

FAIRPLAIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Reformation Sunday

October 25, 2020

9:30 am e-Worship



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REFORMATION SUNDAY

“Lord God, Help in this Trouble”

A CHRISTIAN SONG WRITTEN BY HULDRICH ZWINGLI
WHEN HE WAS ATTACKED BY THE PESTILENCE

Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) was the newly appointed People’s Priest, or *Leutpriestertum*, at Zurich’s Groosmünster church. While visiting the Swiss town of Bad Pfäfers in September 1519 he learned of a new wave of plague devastating Zurich and immediately returned home. Zwingli ministered to the city’s afflicted and himself fell ill. His brother, Andreas, would perish from the disease, along with an estimated quarter to half of all Zurich’s citizens.

Zwingli’s song shows him falling sick, battling the disease, and convalescing. The words speak to his acceptance of divine providence (“Do what Thou wilt; me nothing lacks. Thy vessel am I; to make or break altogether”) and promise a future of faithful acts (“my lips must thy praise and teaching bespeak more than ever before, however it may go”). As a Reformation leader Zwingli went on to oppose longstanding church practices that contradicted his understanding of the Bible, including the veneration of saints and statues, priestly celibacy, and the sale of indulgences.

Although he didn’t write the Plague Song to be performed during worship services, the text can be found in many sixteenth and seventeenth century Protestant hymnals. Zwingli’s words remind us 500 years later that a commitment to others and even personal tribulation can lead to a renewed state of grace.



General Assembly 224 set aside this year’s Reformation Sunday as a day for the “whole church to commit to continuous discernment of how to meet the social justice, economic, and spiritual challenges of the pandemic.” The Presbyterian Historical Society joins this effort by sharing Zwingli’s Plague Song in English on page 2 of this insert or at www.history.pcusa.org/ts

 **PRESBYTERIAN**
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
The National Archives of the PC(USA) 

“Lord God, Help in this Trouble”

VI

A CHRISTIAN SONG WRITTEN BY HULDREICH ZWINGLI
WHEN HE WAS ATTACKED BY THE PESTILENCE

(End of 1519)

[Ein christenlich gsang, gestelt durch H. Z., als er mit pestilenz angriffen ward. In Schuler and Schultheiss ed., ii., 2, 270-2. In modern literary German, translated, pp. 272-4. In Egli and Finsler ed., i., 67-9. Translation reprinted from my life of Zwingli, pp. 132-4.]

This is the most successful of Zwingli's preserved poetry. It was the memorial of his serious illness from the plague which in 1519 carried off nearly half of the population of Zurich. Though unadapted to singing, it has been given a tune and is found in many hymn-books of the 15th and 16th centuries, published in Zurich.]

I.—At the Beginning of the Illness.

Help, Lord God, help
In this trouble!
I think Death is at the door.
Stand before¹ me, Christ;
For Thou hast overcome him!
To Thee I cry:
If it is Thy will,
Take out the dart,
Which wounds me
Nor lets me have an hour's
Rest or repose!
Will'st Thou however
That Death take me
In the midst of my days,

¹ In the sense of "protect."

me."
² The words may also mean equally well, "nothing shall be too much for

me."
³ "It," i.e., my spirit.

Song Written when Attacked with Pestilence 57

II.—In the Midst of his Illness.

Console me, Lord God, console
me!
The illness increases,
Pain and fear seize
My soul and body.
Come to me then,
With Thy grace, O my only
consolation!
It will surely save
Everyone, who
His heart's desire
And hopes sets
On Thee, and who besides
Despises all gain and loss.
Now all is up.

III.—During Convalescence.

Sound, Lord God, sound!
I think I am
Already coming back.²
Yes, if it please Thee,
That no spark of sin
Rule me longer on earth.
Then my lips must
Thy praise and teaching
Bespeak more
Than ever before,
However it may go,
In simplicity and with no
danger.
Although I must
The punishment of death

¹ "It," i.e., Thy grace.

² I.e., to health, to myself.

My tongue is dumb,
It cannot speak a word.
My senses are all blighted.
Therefore is it time
That Thou my fight
Conductest hereafter;
Since I am not
So strong, that I
Can bravely
Make resistance
To the Devil's wiles and treach-
erous hand.
Still will my spirit
Constantly abide by Thee, how-
ever he rages.

Sometime endure,
Perhaps with greater anguish
Than would now have
Happened,³ Lord!
Since I came
So near,⁴
So will I still
The spite and boasting
Of this world
Bear joyfully for the sake of
the reward
By Thy help,
Without which nothing can be
perfect.

³ I.e., if I had died this time.

⁴ I.e., to death's door.

General Assembly 224 set aside this year's Reformation Sunday as a day for the "whole church to commit to continuous discernment of how to meet the social justice, economic and spiritual challenges of the pandemic." PHS joins this effort by sharing an English translation of Zwingli's Plague Song, from *The Latin Works and the Correspondence of Huldreich Zwingli*...vol. 1, 1912.

**PRESBYTERIAN**
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
The National Archives of the PC(USA)

WE GATHER IN GOD'S NAME

Let us prepare our hearts for worship in prayer.

PRELUDE

"I Lay My Sins on Jesus"
Howard Helvey

Muyu Zou

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

David Schell

CALL TO WORSHIP

Oh God, the wind of your spirit blows across our lives and across history, moving where it wishes. We give thanks this day especially for the prophets you have sent to us and to our ancestors, slowly conforming us ever more to the image of your Son Jesus Christ. You do not change, but you change our understandings of you, ever stretching our imaginations to better know you as you have always been. We give you thanks, God of revelation and salvation, in the name of Jesus, who best revealed your heart to us. Amen.

HYMN #260

"A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" *verses 1, 3, and 4*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God, we have not yet reached a full knowledge of you and your love and care for us. On a good day we pray for our enemies; on a bad day, we pray that you will squash them for us. Let your Kingdom come in us, our God, and draw us into your future, we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

TIME OF SILENT PRAYER

ASSURANCE OF PARDON *adapted from I Corinthians 13:8-13, NASB*

One: Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! We are reconciled to God, and we are reconciled to one another.

All: Alleluia, Amen.

GLORIA PATRI

on screen

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

OLD TESTAMENT READING II Chronicles 7:1-18

ANTHEM "The Darkest Hour is Just Before Dawn" Wherever Two ...
 Ralph Stanley

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 21:1-11

SERMON

"The Kings of Israel (and Judah)"

David Schell

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Robert Smith

OFFERTORY

"Complete"

Wherever Two ...

Andrew Ulgia, Parachute Band

Prayer of Dedication *adapted from the* Book of Common Prayer

Doxology

MORNING PRAYER and THE LORD'S PRAYER

David Schell

HYMN #555

"Now Thank We All Our God"

verses 1 and 2

BLESSING AND BENEDICTION

David Schell

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

"Go Now in Peace"

POSTLUDE

"How Great Thou Art"

Muyu Zou

Dan Forrest

VIRTUAL SHARING OF THE PEACE OF CHRIST & FELLOWSHIP

*Please send messages of peace or make phone calls to loved ones,
especially from this congregation.*