

# LCMS

## Worship Library

**Title:** Serving the Lord—The Examples of the Saints

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**Category:** Church Year

A hymnal contains more than just services and hymns. There are other pages filled with all kinds of useful and interesting resources, just waiting to be “discovered.”

One of these is the church year calendar. In addition to the familiar days and seasons on the church calendar—like Advent, Christmas, and Lent—there are also some specific calendar dates to which special festivals are assigned. For example, on page xxii in *Lutheran Service Book*, the date December 21 is listed near the top of the calendar as the day for St. Thomas.

Why does the Lutheran Church include all these names and events on its calendar? Doesn't this border on the invocation of the saints that one finds in Roman Catholicism?

Actually, the Lutheran reformers understood that there was great benefit in remembering the saints whom God has given to his church. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession (Article 21) gives three reasons for such honor. First, we thank God for giving faithful servants to his church. Second, through such remembrance our faith is strengthened as we see the mercy that God extended to his saints of old. Third, these saints are examples by which we may imitate both their faith and their holy living according to our calling in life.

Note the last part of that sentence: according to our calling in life. In his goodness, God places each of us into various callings which revolve around the spheres of work, family, the civil realm, and the church. He doesn't expect us to abandon our responsibilities in these various callings in order to serve him. Rather, through these stations in life God enables us to serve our neighbor in need and, thus, to serve God himself.

Holy Scripture is filled with examples of men and women who did just that. They served God by faithfully fulfilling their calling. Because God has provided examples of the faith through them, it is fitting that we thank him for their lives of service and implore God to show such mercy toward us that he showed toward them.

Our hymnals provide biblical readings and appropriate prayers for each of these church year festivals. In addition, the hymn “By All Your Saints in Warfare” (*LSB* 517) makes it possible to sing specifically about any of the festival days by inserting a hymn stanza unique to the day between two, more general stanzas. Together, these resources allow the faithful to sing and hear directly of God's work through that particular individual.

Six of these festivals are listed below using stanzas from the hymn “By All Your Saints.” The readings for each day and the collect of the day—also part of the proposal for the new hymnal—are also included.

With these materials, a ready-made devotion could be used for personal use or perhaps for a Bible class or meeting.

### **St. Joseph, Guardian of Jesus** **March 19**

- 2 Samuel 7:4–16
- Romans 4:13–18
- Matthew 2:13–15, 19–23

Almighty God, from the house of Your servant David You raised up Joseph to be the guardian of Your incarnate Son and the husband of His mother, Mary. Grant us grace to follow the example of this faithful workman in heeding Your counsel and obeying Your commands; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*We sing our thanks for Joseph,  
The guardian of our Lord  
Who faithfully taught Jesus  
Through craft and deed and word.  
Grant wisdom, Lord, and patience  
To parents everywhere  
Who guide and teach the children  
Entrusted to their care.*

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### **St. Peter and St. Paul, Apostles** **June 29**

- Acts 15:1–12 (13–21)
- Galatians 2:1–10
- Matthew 16:13–19

Merciful and eternal God, Your holy apostles Peter and Paul received grace and strength to lay down their lives for the sake of Your Son. Strengthen us by Your Holy Spirit that we may confess Your truth and at all times be ready to lay down our lives for Him who laid down His life for us, even Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*We praise You for Saint Peter;  
We praise You for Saint Paul;  
They taught both Jew and Gentile  
That Christ is all in all.  
To cross and sword they yielded  
And saw Your kingdom come;  
O God, these two apostles  
Reached life through martyrdom.*

## **St. Mary Magdalene July 22**

- Proverbs 31:10–31
- Acts 13:26–31
- John 20:1–2, 10–18

Almighty God, Your Son Jesus Christ restored Mary Magdalene to health and called her to be the first witness of His resurrection. Heal us from all our infirmities, and call us to know You in the power of Your Son's unending life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*All praise for Mary Magdalene,  
Whose wholeness was restored  
By You, her faithful master,  
Her Savior and her Lord.  
On Easter morning early  
A word from You sufficed;  
For she was first to see You,  
Her Lord, the risen Christ.*

## **St. Mary, Mother of Our Lord August 15**

- Isaiah 61:7–11
- Galatians 4:4–7
- Luke 1:(39–45) 46–55

Almighty God, You chose the Virgin Mary to be the mother of Your only Son. Grant that we, who are redeemed by His blood, may share with her in the glory of Your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*We sing with joy of Mary,  
Whose heart with awe was stirred  
When, youthful and astonished,  
She heard the angel's word.  
Yet she her voice upraises  
To magnify God's name,  
As once for our salvation  
Your mother she became.*

## **The Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist August 29**

- Revelation 6:9–11
- Romans 6:1–5
- Mark 6:14–29

Almighty God, You gave Your servant John the Baptist to be the forerunner of Your Son, Jesus Christ, in both his preaching of repentance and his innocent death. Grant that we, who have died and risen with Christ in Holy Baptism, may daily repent of our sins, patiently suffer for the sake of the truth, and fearlessly bear witness to His victory over death; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*Our thanks for John the Baptist  
Who, till his dying day,  
Made straight paths for the Savior  
And heralded His way!  
In witnessing to Jesus  
Through times of threat or shame  
May we with faith and courage  
The Lamb of God proclaim.*

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### **St. James of Jerusalem, Brother of Our Lord and Martyr October 23**

- Acts 15:12–22a
- James 1:1–12
- Matthew 13:54–58

Heavenly Father, Shepherd of Your people, You raised up James the Just, brother of our Lord, to lead and guide Your Church. Grant that we may follow his example of prayer and reconciliation and be strengthened by the witness of his death; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*We sing of James, Christ's brother,  
Who at Jerusalem  
Told how God loved the Gentiles  
And, in Christ, welcomed them.  
Rejoicing in salvation  
May we too, by God's grace,  
Extend Christ's invitation  
To all the human race.*

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“By All Your Saints in Warfare”

The following are the first and last stanzas of the hymn “By All Your Saints in Warfare” (LSB 517/518).

*By all Your saints in warfare,  
For all Your saints at rest,  
Your holy name, O Jesus,  
Forevermore be blest!  
For You have won the battle  
That they might wear the crown;  
And now they shine in glory  
Reflected from Your throne.*

(Insert the stanza appropriate to the day.)

*Then let us praise the Father  
And worship God the Son  
And sing to God the Spirit,  
Eternal Three in One,  
Till all the ransomed number  
Fall down before the throne,  
Ascribing pow'r and glory  
And praise to God alone.*

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