymn number 58. What a wonderful hymn for Christmas!

1. When time had fully come
God sent His Son to die
To change what we'd become
And let us live on high.
He sent His Son to save us,
By living in our place.
Our Savior's name is Jesus,
He saved our fallen race.

His promises are sure.
The Christ became our brother,
Our own flesh to endure.
Jesus was born of Mary
In little Bethlehem.
He came our sins to carry
And give life to all men.

2. The world became so evil
That death reigned over all.
When tempted by the devil
Mankind had chose to fall.
But we were not left lying
In helplessness of sin.
God promised that by dying
His Son, our lives would win.



3. He is our God and Father,

Responsive Reading

LUKE 2:8-20

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another,

Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

C/O Vicar John L. Hoh, Jr.
1176 Waterville Rd.
Waterville, IA 52170

Praise Today

Responsive Prayer

By Rev. Eugene Andrus

The following is a Responsive Prayer for Christmas, written by Rev. Eugene Andrus (Elkton, MI, WELS)

P– Dear Savior, we worship and praise you this night:

C– *For you are the God of our salvation.*

P– Bless our hearts and homes and loved ones:

C– *And cause your light to shine upon us.*

P– Instill in us the peace of Christmas:

C– *So that our hearts may be filled with gladness.*

P– You came as the hope of the world:

C– *Illumine our hearts with the Gospel of your forgiveness.*

P– You, who came from heaven to earth at Christmas:

C– *Come to each of us with your blessings.*

P– In the coming New Year, bless our country and our church:

C– *Bless our Christian schools and homes.*

P– Above all, bless and strengthen our faith in you:

C– *And cause us to walk according to your word. Amen.*

