

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

A Family Connecting in Christ



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WELCOME TO ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

At this time our services are for people wearing masks and social distancing!

Please know that even as we experience this awkwardness, your Good Shepherd holds you close to his heart and goes with you to share his love!

To Our Guests

- We pray that you receive a warm welcome and are blessed by the message of God's Word in our lessons and hymns. If you have questions, please ask!
- Our service is designed to focus us on Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The Holy Spirit does that by exposing our need for Christ and by showing us the wonders of God's grace in Christ – forgiveness and peace, help and hope for life in this world, and life forever with God in heaven.

Our Communion Practice

We practice close communion, the Biblical and ancient practice of the church. We invite our congregation members and visitors from sister WELS or ELS congregations to join us, but ask Christians from other denominations to kindly respect our practice. Further explanation is in the pew racks or from our pastor.

We Care about Your Children

We love to have children with us in worship.

- If your children are crying loudly, our nursery, Gathering Area (back of church), and downstairs Fellowship Hall are audio-equipped for you and your young children. When your children are ready, come back so we can worship together.

We Care about Your Special Needs

- **Large Print** Service Folders are available from an usher.
- **Hearing Assistance** for those with hearing aids is provided through our Hearing Loop or personal hearing devices available at the "sound table."
- A **wheelchair lift** is available for your assistance; please ask an usher.



Our Facilities

Restrooms are in our Fellowship Hall, downstairs and to the right of the kitchen.

Our Ministry

St. John offers an excellent preschool-8th grade school program. We are members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) - www.wels.net.

January 17, 2021

DIVINE SERVICE II

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... we hear and see a world cheering itself on in a life without God, demanding tolerance for their godless way of life, condemning those who speak of God's way of life. Sometimes that puts us in a hard spot, doesn't it?

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we hear Jeremiah in that hard spot. And we hear the Lord encourage!

OPENING HYMN

"Good News of God Above"

Hymn 568

Good news of God above Is ours to tell abroad,
The Father's everlasting love In Christ the risen Lord.
For neighbors near and far The seed of life is sown;
Then spread the seed By word and deed
To make the Savior known.

The love of Christ proclaim Who left his home on high;
To live our human life he came, Our human death to die.
The Father's only Son Became the sinners' friend,
Our lot to share, Our sin to bear,
And death's dominion end.

The Lord of Glory lives! From cross and death and grave
His own abundant life he gives To those he died to save.
His righteousness and peace Declare from sea to sea;
His praises sound The world around
For Christ has made us free.

Hear now the Master's word To those who bear his name:
"So send I you; till all have heard, Make known, declare, proclaim!"
Go forth in all the earth; Embrace the path he trod
With Christ beside As friend and guide
To bring good news of God.

INVOCATION

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

CONFESSION

M: Dear friends, let us approach God with a true heart and confess our sins, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us.

C: **Lord of life, I confess that I am by nature dead in sin.**

For faithless worrying and selfish pride,

For sins of habit and sins of choice,

For the evil I have done and the good I have failed to do,

I deserve to be cast away from your presence forever.

O Lord, I am sorry for my sins. Forgive me, for Jesus' sake.

ABSOLUTION

M: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. In his great mercy, God made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in our sins. Hear the word of Christ through his called servant: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

LORD, HAVE MERCY (*Kyrie*)

M: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

For the well-being of all people everywhere, that they may receive from you all they need to sustain body and life, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: For the spread of your life-giving gospel throughout the world, that all who are lost in sin may be brought to faith in you, hear our prayer, O Christ.

C: **Christ, have mercy.**

M: For patience and perseverance in this life, that we may not lose the hope of heaven as we await your return, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: Lord of life, live in us that we may live for you.

C: **Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, you gave your one and only Son to be the light of the world. Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshiped, and believed to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and forever. Amen.

FIRST LESSON

Jeremiah 15:15-21

You understand, O Lord;
remember me and care for me.
Avenge me on my persecutors.
You are long-suffering--do not take me away;
think of how I suffer reproach for your sake.
When your words came, I ate them;
they were my joy and my heart's delight,
for I bear your name,
O Lord God Almighty.
I never sat in the company of revelers,
never made merry with them;
I sat alone because your hand was on me
and you had filled me with indignation.
Why is my pain unending
and my wound grievous and incurable?
Will you be to me like a deceptive brook,
like a spring that fails?

Therefore this is what the Lord says:

"If you repent, I will restore you
that you may serve me;
if you utter worthy, not worthless, words,
you will be my spokesman.
Let this people turn to you,
but you must not turn to them.

I will make you a wall to this people,
a fortified wall of bronze;
they will fight against you
but will not overcome you,
for I am with you to rescue and save you,"
declares the Lord.
"I will save you from the hands of the wicked
and redeem you from the grasp of the cruel."

HYMN

"Fight the Good Fight"
Hymn 457

Fight the good fight With all your might;
Christ is your strength and Christ your light.
Lay hold on life, and it shall be
Your joy and crown eternally.

Run the straight race Through God's good grace;
Lift up your eyes and seek his face.
Life with its way before us lies;
Christ is the path and Christ the prize.

Cast care aside, Lean on your guide;
His boundless mercy will provide.
Lean, and the trusting soul shall prove
Christ is its life and Christ its love.

Faint not nor fear; His arms are near.
He changes not, and you are dear.
Only believe, and you will see
That Christ is Lord eternally.

I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues. On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

“Brother will betray brother to death, and father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

“A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebub, how much more the members of his household!

“So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

“Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.

“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn

“a man against his father,
a daughter against her mother,
a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law-
a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’

“Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me;
anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worth of me;
and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.
Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake
will find it.

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and became fully human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow you.
Destitute, despised, forsaken,
You on earth once suffered, too.
Perish ev'ry fond ambition,
All I've ever hoped or known;
Yet how rich is my condition!
God and heav'n are still my own.

Let the world despise and leave me;
They have left my Savior, too.
Human hearts and looks deceive me;
You are not, like them, untrue.
And since you have smiled upon me,
God of wisdom, love, and might,
Foes may hate and friends may shun me --
Show your face, and all is bright.

Go, then, earthly fame and treasure!
Come, disaster, scorn, and pain!
In your service pain is pleasure;
With your favor loss is gain.
I have called you Abba, Father!
You my all in all shall be.
Storms may howl, and clouds may gather;
All must work for good to me.

Haste, my soul, from grace to glory,
Armed by faith and winged by prayer.
All but heav'n is transitory;
God's own hand shall guide you there.
Soon shall end this earthly story;
Swift shall pass the pilgrim days,
Hope soon change to heav'nly glory,
Faith to sight and prayer to praise.

He was so mad he should have had a heart attack. He could hardly get his words out before he kicked me out of his house. What got him going? I told him that he, like we, that he was a sinner. He got so mad he should have had a heart attack. Another time, another place, another face. Another face as red as a face can get. Why? I told him that he sinned. “No, I don’t. I don’t sin any more.” I don’t know that I’ve ever seen a face get redder.

I don’t seem to have as many people angry at me, angry for calling them out. Oh, I have people upset with me for not dancing their dance. I have people disappointed in me for not being the pastor they want or need. But I don’t have as many people red in the face stammering angry because I called them out on their sin.

Part of me says that’s a good thing. I sleep better at night when the world’s not angry at me. A different part of me knows better. Like a blister that won’t heal, like a thorn in the flesh, like a sharp stone inside my shoe, I keep hearing the voices: “You need to have that talk. You need to try again. You need to have that talk.” Whose voice is that? Mostly, it’s the voice of God.

I imagine most all of you hear that same voice, don’t you? Dads and moms, your little baby is growing up, your little baby is all grown up, and what is she doing that you all know is wrong? What is he not doing that you all know he should be doing? Or your dear, dear friend - maybe that friend you used to get in trouble with - that dear, dear friend is still getting in trouble pretending it’s alright with God. Or maybe that brother, sister, son, daughter, friend isn’t really in trouble, but worse. They’re good people - but damned. They’re living damned because they’re living without Jesus; they’re living damned because they’re holding on to their sin instead of holding on to their Savior. And, please, don’t tell yourself that they can do both. You know better than to think people can hold on to sin and Jesus at the same time. So you hear the voices: “You need to have that talk. You need to try again. You need to have that talk.”

And part of us doesn’t want to have that talk because ... what? We don’t want to get someone upset? We don’t want to make things worse? We don’t want to be shown up because we don’t have the answer for all their excuses, questions, arguments? Or maybe we don’t want to have that talk because just the thought of that talk makes us feel guilty? We don’t want to have that talk, but we keep on hearing the voices: “You need to have that talk. You need to try again. You need to have that talk.”

Jeremiah was tired of having those talks. He was tired of people being angry with him, tired of people arguing, tired of seeing people and things go from bad to worse, tired of feeling small and not good enough. And it wasn’t just the talks.

For Jeremiah it wasn't just the talks. It was feeling left out and alone. When the guys got together, when the neighbors got together, Jeremiah wouldn't. Jeremiah couldn't. He wouldn't, he couldn't get together in their sin. He couldn't, he wouldn't get together and pretend that everything was alright, when it wasn't. And it hurt.

Jeremiah hurt. So what did he do? He took it out on God. "LORD, you know how much I love you and your word - **LORD, when your words came, I ate them they were my joy and my heart's delight.**" "Lord, you know how much I've given up for you - friends, family, good times." "Lord, you know what I've done for you; you know what I've given up for you. Why does life have to be so hard? Why don't you do something? Why aren't you there for me, God?"

I suppose blaming God is one way to answer his call to step up and speak up. Another way to answer his call is what? Excuses. "It's not the right time to say something. I'm not the right one to say something. I don't know what to say." "He's confirmed now. She's in college; she has her own place." "They have made it clear - they won't listen." All those things could be true. It might be the wrong time; you might be the wrong one; you might not know what to say; they might not listen. All that might be true, but if that's where you leave it - for all your family, for all your friends - is it a reason, or an excuse?

What did the LORD say to Jeremiah? Or first, what would you like the LORD to say to Jeremiah? Perhaps: "Relax. Don't worry about it. I know; it's hard; it hurts, doesn't it?" But that's not what the LORD said, is it? Instead of holding Jeremiah's hand, instead of patting Jeremiah on the back, first the LORD gave Jeremiah a kick in the backside. **"This is what the LORD says: 'If you repent, I will restore you that you may serve me; if you utter worthy, not worthless, words, you will be my spokesman. Let this people turn to you, but you must not turn to them.'**"

Someplace Jeremiah turned. Someplace Jeremiah joined the world against God. Instead of speaking up for God, he spoke against God. Instead of speaking up for God, he was keeping quiet. And so, instead of standing true with God, he was on the edge of fitting in with the world - no good to God and no good to anyone else.

So the LORD called him out. And the LORD calls us out. He calls us out for our complaining, he calls us out for our excuses, he calls us out for keeping quiet when people need us to be speaking up; and when we sound more like the world than like God, he calls us out - "Repent."

And then he puts his arms around us - the same arms he put around you at your baptism when he said: "I've got you; you're mine." He puts his arms around you - the same arms he stretched out on the cross with our sin and guilt, our excuses and procrastination. He puts his arms around you - the same arms he stretches out to you in his Supper: "take eat, take drink, given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins." He puts his arms around us, and he says: "I know; it's hard. I know; it hurts."

And then he says something more, the same something more that kept Jeremiah going, the same something more that made Jeremiah strong: **“I will make you a wall to this people, a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you to rescue and save you,” declares the LORD. “I will save you from the hands of the wicked and redeem you from the grasp of the cruel.”**

It’s easy to imagine angry faces, angry words. It’s not always so easy to imagine God wrapping his arms around us: “I’ve got you. I’ll give you the words you need.” It’s easy to imagine people ignoring us, turning away. It’s not so easy to imagine people listening to God and turning back to him. But that is what God has been doing since Satan spoke up in the Garden of Eden. God has been turning hearts - hurting hearts, angry hearts, blaming hearts, excuse-making hearts, godless hearts, stubborn hearts, fighting hearts - God has been turning hearts back to him. In Bible Class we’ll put some names on those hearts. But now, let me say - for almost as long as there have been hurting, angry, blaming, excuse-making, godless, stubborn, fighting hearts, God has been winning those hearts back to him so he can stretch his arms out around them: “I’ve got you; I forgive you; you’re mine.”

How? He could use angels. He could do what he did for Adam and Eve or for Saul who became Paul; he could come and call us back in person. Instead, he uses people like Jeremiah, people who struggle, people who feel too weak and too small, people who get tired, people who sometimes wonder if it’s all worth it. He uses people like you and like me to say what needs to be said. “Lord, God, soften our hard hearts, strengthen our weak hearts, give us your love and wisdom, to say what needs to be said so people can know your Love and Truth, for your glory and the good of your people. Amen.”

HYMN

"A Mighty Fortress is Our God"

Hymn 200

A mighty fortress is our God,
A trusty shield and weapon;
He helps us free from ev'ry need
That has 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.

With might of ours can naught be done;
Soon were our loss effected.
But for us fights the valiant one
Whom God himself elected.
You ask, "Who is this?"
Jesus Christ it is, The almighty Lord.
And there's no other God; He holds the field forever.

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.

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 do what they will -- Hate, steal, hurt, or kill --
Though all may be gone,
Our victory is won; The kingdom's ours forever!

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: Eternal God and Father, we give you thanks for the blessings we share as members of your holy Church, for your gracious Word and sacraments, for opportunities to worship and to grow in faith and knowledge, for occasions to serve and be served, for fellowship with believers in our congregation and in our synod.

C: Help us to rejoice in these blessings, dear Lord, and to use them faithfully.

M: Jesus Christ, Lord of the Church, you give grace to your people by calling us to be your witnesses in the world. Open your eyes to see the great and noble mission that lies before us. In the hurting eyes of lonely, in the pained eyes of the sick, and in the searching eyes of the lost, help us to see your face, O Jesus, and to serve others as we would serve you.

C: Awaken us to the opportunities you give to proclaim your message of love.

M: Holy Spirit, giver of life, through Word and sacrament bestow on us the wisdom and power we need to witness clearly and to act boldly. Help us to speak the truth in love, to give the reason for the hope we have, and to conduct ourselves with gentleness and respect.

C: Set our hearts on fire as we work and witness for Christ.

M: Hear us, Lord, as we pray for a family member, an acquaintance, a neighbor, or a friend who does not believe in you, or whose faith is weak or troubled.

Silent prayer

M: Bless the Church with men and women who are willing to proclaim your Word in places where we cannot go. Keep them and their loved ones in your care, and let nothing hinder their work. By the power of the gospel, restore their spirits each day, so that they do not lose heart as they serve us and others.

C: Move us to support them with our sincere prayers and generous offerings.

M: Wherever your Word is proclaimed, O Lord, grant it success. Let your kingdom come to us and others, so that we and many more might join the assembly of saints and angels to sing your praise forever.

C: **Savior of all, hear our prayer and help us in our mission. Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

M: The Lord be with you.

C: **(Spoken) And also with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them up unto the Lord.**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

C: **It is good and right so to do.**

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who rose from the dead in glorious triumph to bring forgiveness to the world and everlasting life to all who believe.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my † body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

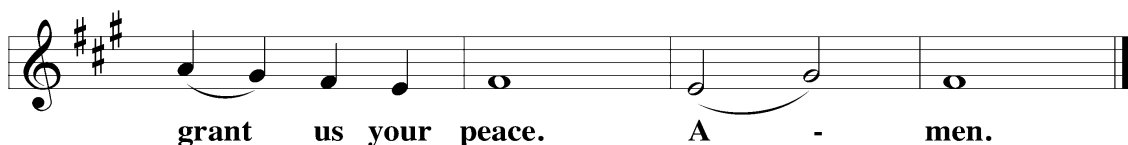
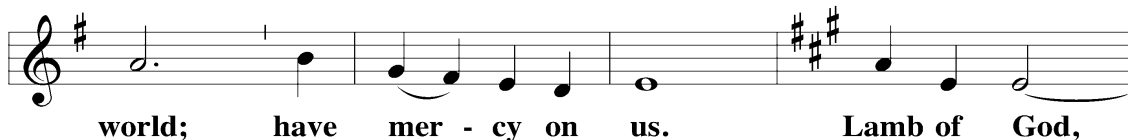
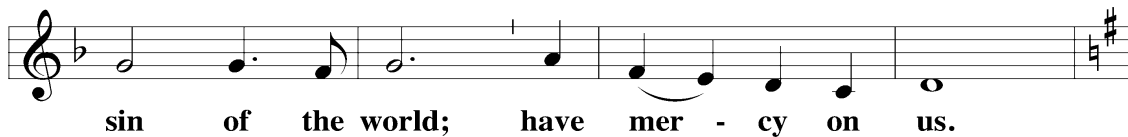
Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my † blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

LAMB OF GOD

Agnus Dei



BEFORE COMMUNION PRAYER

Lord, I am not worthy to be a guest at your holy table. But you are the friend of sinners, and you will not cast me out. This bread is your body, which bore my sins upon the tree. This wine is your blood, which purifies me from all guilt. At your invitation, I come rejoicing. Receive me, my savior.

AFTER COMMUNION PRAYER

Thank you, Lord Jesus Christ, for nourishing me in this sacrament with your body and blood. You have given me forgiveness, life, and salvation. Let me always remain in you as a branch remains in the vine. Send me out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

"The Church's One Foundation"

Hymn 538

The Church's one foundation Is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
She is his new creation By water and the Word.
From heav'n he came and sought her To be his holy bride;
With his own blood he bought her, And for her life he died.

Elect from ev'ry nation, Yet one o'er all the earth;
Her charter of salvation: One Lord, one faith, one birth.
One holy name she blesses, Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses, With ev'ry grace endued.

The Church shall never perish. Her dear Lord, to defend,
To guide, sustain, and cherish, Is with her to the end.
Though there be those that hate her And strive to see her fail,
Against both foe and traitor She ever shall prevail.

Though with a scornful wonder The world sees her oppressed,
By schisms rent asunder, By heresies distressed,
Yet saints their watch are keeping; Their cry goes up, "How long?"
And soon the night of weeping Shall be the morn of song.

Mid toil and tribulation And tumult of her war
She waits the consummation Of peace forevermore
Till with the vision glorious Her longing eyes are blest
And the great Church victorious Shall be the Church at rest.

CLOSING PRAYER

M: We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet that you have given us to eat and to drink in this sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

BLESSING

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

*“Stand up, Stand Up for Jesus”
Hymn 474*

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, Ye soldiers of the cross!
Lift high his royal banner; It must not suffer loss.
From vict'ry unto vict'ry His army shall he lead
Till ev'ry foe is vanquished And Christ is Lord indeed.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus! The trumpet call obey;
Forth to the mighty conflict In this his glorious day!
Ye that are brave, now serve him Against unnumbered foes;
Let courage rise with danger And strength to strength oppose.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus! Stand in his strength alone.
The arm of flesh will fail you; Ye dare not trust your own.
Put on the gospel armor; Each piece put on with prayer;
Where duty calls or danger, Be never wanting there.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus! The strife will not be long;
This day the noise of battle, The next, the victor's song.
To him that overcometh A crown of life shall be;
He with the King of glory Shall reign eternally.

OFFERING

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