



Hymn of the Month



*The only Son from heaven,
Foretold by ancient seers,
By God the Father given,
In human form appears.
No sphere His light confining,
No star so brightly shining
As He, our Morning Star.*

*O time of God appointed,
O bright and holy morn!
He comes, the King anointed,
The Christ, the virgin-born,
Grim death to vanquish for us,
To open heav'n before us
And bring us life again.*

*O Lord, our hearts awaken
To know and love You more,
In faith to stand unshaken,
In Spirit to adore,
That we, through this world moving,
Each glimpse of heaven proving,
May reap its fullness there.*

*O Father, here before You
With God the Holy Ghost
And Jesus, we adore You,
O pride of angel host:
Before You mortals lowly
Cry, "Holy, holy, holy,
O blessed Trinity!"*

Amen.

Beginning this first Sunday in February, I'd like to begin introducing the practice of having a *hymn of the month*. This basically means that there will be one hymn each month or so that we will sing more frequently than other hymns. This will help us become more familiar with certain hymns that are worth learning and that teach us God's word. It will also help stamp the season – whether it be an Epiphany hymn during the Epiphany season or a Lenten hymn during Lent, or just a good hymn on justification any month of the year.

This month, I have chosen a hymn that was written by a woman named Elizabeth Cruciger who lived in the early days of the Lutheran Reformation in Wittenberg, and even knew the Luthers well. What an exciting time to have lived! By listening to the preaching of Christ crucified, she learned the Christian Gospel. And so with such instruction, she, like we do today, also learned to confess her faith with the very words that her faith clung to.

With these words, Elizabeth Cruciger confessed what God's word had taught her. And so when we sing these words, we also make the same confession that she did. We might not be so gifted as to articulate what we know and believe as well and as beautifully as so many great hymnists. But their words are our words. God gave them to us. They are not the personal property of the poet; but they are the property of every Christian who believes and desires to proclaim the Gospel. And we do.

Christians do not sing in order to evoke good feelings, or to stir emotions. We sing in order to teach and admonish one another with the words of Christ so that He might dwell among us with all His grace and riches (Col. 3:16). And He does. That is why we are eager to sing of the salvation that Christ has earned for us. It is through the words that God gives us to sing that we learn what He has done to save us.

This hymn, *The Only Son from Heaven*, that we will be singing this month (at least until the Lenten Season begins) is a wonderful prayer for God to increase our knowledge *of* Him, and faith *in* Him. May we never stop believing what we sing, and singing what we believe.