

The Sources for This Morning's ✿ Reformation Day Liturgy ✿

Most of the content and music of this morning's liturgy has been taken from sixteenth-century Reformation sources.

The Reformers sought to restore vigorous Psalm singing to their congregations, so it is fitting that we are called to worship from Psalm 68, and then in response, sing a metrical version of the same Psalm. The music was composed by Louis Bourgeois (d. 1561) and used in churches pastored by Calvin (d. 1564) in Geneva, and Martin Bucer (d. 1551) in Strassburg. Louis Bourgeois, the foremost Reformation composer, has been called the father of the modern hymn tune. Psalm 68, named the "Battle hymn of the Reformation," was one of the favorite Psalms of the sixteenth-century Reformed churches. It became so identified with the Reformed cause in Catholic France that even the whistling of the tune was outlawed as a felony.

The next section comes from John Calvin's *Form of Prayers*. The call to confession, the prayer of confession, and the absolution are what Calvin and his congregation would have used every Sunday in Geneva.

Hymn #135 was composed by John Calvin while ministering to the French exiles in Strassburg. This music also comes from the Reformation composer Louis Bourgeois.

We respond to the Word of God with another hymn by Luther (#91). The tune is taken from the Wittenberg church's 1543 hymnal (*Geistliche Lieder* = Spiritual Songs). Luther sang this very hymn with the congregation in Wittenberg.

The prayer of petition and supplication is taken from the Scottish Reformation. It was published as part of *The Forme of Prayers* in 1556, written by the "Father of Presbyterians" — John Knox (d. 1572).

The hymn of triumph sung during the distribution of communion (#207) shows how profound a hymn writer Luther (d. 1546) was. The theme of Christ the Victor permeates the devotional life of both Calvin and Luther. This is a wonderful example of a non-inspired hymn that nevertheless draws its content exclusively from the sublime biblical doctrine of Christ's Person and work. The tune is based on the Easter hymn "Christ ist erstanden," which predates the Reformation by about 400 years.

We end the service with "Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott," apparently written by Luther for the Diet (Council) of Speyer, at which the German princes lodged their formal protest against the revoking of their religious liberties, thus receiving the name "Protestants." Today we will sing a version of "A Mighty Fortress" which is very close to the original rhythm of the tune in Luther's day. The musical arrangement is by Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672), and comes from the Becker Psalter of 1628, which contains Schütz's masterful settings of German Psalm versifications (including Luther's) compiled by Cornelius Becker, theology professor at Leipzig.

Pastor Jeffrey J. Meyers

Litany of Petition

O God, in mercy remember Thine inheritance, and forget not the congregation of thy people forever. Thou art our Redeemer and the lifter up of our head, and under the shadow of Thy wings shall we find our shelter and our rest.

Have mercy upon us, O God, and hide not Thyself from our petitions.

Preserve, O God, the Universal Church in holiness and truth, in unity and peace. May she ever advance the honor of her Lord, for ever represent His sacrifice, glorify His Person, and advance His kingdom, that being accepted of Thee, and filled with His Spirit, she may partake of His glory.

Have mercy upon us, O God, and hide not Thyself from our petitions.

Give the spirit of justice and righteousness to all Christian rulers and magistrates; grant that their people may obey them, and that they may obey Thee. Especially do we pray for our President and Congress, that they might conform their judgments more and more to Thy holy law, and further Thy kingdom in this world, the kingdom of Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Have mercy upon us, O God, and hide not Thyself from our petitions.

Give to Thy servants, pastors, elders and deacons, the spirit of patience and humility, of holiness and diligence, of prudence and courage, to declare Thy will by a pure life and wise words, that they may minister to the good of souls, and find the reward of the Master's approval at His coming.

Have mercy upon us, O God, and hide not Thyself from our petitions.

Give to our relatives and friends pardon of sin and the support of Thy grace, comfort in their sorrows, strength in their temptations, and the guidance of Thy good Spirit; that doing Thy will and rejoicing in Thy mercies here, they may partake of Thy glories hereafter.

Have mercy upon us, O God, and hide not Thyself from our petitions.

Give protection to all widows and orphans, patience and submission to the sick, consolation to the afflicted, that they may be rewarded by Thy comforts for the days wherein they have suffered adversity.

Have mercy upon us, O God, and hide not Thyself from our petitions.

Be Thou a star and a guide to them that travel by land or sea; the strength of them that toil on farms and in factories; give cheerfulness to sad hearts, maintenance to the poor, be a defense to the oppressed, and put a stop to the sins and miseries of all mankind.

Have mercy upon us, O God, and hide not Thyself from our petitions.

Give unto our enemies Thy forgiveness, charity towards us, and love for Thee. Bring all sinners to repentance, and all Thy saints to perfect love and holiness; bring all Jews, infidels, and all the heathen to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, and all the benefits of His passion; to the glory of His name.

Have mercy upon us, O God, and hide not Thyself from our petitions.

Give to all merchants faithfulness and truth; to the farmer health, fair seasons, and reward his toil with the dew of heaven and the blessings of the earth. Give to all workman diligence in their callings, and a blessing on their labors; give to the old a mature religion, and desires after heaven; give to the young an early piety; give to all families Thy protection; and give to us all pardon, and holiness, and life eternal.

Have mercy upon us, O God, and hide not Thyself from our petitions. Amen.