

WORSHIP WHILE ISOLATED

Introduction

“Let us . . . not [give] up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but [encourage] one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24,25).

Well . . . social isolation policies might seem to defy what God tells us in that passage. Many, at least for the time being, have given up meeting together at places of worship—not as a matter of poor habit, but as a matter of government-mandated choice. But that doesn’t mean that gathering together in worship comes to a screeching halt. Rather, we adapt. Though we may be relegated for the most part to our homes, the worship of God happens anywhere his Word is preached and his name is praised. Many churches are offering virtual opportunities for worship, and some very creative and moving services have resulted. But not all congregations have the resources to offer worship online. And right in our homes there is opportunity to worship. Whether with immediate family, roommates, or alone, the patterns and blessings of Lutheran worship can easily continue, and in the midst of a pandemic, may prove especially meaningful.

Home Worship

The small group isolated in your home, whatever its size, can worship together weekly—or perhaps even more frequently—much in the same manner as at your local church. Only a few simple resources are needed.

- Liturgies from [Christian Worship](#) can be used as a guide to your home worship format. *Note: Those living alone can use liturgies as a structure for enriched private devotional time.*
 - The father or other designated leader can read portions normally read by the pastor.
 - The family or roommate(s) can read portions designated for the congregation.
- Readings can be selected from the lectionary in the front of the hymnal, or as appropriate to whatever theme, Bible account, or Christian teaching is on the heart and mind of those assembled.
- Psalms can be sung from the front of the hymnal or read directly from the Bible.
- The sermon can be replaced with a devotion from [Meditations](#) or other [devotional resource](#).
- Prayers can be found in the hymnal or other [prayer resource](#).
- Hymns can be sung without accompaniment, accompanied by piano or guitar (if available), or accompanied by recordings. Some hymn recordings have been made available for [free](#).

Orders of Meditation

In the pages that follow, two orders for shorter services of meditation are provided. Perhaps you would like to add worship time to your weekly routine beyond your Sunday morning worship; these orders offer some ideas and structure. Again, much of the needed content is available in the hymnal itself.

Specific Suggestions

Several NEW hymns have been added to the [free hymn download page](#) to support these orders of meditation, including:

- Morning Hymns
- Opening of Service Hymns
- Evening Hymns
- Hymns of the Liturgy

As noted above, Psalms can be sung from the front of the hymnal or read directly from the Bible. They can be chanted, read responsively, or read by a designated reader. Psalm-based hymns are also available on the free hymn download page, including:

- Psalm 32 “[Blessed Are They, Forever Blest](#)”
- Psalm 46 “[A Mighty Fortress Is Our God](#)”
- Psalm 51 “[Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God](#)”
- Psalm 119 “[Oh, that the Lord Would Guide My Ways](#)”

Canticles are words of praise, other than Psalms, that are recorded in Scripture. You may already be familiar with some of them, though you may not refer to them as “canticles.” Familiar canticles include the words of Mary (Luke 1:46-55), the words of the angel host to the shepherds (Luke 2:14), and the words of Simeon (Luke 2:29-32). A few canticle-based hymns have been added to the free hymn download page including “[All Glory Be to God on High](#)” (*Gloria in Excelsis*, the canticle of the angels) and “[My Soul Now Magnifies the Lord](#)” (*Magnificat*, the canticle of Mary). Where these orders of meditation call for a canticle, one of these could be used, another hymn could be sung, or the option omitted. Also, while not a canticle proper, a hymn-based version of the Apostles’ Creed has also been added, “[We All Believe in One True God](#),” which would also be appropriate to sing where the canticle is designated.

Finally, as these are meditations for morning and evening, we recommend [A Year of Prayer](#) as a source for additional prayer suggestions. This resource contains a morning and an evening prayer for every day of the year.

Prayers

These prayers may also be useful for your worship in the home.

Before Worship

Heavenly Father, I have come to worship you. Draw near to me in your gracious Word, and assure me of your loving-kindness. Curb my wandering thoughts so that with undivided attention, I may hear your voice and sing your praise. Amen.

After Worship

Grant, O Lord, that the lips which here have sung your praise may continue to glorify you in the world; that the ears which have heard you speak may be open always to your Word and closed to hatred and discord; that the tongues which have confessed your name may always speak the truth without fear; and that all of us who have worshiped together today may be united in true love for each other as you have loved us in Jesus. Amen.

—from [There’s a Prayer for That](#)

Before Worship

O Lord—our Maker, Redeemer and Comforter—we are assembled in your presence to hear your holy Word. We pray that you would open our hearts by your Holy Spirit, that through the preaching of your Word we may repent of our sins, believe in Jesus, and grow day by day in grace and holiness. Hear us for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

After Worship

Good Shepherd, I was glad to be here, gathered with your flock to worship you. Cause the Word I have heard to take root in my heart and bear fruit in my life. Guide me in paths of righteousness, that my words and actions might lead others to glorify you. Amen.

—from “Personal Prayers for Worship” in [Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal](#)

ADDITIONAL HOME WORSHIP RESOURCES

The following resources are also available for home worship or devotional time:

- [Christian Worship: Supplement](#)
- [Christian Worship: Supplement—Guitar Edition](#)
- *Luther’s Catechism* (available with [NIV](#), [ESV](#), or [EHV](#) passages)
- [God Our Refuge](#)
- [Memory Treasures: Hymns](#)
- [The ABC’s of Worship](#)
- [There’s a Prayer for That](#)
- [He Hears My Voice](#) (ebook)
- FREE: [2019-20 Church Year Calendar](#) (Dec 2019 through Nov 2020) with reading and psalms suggestions.

MEDITATIONS

MORNING MEDITATION

HYMN

A morning hymn or another hymn may be sung or said.

RESPONSES

In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice;

in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation. *Psalm 5:3*

We do not make requests of you because we are righteous,

but because of your great mercy. *Daniel 9:18*

May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us;

establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands.
Psalm 90:17

Let me live that I may praise you,

and may your laws sustain me. *Psalm 119:175*

PSALM

A morning psalm may be sung or said.

READING

*A Scripture lesson or another devotional selection is read.
Silence for meditation and prayer may follow the reading.*

LUTHER'S MORNING PRAYER

In the name of the Father and of the Son ☩ and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have kept me this night from all harm and danger. Keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please you. Into your hands I commend my body and soul and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.

CANTICLE

A canticle may be sung or said (786, 787, 788).

PRAYER

The Prayer of the Day in keeping with the church year or another prayer may be said.

BLESSING

May the grace of the Lord Jesus sanctify us and keep us from all evil; may Christ drive all hurtful things far from us and purify both our souls and bodies; may Christ bind us to himself by the bond of love; and may his peace abound in our hearts.

Amen.

*"In the morning when you get up, make the sign of the holy cross and say, 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.'" (*The Small Catechism*)

MEDITATIONS

EVENING MEDITATION

HYMN

An evening hymn or another hymn may be sung or said.

RESPONSES

Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.

Luke 24:29

Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Matthew 28:20

Your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.

The LORD will guide you always.

Isaiah 58:10,11

Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more;

the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end.

Isaiah 60:20

On no day will the gates of the Holy City ever be shut,

for there will be no night there.

Revelation 21:25

PSALM

An evening psalm may be sung or said.

READING

A Scripture lesson or another devotional selection is read.

Silence for meditation and prayer may follow the reading.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

CANTICLE

A canticle may be sung or said (786, 787, 788).

INTERCESSION

One or more prayers may be used following the Plan for Intercession on page 78.

LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER

In the name of the Father and of the Son ☩ and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have graciously kept me this day. Forgive me all my sins, and graciously keep me this night. Into your hands I commend my body and soul and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.

BLESSING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ☩, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. *2 Corinthians 13:14*

Amen.

*"In the evening when you go to bed, make the sign of the holy cross and say, 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.'" (*The Small Catechism*)