

***The Lutheran Church of the Covenant***  
***“Reaching Out, Reflecting Christ, Renewing  
Lives”***



*Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost*  
*September 11, 2022*



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.



*We welcome you to worship here at the Lutheran Church of the Covenant! As long as the weather cooperates, we gather outside in God's Creation to worship with singing and loud shouts of praise (if not, we will worship in the sanctuary).*

- Bulletins and Communion (wheat or gluten-free wafers, wine or grape juice options) are available to be picked up at the side driveway. Please keep in mind potential wind that may affect your Communion cups.
- You may stay in your vehicle or setup a chair anywhere you like. Speakers will be set up front by the worship leaders so that everyone can hear and participate from their respective spots.
- We encourage you to participate throughout the worship by speaking the **bold** print and singing along with the hymns!
- You will not be asked to stand during the worship, so feel free to remain seated throughout.
- An offering basket is placed up-front by the podium.

### ***Our Worship Leaders & Staff***

Ministers  
Presiding Minister  
Pianist  
Lector  
Parish Administrator  
Custodian

All People  
The Rev. Bradley Ross  
Robin Crawford  
Harry Werner  
Jennifer Lasher-Dobush  
Vince Besednjak

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## Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

*The grumbling of the religious leaders in today's gospel is actually our holy hope: This Jesus welcomes sinners and eats with them. That our God seeks and saves the lost is not only a holy hope, it is our only hope. As the writer of 1 Timothy reminds us, "The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Thanks be to God!*

Prelude *Come Ye Disconsolate* (Wood)

Welcome & Greetings

Confession & Forgiveness

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, uniting us as one family in Christ, and setting us free to serve as his disciples for the sake of the world.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who is eager to forgive  
and who loves us beyond our days.

**Amen!**

Dear friends, together let us acknowledge  
the times when we have not loved this world as Jesus does.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God of mercy and forgiveness,  
**we confess our shortcomings to you and to one another.**  
**We have harmed your good creation.**  
**We have failed to do justice,**  
**love kindness,**  
**and walk humbly with you.**  
**Turn us in a new direction.**  
**Show us the path that leads to new life.**  
**Be our refuge and strength on the journey,**  
**through Jesus Christ, our redeemer and friend.**  
**Amen.**

Beloved of God:

your sins are forgiven † and you are made whole.

God points the way to new life in Jesus Christ,

who meets us on the road.

Journey now in God's abiding love

through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen!**

Gathering Hymn *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*

ELW #807



1 Come, thou Fount of ev - 'ry bless-ing, tune my heart to sing thy grace;  
2 Here I raise my Eb - en - e - zer: "Hith-er by thy help I've come";  
3 Oh, to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con-strained to be;



streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud - est praise.  
and I hope, by thy good plea - sure, safe - ly to ar - rive at home.  
let that grace now like a fet - ter bind my wan-d'ring heart to thee.



While the hope of end - less glo - ry fills my heart with joy and love,  
Je - sus sought me when a strang - er, wan-d'ring from the fold of God;  
Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it; prone to leave the God I love.



teach me ev - er to a - dore thee; may I still thy good - ness prove.  
he, to res - cue me from dan - ger, in - ter - posed his pre - cious blood.  
Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it; seal it for thy courts a - bove.

Text: Robert Robinson, 1735–1790, alt.

Music: NETTLETON, J. Wyeth, *Repository of Sacred Music*, Part II, 1813

Greeting

The grace of our Risen Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all! **And also with you.**

Canticle of Praise *Now the Feast*

**Refrain**

Now the feast and cel - e - bra - tion,  
all of cre - a - tion sings for joy  
to the God of life and love and  
free-dom: praise and glo - ry for ev -  
er - more!

**Verse 1**

1. Now is the feast of the Lamb once  
slain, whose blood has freed and u -  
nit - ed us to be one great peo - ple of  
God.

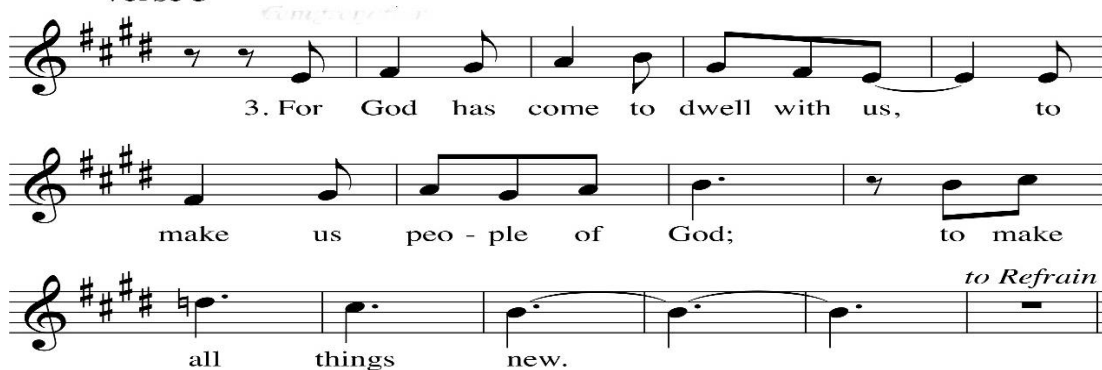
*to Refrain*

## Verse 2



2. Pow - er and rich - es, wis - dom and  
might, all hon - or and glo - ry to Christ  
for ev - er. *to Refrain*

## Verse 3



3. For God has come to dwell with us, to  
make us peo - ple of God; to make  
all things new. *to Refrain*

## Prayer of the Day

O God, overflowing with mercy and compassion, we praise you for being with us wherever we go in this life. Preserve your people in your loving care, that we may resist whatever is contrary to you and may follow in all the ways that sustain our journey with your wondrous Son, Jesus Christ, our Risen Savior and Lord. **Amen!**

## First Lesson

Exodus 32:7-14

*While Moses is on Mount Sinai, the people grow restless and make a golden calf to worship. Today's reading shows Moses as the mediator between an angry God and a sinful people. Moses reminds God that the Israelites are God's own people, and boldly asks for mercy for them.*

<sup>7</sup>The LORD said to Moses, “Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; <sup>8</sup>they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf, and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’ ” <sup>9</sup>The LORD said to Moses, “I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. <sup>10</sup>Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; and of you I will make a great nation.”

<sup>11</sup>But Moses implored the LORD his God, and said, “O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? <sup>12</sup>Why should the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth’? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. <sup>13</sup>Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.’ ” <sup>14</sup>And the LORD changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

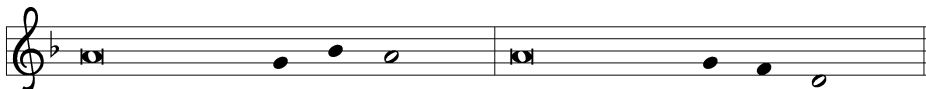
Word of God, word of life!

**Thanks be to God!**

Psalm

Psalm 51:1-10

*The bold verses are sung by the congregation using the tone below*



Antiphon: *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love.* (Ps. 51:1)

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your <sup>1</sup> steadfast love;  
in your great compassion blot out <sup>1</sup> my offenses.

<sup>2</sup>**Wash me through and through | from my wickedness,  
and cleanse me | from my sin.**

<sup>3</sup>For I know <sup>1</sup> my offenses,  
and my sin is ev- <sup>1</sup> er before me.

<sup>4</sup>**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil | in your sight;  
so you are justified when you speak and right | in your judgment.** *Antiphon*

<sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born | steeped in wickedness,  
a sinner from my | mother's womb.

<sup>6</sup>**Indeed, you delight in truth | deep within me,  
and would have me know wisdom | deep within.**

<sup>7</sup>Remove my sins with hyssop, and I | shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be pur- | er than snow.

<sup>8</sup>**Let me hear | joy and gladness;  
that the body you have broken | may rejoice.**

<sup>9</sup>Hide your face | from my sins,  
and blot out | all my wickedness.

<sup>10</sup>**Create in me a clean | heart, O God,  
and renew a right spir- | it within me. Antiphon**

## Second Lesson

1 Timothy 1:12-17

*The letters to Timothy and Titus are called the pastoral epistles because they contain advice especially intended for leaders in the church. Here the mercy shown to Paul, who once persecuted the church, is cited as evidence that even the most unworthy may become witnesses to the grace of God.*

<sup>12</sup>I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he judged me faithful and appointed me to his service, <sup>13</sup>even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, <sup>14</sup>and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup>The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost. <sup>16</sup>But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life. <sup>17</sup>To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Word of God, word of life!

**Thanks be to God!**



## Gospel Verse

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we  
go? You have the words of e - ter - nal  
life. Al - le - lu - ia!

## Gospel

Luke 15:1-10

*Jesus tells two stories that suggest a curious connection between the lost being found and sinners repenting. God takes the initiative to find sinners, each of whom is so precious to God that their recovery brings joy in heaven.*

The Gospel according to Luke, 15<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord!**

<sup>1</sup>Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.] <sup>2</sup>And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

<sup>3</sup>So he told them this parable: <sup>4</sup>“Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? <sup>5</sup>When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. <sup>6</sup>And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ <sup>7</sup>Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

<sup>8</sup>“Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? <sup>9</sup>When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ <sup>10</sup>Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord!

**Praise to you, O Christ!**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day *Come, Ye Disconsolate*

ELW #607



1 Come, ye dis - con - so - late, wher - e'er ye lan - guish;  
2 Joy of the des - o - late, light of the stray - ing,  
3 Here see the Bread of life; see wa - ters flow - ing



come to the mer - cy - seat, fer - vent - ly kneel.  
hope of the pen - i - tent, fade - less and pure;  
forth from the throne of God, pure from a - bove.



Here bring your wound - ed hearts, here tell your an - guish;  
here speaks the Com - fort - er, ten - der - ly say - ing,  
Come to the feast of love; come, ev - er know - ing



earth has no sor - row that heav'n can - not heal.  
"Earth has no sor - row that heav'n can - not cure."  
earth has no sor - row but heav'n can re - move.

Text: Thomas Moore, 1779–1852, sts. 1–2; Thomas Hastings, 1784–1872, st. 3  
Music: CONSOLATOR, Samuel Webbe Sr., 1740–1816

## Apostles' Creed

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ,  
God's 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 to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

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

## Prayers of Intercession

As scattered grains of wheat are gathered together into one bread, so let us gather our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of God's good creation.

*A brief silence.*

Your people receive mercy and your grace overflows in our lives. Fill your whole church, including our Covenant family, with faith and love, and give understanding hearts to those who work to strengthen our ecumenical and interreligious commitments. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your creation groans as it suffers the impacts of pollution and lack of care. As the seasons change, renew in us the will to protect plants, animals, and habitats. Bless us with bountiful harvests that all may share. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**



It is our duty and delight that we should everywhere and always offer thanks and praise to you, O God, through Jesus Christ who calls us to follow his way of humble service and love. And so, with the church on earth and the host of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly are you, God of pow - er and  
might; Heav - en and earth are filled with your  
glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est!  
Bless - ed is the One who comes in your name. Ho -  
san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est!

### Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy God,  
our Bread of life, our Table, and our Food,  
you created a world in which all might be satisfied by your abundance.

You dined with Abraham and Sarah, promising them life,  
and fed your people Israel with manna from heaven.  
You sent your Son to eat with sinners  
and to become food for the world.

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore,  
his life given for us  
and his rising from the grave,  
we await his coming again to share with us the everlasting feast.

Holy Spirit, nurture and sustain us with this meal:  
strengthen us to serve all in hunger and want,  
and by this bread and cup make of us the body of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,  
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,  
both now and forever.

**Amen!**

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.**

Invitation to Communion

Christ invites you to this table.  
Taste and see that the Lord is good!  
**Thanks be to God!**

Communion

Music Interlude *Softly and Tenderly* (Hayes)

Prayer after Communion

God of the abundant table,  
you have refreshed our hearts in this meal  
with bread for the journey.  
Give us your grace on the road  
that we might serve our neighbors with joy;  
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen!**

Blessing

God, who gives life to all  
and frees us from despair,  
bless you with truth and peace.  
And may the holy Trinity, † one God,  
guide you always in faith, hope, and love.  
**Amen!**



1 Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for  
 2 Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing, plead - ing for  
 3 Oh, for the won - der - ful love he has prom - ised, prom - ised for



you and for me. See, on the por - tals he's wait - ing and watch - ing,  
 you and for me? Why should we lin - ger and heed not his mer - cies,  
 you and for me! Though we have sinned, he has mer - cy and par - don,

*Refrain*



watch - ing for you and for me.  
 mer - cies for you and for me? "Come home, come home!  
 par - don for you and for me.



You who are wea - ry, come home." Ear - nest - ly, ten - der - ly,



Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing, "O sin - ner, come home!"

Text: Will L. Thompson, 1847-1909  
 Music: THOMPSON, Will L. Thompson

Dismissal

Go in peace, with Christ always beside you!  
**Thanks be to God!**

Postlude *Fantasia on Come, Thou Fount* (Purifoy)



## Praying Together

**... for those who are homebound, ill, hospitalized or recuperating:** Gayle Agg, Sheena Cameron, Joan Clarke, Barbara Fossa, Carolyn Frajter, Ken Frajter, Donna Franz, Nealie Gage, Barb Gaglione, Michelle Garnett, Rosa Garnett, Clare Hanusz, Alex Hohenstein, Dylan King, Jason Lanese, Sara Mendes, Debbie Morris, Phyllis Nemeth, Mary Ann Noll, Sam Reddig, Steve Senderak, Gary Smith, Arlene Stoltz, Marie Storms, Tom Susanek, Phyllis Treichel, Phyllis Welker, Wilma Dancy, Bill Helmick, Nancy Helmick, Robert Lambrecht, Kim (Novak) Leonhardt, Laura Mele, Judy Morgan, Kris Sandor, Bill Wilkens, Eugene Winfrey, the Copeland/Lane Family.

General Fund receipts for week ending 9/4/2022: \$2123



We are delighted that 2022 marks 75 years of ministry as a Covenant family! And so, we will boldly celebrate on Reformation Sunday (October 30) with worship in the sanctuary at 9am and a catered brunch following the worship in our fellowship hall. Bishop Emeritus Abraham Allende will preach, and we will also have our ecumenical handbell choir and the Wolf Creek brass quintet join us to make the day all the more special as we give thanks to God for the honor to be part of this wonderful body of Christ. We only ask that if you do plan on joining us, to RSVP to Jen Lasher-Dobush by Sunday, October 16, as we need a head-count for the meal. We hope to see you here!

## ***Lectionary Blog: God's Invitation to Discomfort***

Once again, in this time after Pentecost, the lectionary passages build upon the previous week. Last week, Jesus warned the crowds following him about the steep costs of discipleship that they had to be prepared to pay. This week, we read about the discomfort that God is willing to allow into the lives of steadfast followers in order to rescue those at the margins or who have been lost.

The framing for this week's Gospel reading is about how Jesus mixed with two groups that didn't get along. Jesus, as a Pharisee himself, ate with other Pharisees, talked with them and generally had intra-Pharisaic debates. One of the Pharisees' defining characteristics was that they didn't eat with folks who were ritually impure—this is where their name comes from (*parusim*, “the ones who separate”). So the Pharisees, who very much wanted to keep talking with Jesus at dinner parties, complained that he was potentially adding the contagion of ritual impurity to their meals by eating with tax collectors and sinners. In effect, Jesus was making them very uncomfortable and potentially exposing them to danger. It's in this light that we must read the parables that Jesus tells the Pharisees.

Usually when we read the parable of the sheep or the coin, we focus on the experience of the one sheep or the one coin who is delighted to be found. But I think Jesus, at least in the original context, was telling the story to folks who felt like the 99 sheep and the nine coins.

Jesus emphasizes that standard practice is for shepherds to leave the 99 sheep in the wilderness to go look for the one lost sheep until it is found. The shepherd delights in the one lost sheep more than the 99 who stayed in the wilderness without anyone to protect them. In the same way, a woman doesn't content herself with her nine other drachma coins but expends energy to go find the lost coin. Moreover, when she finds the lost coin, she calls together her neighbors to rejoice. No mere “Yay!” and high-five is in view here. She throws a party, uses some of her coins to buy food and rejoices, along with her neighbors, over the coin that was once lost but now is found.

Jesus was explicitly telling the Pharisees and scribes that outreach efforts to find those who have been lost or cast aside *are more important* than in-reach efforts to take care of folks who are already part of the Holy Community.

Does Jesus' priority here make you uncomfortable? If I'm honest, it does for me. I don't like the notion of some people being more valuable to heaven than others. And yet, here it is. Now, we must note that Jesus doesn't break fellowship with the Pharisees. Indeed, many of his followers—Nicodemus, Paul and all of the disciples who joined Jesus at the dinner parties—were Pharisees. The kingdom of heaven is not an either/or proposition. But Jesus is explicit on priorities. And God is OK if that makes some folks uncomfortable.

And speaking of God being OK with discomfort, I can't pass up one of my favorite passages from Exodus. In light of the golden calf episode, Moses is told to leave God alone so God can destroy the Israelites and start over with him (32:9-10). Moses prays for the people and argues that the Egyptians would mock God for killing the people instead of saving them (12).

And then the Bible says an extraordinary thing: the Lord repents from the evil that God said he would do to God's people (14; see also Numbers 14:13-20). Do we have space in our theologies for the two times that the Scripture says God repents of something that God had done (Genesis 6:6-7, 1 Samuel 15:11), and the 11 times that God repents of something that God was about to do? There's a bit of nuance in the text, to be sure. The wicked, unseeing-seer, Balaam, says God doesn't repent (Numbers 23:19). Samuel says the same thing (1 Samuel 15:29)—only 18 verses after telling us that God repented! Insofar as we believe Scripture is inspired by the Spirit, God is telling us repeatedly that repentance is part of the divine prerogative. Does that make us uncomfortable? If so, good! God invites us into discomfort. Submitting our theologies to the witness of Scripture is a Lutheran tradition, after all.

When Jesus spoke to large crowds or his usual dinner party colleagues, he didn't promise an easy path that made logical sense immediately or wouldn't challenge assumptions. On the contrary, Jesus warned of difficulties and hardships that would make people question their priorities and values. Jesus has always called those who would follow him into discomfort. May we be blessed to lean into difficult discipleship.

*Cory Driver is an ELCA missionary serving as the director of graduate studies at the Evangelical Theological Seminary of Cairo (Egypt). His book on wilderness spirituality, *Life Unsettled*, is available from Fortress Press.*

*Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song: Jésus, je voudrais te chanter (ELW 808)*



1 *Jé - sus, je vou - drais te chan - ter sur ma rou - te;*  
 1 Lord Je - sus, you shall be my song as I jour - ney;  
 2 Lord Je - sus, I'll praise you as long as I jour - ney.  
 3 As long as I live, Je - sus, make me your ser - vant,  
 4 I fear in the dark and the doubt of my jour - ney;



*Jé - sus, je vou - drais t'an - non - cer à mes voi - sins par - tout,*  
 I'll tell ev - 'ry - bod - y a - bout you wher - ev - er I go:  
 May all of my joy be a faith - ful re - flec - tion of you.  
 to car - ry your cross and to share all your bur - dens and tears.  
 but cour - age will come with the sound of your steps by my side.



*car toi seul es la vie et la paix et l'a - mour:*  
 you a - lone are our life and our peace and our love.  
 May the earth and the sea and the sky join my song.  
 For you saved me by giv - ing your bod - y and blood.  
 And with all of the fam - 'ly you saved by your love,



*Jé - sus, je vou - drais te chan - ter sur ma rou - te.*  
 Lord Je - sus, you shall be my song as I jour - ney.  
 Lord Je - sus, I'll praise you as long as I jour - ney.  
 As long as I live, Je - sus, make me your ser - vant.  
 we'll sing to your dawn at the end of our jour - ney.