

# Heritage Hymn of the Month

JANUARY

## “In Jesus’ Name”

ELH 4

“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (Colossians 3:17, ESV). It is important to begin in the name of Jesus. The Norwegian immigrants used this hymn at the beginning of important endeavors – emigrating to America, building their homes, starting churches and schools. It was in every Norwegian and Danish hymnal from the time it was first published in 1645, and often was the first hymn in the book. This is a good hymn for the New Year, and as we emphasize Christian education and missions.

The three stanzas can be remembered from the first two lines in each. “In Jesus’ name/Our work must all be done” – serving in our vocations not for our self-interest, but in Jesus’ name. “In Jesus’ name/We praise our God on high” – as we “spread abroad His fame” in missions, remembering that it is not our burden but the Lord who does “great things by His Word.” To conclude: “In Jesus’ name/We live and we will die” – for to live is Christ and to die is gain. The hymn ends by affirming us in the central Bible teaching of justification by grace: “When at last, saved by His grace,/We shall see Him face to face,/Live with Him in Paradise.”

## Secondary Hymn for the Month

## “I Pray Thee, Dear Lord Jesus”

ELH 178

This was the final stanza of Thomas Kingo’s hymn about Jesus’ childhood, which many of our churches remember on the First Sunday after the Epiphany.

## In Jesus’ Name

1. In Jesus’ name  
Our work must all be done  
If it shall compass our true good and aim,  
And not end in shame alone;  
For ev’ry deed  
Which in it doth proceed,  
Success and blessing gains  
Till it the goal attains.  
Thus we honor God on high  
And ourselves are blessed thereby;  
Wherein our true good remains.

2. In Jesus’ name  
We praise our God on high,  
He blesses them who spread abroad His fame,  
And we do His will thereby.  
E’er hath the Lord  
Done great things by His Word,  
And still doth bare His arm  
His wonders to perform;  
Hence we should in ev’ry clime  
Magnify His name sublime,  
Who doth shield us from all harm.

3. In Jesus’ name  
We live and we will die;  
If then we live, His love we will proclaim;  
If we die, we gain thereby.  
In Jesus’ name,  
Who from heav’n to us came,  
We shall again arise  
To meet Him in the skies,  
When at last, saved by His grace,  
We shall see Him face to face,  
Live with Him in Paradise.

# Heritage Hymn of the Month

FEBRUARY

## “I Walk in Danger All the Way”

ELH 252

This hymn is written to help us meditate during Lent on Jesus’ determination to journey to the cross (Luke 9:51) and his enduring of temptations in the wilderness and beyond (Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 4:13). In Lent we meditate on Jesus’ suffering for us: first, so that we know He has redeemed us; but second, so that we may be encouraged for our life of trial under the cross.

The hymn is constructed so that a portion of suffering in the first three stanzas is answered by a promise of rich comfort in the last three stanzas. “I walk in danger all the way ... I walk with angels all the way” (v. 1, 4). “I pass through trials all the way ... I walk with Jesus all the way” (v. 2, 5). “Death doth pursue me all the way ... My walk is heav’nward all the way” (v. 3, 6). The highlight of the hymn is the fifth stanza. The answer, in this life of trials, is Jesus: “Within His wounds I find a stay,” so although “Satan’s power assails me” even the sins we commit ultimately will not hurt us: “my path I safely tread,” through the daily cleansing given to me in Jesus’ blood.

## Secondary Hymns for the Month

### “Before Thee, God, Who Knowest All”

ELH 493

This hymn by Magnus B. Landstad fits well on Ash Wednesday.

### “The Sun Has Gone Down”

ELH 575

Based on Martin Luther’s Evening Prayer, this hymn by Samuel O. Bruun may be sung at evening Lent services.

## I Walk in Danger All the Way

1. I walk in danger all the way;  
The thought shall never leave me  
That Satan, who has marked his prey,  
Is plotting to deceive me.  
This foe with hidden snares  
May seize me unawares  
If e’er I fail to watch and pray;  
I walk in danger all the way.

2. I pass through trials all the way,  
With sin and ills contending;  
In patience I must bear each day  
The cross of God’s own sending.  
Oft in adversity  
I know not where to flee,  
When storms of woe my soul dismay;  
I pass through trials all the way.

3. Death doth pursue me all the way;  
Nowhere I rest securely.  
He comes by night, he comes by day,  
And takes his prey most surely.  
A failing breath, and I  
In death’s strong grasp may lie  
To face eternity for aye.  
Death doth pursue me all the way.

4. I walk with angels all the way;  
They shield me and befriend me.  
All Satan’s pow’r is held at bay  
When heav’nly hosts attend me.  
They are my sure defense,  
All fear and sorrow, hence!  
Unharm’d by foes, do what they may,  
I walk with angels all the way.

5. I walk with Jesus all the way;  
His guidance never fails me.  
Within His wounds I find a stay  
When Satan’s pow’r assails me,  
And, by His footsteps led,  
My path I safely tread.  
In spite of ills that threaten may,  
I walk with Jesus all the way.

6. My walk is heav’nward all the way;  
Await, my soul, the morrow,  
When thou shalt find release for aye  
From all thy sin and sorrow.  
All worldly pomp, begone!  
To heav’n I now press on.  
For all the world I would not stay;  
My walk is heav’nward all the way.

# Heritage Hymns of the Month

## MARCH

### “Over Kedron Jesus Treadeth”

ELH 295

Our *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*, its Rite I liturgy and its preservation of Norwegian/Danish heritage of church singing and hymnody would not be ours without Thomas H. Kingo. He is the Danish pastor and poet who produced the original 1685 Danish version and wrote many of its hymns. In this tradition, congregational singing is given a position equal to choral liturgical singing. Through their singing of the hymns, people in the congregation proclaim their faith to one another. The hymns are devotional too.

This is especially true of Kingo’s hymns for the Passion of Christ. He wrote a series of hymns which turn each part of Christ’s Passion into a sung sermon. The first part of each hymn tells what was done to Christ; the second part applies it for comfort to the Christian’s daily life. “Over Kedron Jesus Treadeth” is one of these Passion hymns. It is from the first part of Jesus’ Passion, in the Garden of Gethsemane. Over the first five stanzas, we “see how, anguish-struck,” Jesus experiences the depths of suffering for us. In the final three stanzas, comfort is applied to us: “When as flow’rs themselves *I* wither,/When *I* droop and fade like grass ...” then I hear of Jesus’ suffering “to cheer my singing soul.”

### “On My Heart Imprint Thine Image”

ELH 593

The superscription on Jesus’ cross was the writing that Pontius Pilate placed over Jesus: “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews” (John 19:19-22). For the baptized Christian – on whom the cross has been imprinted on forehead and breast – the superscription that God sees is: “Jesus, crucified for me.”

This verse is from Thomas Kingo’s Passion hymn for Good Friday. That hymn is 29 verses long; this verse, centered on “Jesus, crucified for me,” is the exact center of the hymn by Kingo’s design. He places Jesus at the center, as Jesus is the center of the Christian’s faith and life. This verse has been used by many ELS congregations as a conclusion to each midweek Lent service. It also is used on Good Friday as we meditate on the gifts of Jesus’ death by crucifixion: “my life, my hope’s foundation, and my glory and salvation.”

## Over Kedron Jesus Treadeth

1. Over Kedron Jesus treadeth,  
To His passion for us all;  
Ev’ry human eye be weeping,  
Tears of bitter grief let fall!  
Round His spirit flock the foes,  
Place their shafts and bend their bows,  
Aiming at the Savior solely,  
While the world forsakes Him wholly.

2. David once, with heart afflicted,  
Crossed the Kedron’s narrow strand,  
Clouds of gloom and grief about him  
When an exile from his land.  
But, O Jesus, blacker now  
Bends the cloud above Thy brow,  
Hasting to death’s dreary portals  
For the shame and sin of mortals.

3. Enter now the restful garden  
As a peaceful quiet space,  
Sorrow soon begins to darken,  
Follow Thee in ev’ry place!  
Come now, Adam, come and see  
Enter blest Gethsemane!  
See the Lord of heaven shaking  
Hellish anguish for us taking.

4. See how, anguish-struck, He falleth  
Prostrate, and with struggling breath,  
Three times on His God He calleth,  
Praying that the bitter death  
And the cup of doom may go,  
Still He cries, in all His woe:  
“Not My will, but Thine, O Father!”  
And the angels round Him gather.

5. See how, in that hour of darkness,  
Battling with the evil pow’r,  
Agonies untold assail Him,  
On His soul the arrows show’r;  
All the garden flow’rs are wet  
With the drops of bloody sweat,  
From His anguished frame distilling—  
World’s redemption thus fulfilling!

6. But, O flow’rs, so sadly watered  
By this pure and precious dew,  
In some blessed hour your blossoms  
’Neath the olive-shadows grew!  
Eden’s garden did not bear  
Aught that can with you compare,  
For the blood, thus freely given,  
Makes my soul the heir of heaven.

7. When as flow’rs themselves I wither,  
When I droop and fade like grass,  
When the life-streams through my pulses  
Dull and ever duller pass,  
When at last they cease to roll  
Then, to cheer my singing soul,  
Grace of Jesus, be Thou given—  
Source of triumph! Pledge of heaven!

8. Daily I am gladly yearning  
E’er to go to Kedron’s stream  
And from earthly pleasure turning  
In a penitential theme!  
Daily in Gethsemane  
With my spirit I shall see  
Jesus’ bleeding and His sighing  
For my soul is all His dying.

# Heritage Hymn of the Month

APRIL

## “Like the Golden Sun Ascending”

ELH 354

This Easter hymn is a prayer of thanks and praise. The hymn’s first stanza is an exclamation to the world – “thus my Jesus ... rose triumphant Easter morning” – but the rest of the hymn is sung to Jesus. The world can listen in, and learn of our risen Savior, but this is personal! “Thanks to Thee, O Christ victorious! ... Thanks because Thou didst arise, and hast opened Paradise!” The hymn ends with this: “Lord, I thank Thee and extol Thee,/And in heav’n I shall behold Thee.” Throughout this hymn, we speak to Christ of what He has done for us. This is praise: speaking back to God the great things He has done.

Like all great Easter hymns, this hymn emphasizes the finished work of Christ that has redeemed us: “Thou hast won for me salvation,/All my sins on Thee were laid” (v. 4). This is the Gospel. What sets this hymn apart is its extremely pastoral emphasis, using the Gospel in Word and Sacrament (v. 7, 10) as healing medicine for the wounded sinner. The hymn deals with great spiritual troubles and applies the comfort of the resurrection. “For my heart finds consolation,/And my fainting soul grows brave” (v. 3), addresses the one who is overtaken by sin, feels defeated by life and helpless, is forsaken or forgotten by others, suffers “sore distress,” or is despised and condemned by an unsympathetic world (v. 4). “Thou hast buried all my woe ... Sin and death shall not o’erthrow me/Even in my dying hour” (v. 6, 7).

## Secondary Hymn for the Month

## “Peace to Soothe Our Bitter Woes”

ELH 595

This hymn by Nikolai F. S. Grundtvig is for the Second Sunday of Easter, when we hear Jesus say to the hidden-away disciples, and later to Thomas too: “Peace be with you.”

## Like the Golden Sun Ascending

1. Like the golden sun ascending,  
Breaking through the gloom of night,  
On the earth his glory spending  
So that darkness takes to flight,  
Thus my Jesus from the grave  
And death’s dismal, dreadful cave  
Rose triumphant Easter morning  
At the early purple dawning.

2. Thanks to Thee, O Christ victorious!  
Thanks to Thee, O Lord of life!  
Death hath now no power o’er us,  
Thou hast conquered in the strife.  
Thanks because Thou didst arise  
And hast opened Paradise!  
None can fully sing the glory  
Of the resurrection story.

3. For my heart finds consolation  
And my fainting soul grows brave  
When I stand in contemplation  
At Thy dark and dismal grave;  
When I see where Thou didst sleep  
In death’s dungeon dark and deep,  
Yet didst break all bands asunder,  
Must I not rejoice and wonder?

4. Though I be by sin o’ertaken,  
Though I lie in helplessness,  
Though I be by friends forsaken  
And must suffer sore distress,  
Though I be despised, contemned,  
And by all the world condemned,  
Though the dark grave yawn before me,  
Yet the light of hope shines o’er me.

5. Thou hast died for my transgression,  
All my sins on Thee were laid;  
Thou hast won for me salvation,  
On the cross my debt was paid.  
From the grave I shall arise  
And shall meet Thee in the skies.  
Death itself is transitory;  
I shall lift my head in glory.

6. Satan’s arrows all lie broken,  
Death and hell have met their doom;  
Christ, Thy rising is the token:  
Thou hast triumphed o’er the tomb.  
Thou hast buried all my woe,  
And my cup doth overflow;  
By Thy resurrection glorious  
I shall wave my palms victorious.

7. As the Son of God I know Thee,  
For I see Thy sov’reign pow’r;  
Sin and death shall not o’erthrow me  
Even in my dying hour;  
For Thy resurrection is  
Surety for my heav’nly bless,  
And my baptism a reflection  
Of Thy death and resurrection.

8. Unto life Thou shalt arouse me  
By Thy resurrection’s pow’r;  
Though the hideous grave shall house me,  
And my flesh the worms devour;  
Fire and water may destroy  
My frail body, yet with joy  
I shall rise as Thou hast risen  
From the deep sepulchral prison.

9. Grant me grace, O blessed Savior,  
And Thy Holy Spirit send  
That my walk and my behavior  
May be pleasing to the end;  
That I may not fall again  
Into death’s grim pit and pain,  
Whence by grace Thou hast retrieved me  
And from which Thou hast relieved me.

10. For the joy Thy birth doth give me,  
For Thy holy, precious Word;  
For Thy Baptism which doth save me,  
For Thy blest Communion board;  
For Thy death, the bitter scorn,  
For Thy resurrection morn,  
Lord, I thank Thee and extol Thee,  
And in heav’n I shall behold Thee.

# Heritage Hymns of the Month

MAY

## “How Blest Are They Who Hear God’s Word”

ELH 586

This is a good hymn to learn and sing as Sunday School children, school children and catechism students end their school year and head into summer. It is based on Jesus’ words, “Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it” (Luke 11:28). In this verse, “keep” does not mean “obey it,” but “cling to it.” This is what the hymn conveys, that not only is it important to hear the Word of God and gladly learn it (v. 1), but it is important to treasure it, use it in battle, and be preserved in this faith “till my account is given before the throne in heaven!” (v. 3)

If children learn one verse of this hymn, it should be the second. It teaches how God’s Word sustains a person in trials and difficulty. “God’s Word a treasure is to me!” Why is it such a treasure? “Through sorrow’s night my sun [it] shall be,” and also “the shield of faith in battle” (Ephesians 6:16). We live in the church militant on earth, where faith is attacked daily. The Christian looks for reassurance to the promise that “faileth never”: God has written – in Jesus’ blood! – “my title as His child and heir.”

## “He That Believes and Is Baptized”

ELH 241

This Baptism hymn by Thomas Kingo is short, but very sweet! Because it is short, it is easily memorized. It is a good hymn for Pentecost, because of the prayer for God to give His Holy Spirit (v. 2). Many chief Bible verses about baptism and eternal life are put right into this hymn (Mark 16:16, Romans 6:3, 2 Cor. 5:17, Rev. 7:9).

The first stanza teaches that baptism gives eternal life and brings the blessings of Jesus’ work of redemption to the baptized. This includes being placed in the church that includes those in heaven! The baptized infant even stands before God righteous through the gift of faith. “Baptized into the death of Christ” means baptism gives strength to walk in newness of life. The second stanza is a prayer that the Holy Spirit will lead us to grow in grace by holy baptism; the blessings of baptism are for each day!

## How Blest Are They Who Hear

1. How blest are they who hear God’s Word,  
And keep and heed what they have heard!  
They daily grow in wisdom.  
Their light shines brighter day by day,  
And while they tread life’s weary way,  
They have the oil of gladness  
To sooth their pain and sadness.

2. God’s Word a treasure is to me,  
Through sorrow’s night my sun shall be,  
The shield of faith in battle.  
The Father’s hand hath written there  
My title as His child and heir,  
“The kingdom’s thine forever.”  
That promise faileth never.

3. Today I was my Savior’s guest;  
My soul was here so richly blest,  
The bread of life receiving.  
O may thereby my faith prevail  
So that its fruit shall never fail  
Till my account is given  
Before the throne in heaven!

## He That Believes and Is Baptized

1. He that believes and is baptized  
Shall see the Lord’s salvation;  
Baptized into the death of Christ,  
He is a new creation.  
Through Christ’s redemption he shall stand  
Among the glorious heav’nly band  
Of ev’ry tribe and nation.

2. With one accord, O God, we pray:  
Grant us Thy Holy Spirit.  
Look Thou on our infirmity  
Through Jesus’ blood and merit.  
Grant us to grow in grace each day  
By holy baptism that we may  
Eternal life inherit.

# Heritage Hymn of the Month

JUNE

## “Built on the Rock”

ELH 211

On June 25, 1530, the Lutheran people confessed their faith before the emperor in the words of the Augsburg Confession, under threat of the loss of life, family, property, church buildings, and freedom. They “built on the Rock,” Jesus Christ. The Rock is Christ (1 Cor. 10:4), and the Rock is the confession of faith revealed to us by the Father that Jesus is the Christ (Matthew 16:16-18). This is a hymn written to lift up hearts that are afraid for how God’s church on earth is faring.

The people who founded our synod 100 years ago had to give up churches and schools in order to confess the truth. They dealt with the sinking feeling that “steeple are falling,” they were ready to be “but two His name to tell,” and they prepared to “gather with our King/E’en in the lowliest dwelling.” This hymn applies to such times of trial the comfort in God’s promises, especially in baptism: “He through baptismal grace us owns ... He draws near/ And little children embraces.”

This hymn echoes with the words which God speaks to us and the words of faith which we speak in His presence. First, God speaks to us: “Spirit and life are all His words, His truth doth hallow the temple. ... Beautiful things in them [the churches] are said ... Here sounds the word that doth proclaim Christ ... [Here] He His message is bringing.” Then we speak the faith given by Him: “Praises to Him we there may bring, His wondrous mercy forth-telling ... We our earthly temples rear, that we may herald His praises.”

## Secondary Hymn for the Month

## “When Sinners See Their Lost Condition”

ELH 111

In this hymn by Magnus B. Landstad, the emphasis is on the Christian home: “God’s kingdom comes with pow’r and glory, To young and old, to man and wife.”

## Built on the Rock

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| <p>1. Built on the Rock the Church doth<br/>Even when steeples are falling; [stand<br/>Crumbled have spires in ev’ry land,<br/>Bells still are chiming and calling,<br/>Calling the young and old to rest,<br/>But above all the soul distressed,<br/>Longing for rest everlasting.</p> <p>2. Surely in temples made with hands<br/>God, the Most High, is not dwelling,<br/>High above earth His temple stands,<br/>All earthly temples excelling.<br/>Yet He whom heav’ns cannot contain<br/>Chose to abide on earth with men—<br/>Built in our bodies His temple.</p> <p>3. We are God’s house of living stones,<br/>Built for His habitation;<br/>He through baptismal grace us owns<br/>Heirs of His wondrous salvation;<br/>Were we but two His name to tell,<br/>Yet He would deign with us to dwell<br/>With all His grace and His favor.</p> | <p>4. Now we may gather with our King<br/>E’en in the lowliest dwelling;<br/>Praises to Him we there may bring,<br/>His wondrous mercy forthtelling;<br/>Jesus His grace to us accords,<br/>Spirit and life are all His words,<br/>His truth doth hallow the temple.</p> <p>5. Still we our earthly temples rear<br/>That we may herald His praises;<br/>They are the homes where He draws<br/>And little children embraces; [near<br/>Beautiful things in them are said,<br/>God there with us His cov’nant made,<br/>Making us heirs of His kingdom.</p> <p>6. Here stands the font before our eyes,<br/>Telling how God did receive us;<br/>Th’altar recalls Christ’s sacrifice<br/>And what His table doth give us;<br/>Here sounds the Word that doth pro-<br/>Christ yesterday, today, the same, [claim<br/>Yea, and for aye our Redeemer.</p> <p>7. Grant then, O God, where’er men roam,<br/>That, when the church bells are ringing,<br/>Many in Jesus’ faith may come<br/>Where He His message is bringing:<br/>“I know Mine own, Mine own know Me,<br/>Ye, not the world, My face shall see:<br/>My peace I leave with you, Amen.”</p> |
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# Heritage Hymn of the Month

JULY

**“Ye Lands, to the Lord”**

**ELH 56**

One of the Norwegian Synod’s founding fathers, Ulrik Vilhelm Koren, wrote this hymn. He served as president of the synod until 1910. Before he died, he warned against doctrinal compromise on the doctrine of election, and his words helped strengthen those who refused to compromise by joining the merger. As president, Koren exercised pastoral leadership in writing “An Accounting” (a Scripture-based evaluation of the true doctrine of election) and “Can and Ought a Christian Be Certain of His Salvation?” – to which, guided by Scripture passages, he answered a resounding “Yes!”

This hymn sings Psalm 100 verse by verse. In each stanza Koren has us sing the refrain: “Glory be to God! ... Sing praise unto God out of Zion!” This steadily reinforces that God receives all the glory for our salvation. The end of the hymn – “To all generations His truth shall still endure” – has become a theme of our synod, and a reminder to pass on God’s truth to the next generation.

## Secondary Hymn for the Month

**“In Jesus I Find Rest and Peace”**

**ELH 437**

This hymn by an unknown Scandinavian author expresses trust in God’s providence.

## Ye Lands to the Lord

1. Ye lands, to the Lord make a jubilant noise:  
Glory be to God!  
O serve Him with joy, in His presence now rejoice;  
Sing praise unto God out of Zion!
2. Not we, but the Lord is our Maker, our God:  
Glory be to God!  
His people we are, and the sheep led by His rod;  
Sing praise unto God out of Zion!
3. O enter His gates with thanksgiving and praise;  
Glory be to God!  
To bless Him and thank Him, our voices we will raise;  
Sing praise unto God out of Zion!
4. For good is the Lord, and His mercy is sure;  
Glory be to God!  
To all generations His truth shall still endure;  
Sing praise unto God out of Zion!

# Heritage Hymn of the Month

AUGUST

## “Thy Love, O Gracious God and Lord”

ELH 449

This hymn is a sung sermon based on Luke 19:41-48, the traditional gospel lesson for the Tenth Sunday after Trinity/Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost (usually observed sometime in August). In this hymn we are meditating on Jesus’ weeping over Jerusalem, that He still loves people who reject Him.

The first three stanzas lay out God’s love for everyone – “Thou hast loved our fallen race” – expressed in Jesus’ incarnation, fulfilling of the Law, atoning death on the cross, and sending of the Spirit to give faith. The last six stanzas take up the question in the gospel lesson: “Why is Thy heart still yearning/Since the great world rejects Thy Word?” The answer to this is a beautiful pastoral appeal which declares that God is “full of sweet compassion” and wants only to “give us joy for sorrow.” The last verse demonstrates one of the strengths of our *Hymnary*: including the “funeral verse” which often ends a Lutheran hymn. The final verse preaches the emphatic certainty of arriving in heaven to enjoy everlasting life: “O Jesus, at my dying breath/Hold Thou my hand securely ... And I shall find in Paradise/The joys of life unending.”

## Secondary Hymn for the Month

## “As After the Water-Brooks”

ELH 462

This hymn by Nikolai F. S. Grundtvig is based on Psalm 42.

## Thy Love, O Gracious God and Lord

1. Thy love, O gracious God and Lord,  
All other loves excelling,  
Attunes my heart to sweet accord,  
And passes pow’r of telling;  
For when Thy wondrous love I see,  
My heart yields glad submission;  
I love Thee for Thy love to me  
In my poor, lost condition.

2. Yea, Thou hast loved our fallen race,  
And rather than condemn us,  
Cast out and banish from Thy face  
Thine only Son didst send us;  
Who died upon the cross, that we  
Should all be saved forever;  
Hence Jesus also died for me,  
My soul, forget it never.

3. Thy love, O God, embraces all,  
And Jesus’ merits cover  
The guilt of all, both great and small,  
The world of sinners over.  
Thy Spirit doth Thy light afford  
To all who will receive it,  
And from Thy knowledge bars Thy Word  
No soul who will believe it.

4. But what hath moved Thee, gracious  
Why is Thine heart still yearning [Lord?  
Since the great world rejects Thy Word,  
Thy love and mercy spurning?  
For men go on in sin each day,  
In carnal-minded blindness,  
And O how few Thy call obey  
And heed Thy lovingkindness!

5. In us no beauty Thou couldst see,  
And no intrinsic merit;  
We all were poor—but misery  
And sin we did inherit.  
We wandered each a different path,  
And in our lost condition,  
By nature children of His wrath,  
Whom sin doomed to perdition.

6. Our virtues and our own good deeds  
With God cannot avail us;  
With these the enemy misleads,  
Such righteousness shall fail us;  
Our will and strength and soul are dead  
In evil inclination;  
Christ Jesus has the ransom paid,  
And gained for us salvation.

7. O gracious God, Thy loving heart  
Was full of sweet compassion;  
And felt our woe and desp’rate smart,  
And planned our restoration;  
Thy grace and justice found a way  
To save us from death’s horror;  
And everlasting judgment stay,  
And give us joy for sorrow.

8. On Christ, the rock, I’m anchored fast,  
By faith in Him remaining;  
I’ll weather ev’ry stormy blast,  
My peace of soul retaining;  
On Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
My ever firm foundation,  
Until the harbor bar is crossed,  
And I see God’s salvation.

9. O Jesus, at my dying breath  
Hold Thou my hand securely,  
And may I in a living faith  
Hold fast to Thee most surely;  
That my last prayer to Thee may rise,  
My soul to Thee commending,  
And I shall find in Paradise  
The joys of life unending.



# Heritage Hymn of the Month

SEPTEMBER

## “Lord Jesus Christ, My Savior Blest”

ELH 258

This is a good hymn to learn and sing as Sunday School children and catechism students begin their school year. Throughout the hymn, we are directed to God’s Word as our comfort, support, and guide; yet we are simultaneously directed to Christ our Savior. In this hymn, Christ and His Word are never separated. This is a heritage of the Lutheran emphasis that Christ is given by means of His Word. To lose the Word is to lose Jesus, and to have and to hear the Word is to have Jesus and hear His very voice.

The melody is happy. It sings with a childlike spirit of joy and optimism. Embedded within this cheerful melody are words about life under the cross: “I trust in Thee;/Deliver me/From misery;/Thy Word’s my consolation,” and: “When sorrows rise,/My refuge lies/In Thy compassion tender,” and: “... This will I plead/In time of need./O help with speed,/When troubles overtake me!”

## Secondary Hymn for the Month

## “Praise to Thee and Adoration”

ELH 596

This hymn by Thomas Kingo is a good hymn for the beginning of catechism and Sunday School instruction for the year; the events of Jesus’ life and redeeming work are joined with a prayer to be kept faithful.

## Lord Jesus Christ, My Savior Blest

1. Lord Jesus Christ,  
My Savior blest,  
My Hope and my Salvation!  
I trust in Thee;  
Deliver me  
From misery;  
Thy Word’s my consolation.

2. As Thou dost will,  
Lead Thou me still  
That I may truly serve Thee.  
My God, I pray,  
Teach me Thy way,  
To my last day  
In Thy true faith preserve me.

3. Most heartily  
I trust in Thee;  
Thy mercy fails me never.  
Dear Lord, abide;  
My Helper tried,  
Thou Crucified,  
From evil keep me ever.

4. Now henceforth must  
I put my trust  
In Thee, O dearest Savior.  
Thy comfort choice,  
Thy Word and voice,  
My heart rejoice  
Despite my ill behavior.

5. When sorrows rise,  
My refuge lies  
In Thy compassion tender.  
Within Thine arm  
Can naught alarm;  
Keep me from harm,  
Be Thou my strong Defender.

6. I have Thy Word,  
Christ Jesus, Lord;  
Thou never wilt forsake me.  
This will I plead  
In time of need.  
O help with speed,  
When troubles overtake me!

7. Grant, Lord, we pray,  
Thy grace each day,  
That we, Thy law revering,  
May live with Thee,  
And happy be  
Eternally,  
Before Thy throne appearing.

# Heritage Hymns of the Month

October

## “There Many Shall Come from the East and the West”

ELH 200

Magnus Landstad was a writer and translator of many hymns, and publisher of the 1870 Norwegian hymnbook that many Norwegian immigrants brought with them to America. This is one of Landstad’s greatest hymns. It is based on Jesus’ words recorded in Matthew 8:11-12: “I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven ...” (ESV)

Our Lord sees in advance people from many nations sitting at the Supper of the Lamb in heaven with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This is a promise, so it is the Gospel. The hymn’s second verse preaches the Law, the message of warning, that many do sadly resist God’s grace and will be “eternally lost and unfriended.” But those who are saved are those who “hear when our Shepherd doth call/in accents persuasive and tender.” In verses 3-5 we are praying with humility that God’s work of grace would bear fruit in us: “O may we all hear ... O that we the throng of the ransomed may swell ... God graciously make us in heaven to dwell ... God grant that I may of His infinite love/Remain in His merciful keeping.” This is underscored by the closing of every verse: “Have mercy upon us, O Jesus!”

## “God’s Word Is Our Great Heritage”

ELH 583

Nikolai F.S. Grundtvig (author of “Built on the Rock”) wrote this hymn verse on the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation to be an additional verse to Martin Luther’s hymn “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.” It is often used as the festival hymn verse on Reformation Sunday (following the exordium, another old Norwegian Lutheran tradition). As we sing this we are reminded that God’s Word is the means by which faith in Jesus is obtained and passed on to our children and each generation. The prayer that closes this verse asks for God to help us “keep its teachings pure” in our churches “throughout all generations.”

## Secondary Hymn for the Month

## “Built on the Rock”

ELH 211

## There Many Shall Come from the East and the West

1. There many shall come from the east and the west  
And sit at the feast of salvation  
With Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the blest,  
Obeying the Lord’s invitation.  
Have mercy upon us, O Jesus!

2. But they who have always resisted His grace  
And on their own virtue depended,  
Shall then be condemned and cast out from His face,  
Eternally lost and unfriended.  
Have mercy upon us, O Jesus!

3. O may we all hear when our Shepherd doth call,  
In accents persuasive and tender,  
That while there is time we make haste one and all  
And find Him, our mighty Defender.  
Have mercy upon us, O Jesus!

4. O that we the throng of the ransomed may swell,  
To whom He hath granted remission.  
God graciously make us in heaven to dwell  
And save us from endless perdition.  
Have mercy upon us, O Jesus!

5. God grant that I may of His infinite love  
Remain in His merciful keeping;  
And sit with the King at His table above,  
When here in the grave I am sleeping.  
Have mercy upon us, O Jesus!

6. All trials are then like a dream that is past,  
Forgotten all trouble and sorrow;  
All questions and doubts have been answered at last;  
Then dawneth eternity’s morrow.  
Have mercy upon us, O Jesus!

7. The heavens shall ring with an anthem more grand  
Than ever on earth was recorded;  
The blest of the Lord shall receive at His hand  
The crown to the victors awarded.  
Have mercy upon us, O Jesus!

## I Know of a Sleep in Jesus' Name

1. I know of a sleep in Jesus' name,  
A rest from all toil and sorrow;  
Earth folds in her arms my weary frame  
And shelters it till the morrow.  
My soul is at home with God in heav'n;  
Her sorrows are past and over.

2. I know of a peaceful eventide;  
And when I am faint and weary,  
At times with the journey sorely tried,  
Through hours that are long and dreary,  
Then often I yearn to lay me down  
And sink into blissful slumber.

3. I know of a morning, bright and fair  
When tidings of joy shall wake us,  
When songs from on high shall fill the  
And God to His glory take us, [air  
When Jesus shall bid us rise from sleep  
How joyous that hour of waking!

7. O Jesus, draw near my dying bed  
And take me into Thy keeping  
And say when my spirit hence is fled,  
"This child is not dead, but sleeping."  
And leave me not, Savior, till I rise  
To praise Thee in life eternal.

4. O that is a morning dear to me,  
And oft, o'er the mountains streaming,  
In spirit its heav'nly light I see,  
As golden the peaks are beaming.  
Then sing I for joy like birds at dawn  
That carol in lofty lindens.

5. God's Son to our graves then takes  
His way,  
His voice hear all tribes and nations;  
The portals are rent that guard our clay,  
And moved are the sea's foundations.  
He calls out aloud, "Ye dead, come  
In glory we rise to meet Him. [forth!"

6. Now opens the Father's house above,  
The names of the blest are given:  
Lord, gather us there; let none we love  
Be missed in the joys of heaven.  
Vouchsafe Thou us all a place with Thee;  
We ask through our dear Redeemer.

## Heritage Hymns of the Month

November

### "Behold a Host, Arrayed in White"

ELH 553

We wish we could see the people who are in heaven, if only for a moment. In Revelation 7:9-17, the Lord allowed St. John to see them and write down what he saw, to share with us. They are "a great multitude that no one could number ... standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands." John is asked, "Who are these, clothed in white robes?" He does not know and is then told that they made it "out of the great tribulation" by having their robes "washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb." (ESV)

In this hymn we sing about this, to a sweet Norwegian folk melody. It is a hymn that acknowledges life under the cross: "So oft, in troubled days gone by,/In anguish they would weep and sigh ... Ye did the joys of earth disdain,/Ye toiled and sowed in tears and pain." In answer to this, it is a hymn rich in comfort: "At home above the God of love/For aye their tears shall dry." Yet we still sing the true teaching of justification, directed to Christ and His promises: They "in the flood of Jesus' blood/Are cleansed from guilt and blame ... And praise the Lord, who with the Word/Sustained you on the way."

### "I Know of a Sleep in Jesus' Name"

ELH 525

The best hymns use the full wealth of God's Word to teach the faith and comfort the conscience. This hymn shows how Scripture teaches in more than one place that death is a sleep. St. Paul calls Christians "those who sleep in Jesus" (1 Thess. 4:14); in the gospel we hear that "all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth" (John 5:28-29); and Jesus said that Jairus' daughter was "not dead, but sleeping" (Mark 5:39) before He took her by the hand and raised her with His voice.

This hymn brings these things together: “I know of a sleep in Jesus’ name,” we sing in the first verse – when we Christians die, we sleep in Jesus. “He calls out aloud, ‘Ye dead, come forth!’/In glory we rise to meet Him,” we sing in the fifth verse – His voice will wake the dead on the last day. “O Jesus, draw near my dying bed/And take me into Thy keeping,/And say when my spirit hence is fled,/“This child is not dead but sleeping,” we sing in the last verse. At our deathbeds, Jesus is there to raise us from death like the daughter of weeping Jairus. Jesus dries our tears as He turned Jairus’ tears from sorrow to joy.

### Secondary Hymn for the Month

#### “O Happy Day When We Shall Stand”

ELH 590

This hymn, sometimes sung at graveside committals, places the hope of the resurrection in the forefront.

### Behold a Host, Arrayed in White

1. Behold a host, arrayed in white,  
Like thousand snow-clad mountains bright;  
With palms they stand. Who is this band  
Before the throne of light?  
Lo, these are they, of glorious fame,  
Who from the great affliction came  
And in the flood of Jesus’ blood  
Are cleansed from guilt and blame.  
Now gathered in the holy place,  
Their voices they in worship raise;  
Their anthems swell where God doth dwell  
Mid angels’ songs of praise.

2. Despised and scorned, they sojourned here;  
But now, how glorious they appear!  
Those martyrs stand, a priestly band,  
God’s throne forever near.  
So oft in troubled days gone by,  
In anguish they would weep and sigh;  
At home above the God of love  
For aye their tears shall dry.  
They now enjoy their Sabbath rest,  
The paschal banquet of the blest;  
The Lamb, their Lord, at festal board  
Himself is host and guest.

3. Then hail! ye mighty legions, yea,  
All hail! now safe and blest for aye;  
And praise the Lord, who with His Word  
Sustained you on the way.  
Ye did the joys of earth distain,  
Ye toiled and sowed in tears and pain;  
Farewell, now bring your sheaves and sing  
Salvation’s glad refrain.  
Swing high your palms, lift up your song,  
Yea, make it myriad voices strong:  
Eternally shall praise to Thee,  
God, and the Lamb belong.

## Thy Little Ones, Dear Lord, Are We

1. Thy little ones, dear Lord, are we,  
And come Thy lowly bed to see;  
Enlighten every soul and mind,  
That we the way to Thee may find.
2. With songs we hasten Thee to greet  
And kiss the dust before Thy feet;  
O blessed hour, O sweetest night,  
That gave Thee birth, our soul's delight.
3. Now welcome! From Thy heav'nly home  
Thou to our vale of tears art come;  
Man hath no offering for Thee save  
The stable, manger, cross, and grave.
4. Jesus, alas! how can it be  
So few bestow a thought on Thee  
Or on the love, so wondrous great,  
That drew Thee down to our estate?
5. O draw us wholly to Thee, Lord,  
Do Thou to us Thy grace accord,  
True faith and love to us impart,  
That we may hold Thee in our heart.
6. Keep us, howe'er the world may lure,  
In our baptismal cov'nant pure;  
That ev'ry yearning thought may be  
Directed only unto Thee
7. Until at last we, too, proclaim,  
With all Thy saints, Thy glorious name;  
In Paradise our songs renew,  
And praise Thee as the angels do.
8. We gather round Thee, Jesus dear,  
So happy in Thy presence here;  
Grant us, our Savior, ev'ry one,  
To stand in heav'n before Thy throne.

## Heritage Hymns of the Month

December

### “On Mary, Virgin undefiled”

ELH 268

This is actually a revision of a Roman Catholic hymn to Mary. The hymn we sing has no problem saying God bestowed His favor on Mary, but clearly gives all the glory to Christ: “To *Him* be praise forever!” This hymn teaches the Gospel very clearly: “He hath us all from sin set free ... For full of grace and truth is He ... All shall be saved/Who trust in Him, believing ... Grant me Thy grace, I pray Thee!” It works very well in Advent, especially verse 3 which says not only that the Old Testament prophets were inspired by God, but that they were speaking of Christ’s saving work; “and faithful proved their saying.”

### “Thy Little Ones, Dear Lord, Are We”

ELH 144

Hans Brorson originally titled this “A Little Hymn for Children.” Not only does it tell little children of Christ’s birth, but it teaches them about their baptism. How are we His little ones? Through baptism! We cannot “come His lowly bed to see” by our own reason and strength, but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel. This is why we learn to say, “O *draw us wholly* to Thee, Lord” – He must draw us, and “wholly.” How does He “true faith and love ... impart?” The first way: in baptism. The great prayer in this hymn is: “Keep us, howe’er the world may lure,/In our baptismal cov’nant pure,” until He brings us to heaven. “Grant us, our Savior, ev’ry one,/To stand in heav’n before Thy throne.”

## Secondary Hymns for the Month

### “I Am So Glad When Christmas Comes”

ELH 127

This Christmas hymn by Marie Wexelsen has a great baptism connection.

### “In This Our Happy Christmastide”

ELH 150

This hymn by H. A. Brorson speaks of the crosses we bear even at Christmastime (for Christmas Day or Christmas 1).

## On Mary, Virgin undefiled

1. On Mary, Virgin undefiled,  
Did God bestow His favor;  
She bore a Son, the spotless Child,  
To Him be praise forever!  
He hath us all from sin set free;  
Our stay be He,  
And rest eternal give us!

2. Were all the sages here below  
All human wisdom showing,  
The mystery of Christ to know  
Were far beyond their knowing;  
For full of grace and truth is He;  
O may He be  
Our comfort in our dying!

3. Inspired of God the prophets spake,  
And faithful proved their saying,  
That Christ the bonds of sin doth break,  
Deliverance conveying  
To all by Satan's wiles enslaved;  
All shall be saved  
Who trust in Him, believing.

4. O Root of Jesse, David's Son,  
And Jacob's Star of Heaven!  
Thou art the Christ, the blessed One;  
Thy name all praise be given:  
By grace Thou hast redeemed us all  
From Adam's fall,  
And Thou wilt guide and tend us.

5. O could I speak in ev'ry tongue,  
The Scripture's deep expounding,  
Were in my mouth the angels' song  
That through high heav'n is sounding,  
I on my knees would humbly fall,  
On Jesus call,  
And worship Him forever!

6. My sins are countless as the sands,  
My crimes, O God, are crying,  
Deliver me from sin's dread bands  
And save me, Lord, when dying;  
O let me not, for evil past,  
Be lost at last,  
Grant me Thy grace, I pray Thee!