

December 2017

Dear Friends,

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. ⁵ Sing unto the Lord with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm. ⁶ With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King. ⁷ Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. ⁸ Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together ⁹ Before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.” Psalm 98: 4-9

The great hymnwriter Sir Isaac Watts is credited with having composed over 750 hymns, including beloved favorites such as “*Am I a Soldier of the Cross?*,” “*I Sing the Mighty Power of God*” and “*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.*” As a result of his popularity and inspired genius, Watts has been referred to as “the father of English hymnody.” Watts was a member of the Congregational Church in England, which emphasized the singing of psalms in public worship. Although Watts embraced this practice, he believed that the psalms “... ought to be translated in such a manner as we have reason to believe David would have composed them if he had lived in our day.” Watts set out to do that very thing, composing a collection of the psalms written in the contemporary language for the English people. However, when Watts was writing this “English Psalter”, he did so with an eye toward the truths of the New Testament. It was important for Watts to show how the Old Testament promises were fulfilled in Christ. In fact, the title of his composition was the “*Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament.*”

It is believed that Watts composed “*O God Our Help in Ages Past*” based on Psalm 90, “*Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun*” by Psalm 72 and “*Joy to the World*” by Psalm 98. It is also easy to see the impact of Romans 5 in Watts composition of his most familiar Christmas hymn, “*Joy to the World*”:

*No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as, the curse is found.*

“For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) ¹⁸ Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. ¹⁹ For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. ²⁰ Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: ²¹ That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 5:17-21

The suffering, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ has triumphed over the forces of darkness. Indeed, God's grace is much greater than our sin.

May the God richly bless you this Advent and Christmas season with the assurance of the abundant blessings in His Son, Jesus Christ, the One who rules with truth and grace. Merry Christmas!

**Yours in Christ,
Pastor Chuck Bylkas**



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In memory of Peter Bergstedt

From Hazel Yliniemi

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Winter Night of Music @ Zion Lutheran Church-Hancock

You are invited to an evening of Christmas caroling and special music as we usher in the Christmas season on Tuesday, December 5 at 7PM. Refreshments will be served with support from Thrivent Financial. A free will offering will benefit the seminary.



UPCOMING SPRING SEMESTER CLASSES BEING OFFERED

The spring semester will begin Monday, January 22, 2018. The following classes will be offered:

Lutheran Confessions (3 credits) – An in-depth look at the three ecumenical creeds and the documents that make up the Book of Concord.

Churches, Sects & Isms (3 credits) – An overview of the teachings and practices of the most prevalent Christian denominations, sectarian groups and others.

Acts of the Apostle (2 credits) – The historical account of the rise of the Church according to Luke is examined in the light of its doctrinal and theological contents.

Ministry to the World (2 credits) – The biblical basis for mission work along with a history of the methods employed to carry out such work.

Gospel of Matthew (2 credits) – An analysis of the gospel of Matthew in the light of its similarity to Mark and Luke. Also, questions concerning the roots and priority of the Synoptic Gospels.

Working as a Deaconess I (2 credits) – A course which explores the use of Deaconess skills involving both congregational and personal care and the employment of such skills in the current church setting.

Please contact the seminary if you are interested in taking any of these classes -email cilseminary@ilseminary.com or call (906) 482-3337.

*Wishing you a blessed Christmas and a
joyous New Year!
~From the students and staff
of the Inter-Lutheran Theological Seminary*

