

The History and Use of Invitatories, Responsories, Versicles, and Antiphons

In *The Lutheran Hymnal* beginning at page 95 there are lists of suggested *Invitatories*, *Antiphons*, *Versicles*, and *Responsories* for use in various seasons throughout the Church's year. Unfortunately, these are rarely used by the local parish. Part of the reason is that these are typically used in the daily Offices of Matins and Vespers. The Offices used to be a daily part of the worship of the local parish in Lutheran circles. Daily praying of Matins and Vespers was the norm, and rubrics governing their use are in most, if not all, of the Church Orders of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries.¹ That these Offices would be used in the local parish was assumed, especially in the city churches where there would be a school, and a larger population would be typical. Even in the case of the rural parish, the Offices were expected to be said daily, the only difference commonly listed was that instead of the parts being sung by a boys' choir, that the parts would be read.

The fact that these sets of *Invitatories*, *Antiphons*, *Responsories*, and *Versicles* have been retained in our modern hymnals, and the fact that the daily Offices of Matins and Vespers are also provided in our hymnals, assumes that these chants would be retained among us also. This paper will look at the history of these chants, and why and how we should use them. It will also explore how they fell into disuse and look at ways to restore them to usage among the parishes of our diocese.

One does not have to dig very far into the *Kirchen Ordnung* of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries to see that music is a huge part of the worship of the Lutheran Orders. This begins with the first example of a Lutheran Order of worship put forth by Martin Luther in his

¹ I cannot say all, because I have not seen them all.

Formulae Missae.² In this writing he gives suggestions for which tones the various parts of the Liturgy should be sung. The Church Orders of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries followed suit. We have musical examples for most parts of the Liturgy, both for the Propers and the Ordinaries. In many cases, there are two or more settings given which may be used for the various parts. An example of this is from the Morning Service in the *Church Book for the Use of Evangelical Lutheran Congregations*.³ For the opening *Versicles* of the *Confiteor* there are three settings given in which to sing them: one for “General Use”, one for “Passion season,” and one for “Easter, and festivals.” This pattern follows for many of the other parts of the Liturgy in that hymnal. Singing the words of the Liturgy is the Lutheran way. In fact, there are only two parts of the historic Lutheran Liturgy that are never sung: the sermon and the General Prayer. All other parts of the Liturgy were meant to be sung and were sung by the Lutheran Reformers.

Furthermore, the parts of the Liturgy were not only meant to be sung, but there was intended to be great variety of settings. The music of the Liturgy would change with the various seasons of the Church’s year. Ludwig Schöberlein in his great work *Schatz des liturgischen Chor- und Gemeindegesangs nebst den Alterweisen in der deutschen evangelischen Kirche*⁴ compiles all the different settings that were used among Lutherans in the various Church Orders of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries. He lists nineteen different ways that the *Amen* after the *Benediction* was sung in the Lutheran churches. There was certainly a common setting for each of the parts of the Liturgy that everyone would know well, but the settings would change for the Passion season (including Pre-Lent) and for Easter, and other Festivals.

² Luther, Martin. *Luther’s Works, Vol. 53: Liturgy and Hymns*, “An Order of Mass and Communion at Wittenburg.” pp. 15-40. 1523. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, PA. 1965. Translated by Paul Zeller Strodach.

³ *Church Book for the Use of Evangelical Lutheran Churches*. By the Authority of the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with Music. General Council Publication Board. Philadelphia, PA. 1872. The Morning Service, page 1.

⁴ Schöberlein, Ludwig. *Schatz des liturgischen Chor- und Gemeindegesangs nebst den Alterweisen in der deutschen evangelischen Kirche*. Göttingen. 1865. Pp. 481-485. This includes the Triple Amen to which we are accustomed.

This has actually been retained in *The Lutheran Hymnal*,⁵ although in many parishes it is not employed in use. An example of this is in the *Post-Communion Thanksgiving* where there is an option to use a different *Versicle* and *Response* during the season of Lent.⁶ The reason why the appropriate *Thanksgiving* is not used during the season of Lent in many places I believe is because the music is not given. The music is given in *The Music for the Liturgy*.⁷ It is the same setting that is in *The Lutheran Hymnal*⁸ for the common *Thanksgiving*. There is also the example of the various options for singing the “*Hallelujah*” and “*Triple Hallelujah*.”

But lest one may get the impression that this is only a modern concept; that various settings for various parts of the Liturgy is prevalent only in modern hymnals. We can also see this in Heinrich Herzog von Sachsen-Weimar’s Leipzig Agenda of 1691.⁹ There are two settings given for the chanting of the Epistle reading, and two settings given for the chanting of the *Verba Domini*.

One may be wondering by now what any of this has to do with the topic of the paper. What does any of this have to do with *Invitatories*, *Antiphons*, *Responsories*, and *Versicles*? This is to establish by way of introduction that there are two principles when it comes to Lutheran worship: The words of the Liturgy are generally put to music, and there is variety within that music that reflects the character of the various seasons of the Church’s year. The *Invitatories*, *Antiphons*, *Responsories* and *Versicles*, and the other music like it like—the *Sentences for the Seasons*, the *Sequence Hymns*, *Canticles*, and the *Offertories*—give variety to the music and worship of Liturgy.

⁵ *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Authorized by the Synods Constituting the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America. Concordia Publishing House. St. Louis, MO. 1941.

⁶ “V: As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup:” “R: Ye do show the Lord’s death till He come.” *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Concordia Publishing House. St. Louis, MO. 1941, p. 30.

⁷ *The Music for the Liturgy of the Lutheran Hymnal*. Authorized by the Intersynodical Committee on Hymnology and Liturgics for the Synodical Conference of North America. Concordia Publishing House. 1944. Page 74.

⁸ *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Authorized by the Synods Constituting the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America. Concordia Publishing House. St. Louis, MO. 1941.

⁹ Herzog, Heinrich von Sachsen-Weimar. *Agenda, das ist: Kirchen Ordnung wie sich die Pfarrherren und Seelsorger in ihren Aembtern und Diensten verhalten sollen*. Leipzig. 1691.

The Lutheran Liturgy was never meant to be dull and rote. If one makes a dish of food and does not add any seasoning to it, it is not very good. But with the right blend and amount of spices an ordinary meal can turn into a fabulous meal. The Lutheran Liturgy is meant to be like this. One starts with a good foundation and base and adds variety to that base to reflect the changes of the various seasons of the Church's year.

We do ourselves a disservice when we do the same Liturgy Sunday after Sunday with no changes. This is why many people cry for something different, because the variety that is already in place within the Liturgy is not being employed. To be clear, this is not advocating for "being contemporary." It is simply a plea to put into use in the life of the Church that which is already available to us for our use, and was intended to be a part of the worship of the parish. The *Invitatories*, *Antiphons*, *Responsories*, *Versicles*, *Sequence Hymns*, *Sentences for the Seasons*, *Canticles*, and different *Offertories* have fallen into disuse simply because we do not employ them at the proper time. I will concede that this is a difficult task if one does not possess a choir or at the very least good singers within one's parish. It is even harder if one does not have the benefit of the accompaniment of an organist, or other musician. A choir that can rehearse these parts of the Liturgy and be employed to lead the singing of the congregation would go a long way into introducing these parts back into our worship. The same is true of an organist, or other musician, who could lead the singing of the parish.

An even more difficult task is the reintroduction into the daily life of the parish the use of the daily Offices of Matins and Vespers. This is after all where these treasures find their common use. When Matins or Vespers are only used when a service with no communion is desired, it is no wonder that the simplest form of those Offices is put to use, because the Office itself is unfamiliar to us. Take for example the use of the *Canticle* in the Office of Matins. According to the rubrics,

“The *Te Deum Laudamus* or the *Benedictus* may be used on Sundays. Other Canticles may be used on other days.”¹⁰ What often happens, sadly, is that the *Te Deum Laudamus* is used exclusively as the *Canticle* at Matins. According to the rubrics the *Te Deum Laudamus* is only supposed to be used on Sundays at Matins, except during the season of Advent when the *Benedictus* is used on Sundays. The *Benedictus* may be used in some parishes during Advent, but the other *Canticles*¹¹ are rarely used.

These other *Canticles* set forth a different theme for each day of the week. For example, the *Ego Dixi* on Tuesdays¹² gives us a weekly reminder that we are mortal and that our pilgrimage in this life is a temporary one. The next day, on Wednesday, we join our voices to the voice of the mother of the Prophet Samuel, Hannah, when she rejoiced at the birth of her son in the words of the *Exultavit Cor Meum*.¹³ The *Canticles* are there so that we may join our voices to the voices of those who have come before us: Moses (twice)¹⁴, Hezekiah,¹⁵ Hannah,¹⁶ Isaiah,¹⁷ and Habakkuk.¹⁸ When we do not use them, we lose this valuable link to the saints of the past.

We can make a similar case for each of these various parts of the Church’s worship, but first let us look at the history, use and development of the *Invitatories*, *Antiphons*, *Responsories*,

¹⁰ *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Authorized by the Synods Constituting the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America. Concordia Publishing House. St. Louis, MO. 1941. Page 34.

¹¹ There is a Canticle for each day of the week. On Mondays the *Confitebor Tibi* is used. Tuesdays is *Ego Dixi*. Wednesday is *Exultavit Cor Meum*. Thursday is *Cantemus Domino*. Friday is *Domine, Audivi*. Saturday is *Audite, Coeli*. On Feasts and Festivals, the *Benedicite, Omnia Opera* is used. During the Trinity Octave the *Beati Pauperes* is used, and during Eastertide and Ascensiontide the *Dignus Est Agnes* is used. These can all be found in *The Psalter and Canticles of the New King James Version* pointed to the appropriate Gregorian chant tone and with an appropriate Antiphon.

¹² The Song of Hezekiah from Isaiah 38:10-20 “when he had been sick and had recovered from his sickness.”

¹³ The Song of Hannah from 1 Samuel 2:1-4, 6-10.

¹⁴ Thursday and Saturday. Thursday is from the Song of Moses recorded in Exodus 15:1-2, 6, 11, 13, 17-18. Saturday is from Deuteronomy 32:1-4, 9, 36, 40, 43 the song that the Lord God gave to Moses to teach the children of Israel as a witness against their future unfaithfulness.

¹⁵ The Song of Hezekiah on Tuesdays.

¹⁶ *Exultavit Cor Meum* on Wednesdays.

¹⁷ The song of Isaiah from Isaiah 12:1-3, 4b-6; the *Confitebor Tibi* on Mondays.

¹⁸ *Domini, Audivi* on Fridays from Habakkuk 3:2-6, 13, 18-19a, c.

Versicles, and the rest.

Public worship from the days of the Jewish synagogue until now has always employed the use of chant in some form, either from a separate choir or as a congregation, as an interlude between the readings during the Liturgy. In the Divine Service, this developed into what is referred to as the “Intervient Chants.” One may be more familiar with their common names: *Gradual*, *Verse*, *Tract*, and *Greater Alleluia*, commonly just referred to as *The Gradual*. These are the chants that have been used as interludes between the readings of the day. In the daily Offices of Matins and Vespers, this interlude between readings developed into what we now call the *Responsory*. On page 95ff of *The Lutheran Hymnal*¹⁹ *Responsories* are given for the season of Advent, Christmastide, the Epiphany season, the Passion season (which would include Pre-Lent), Eastertide, Ascension Day, Whitsuntide, the Trinity season, and “for Other Times.” Even though these are meant to be *Intervient Chants* (a musical interlude to follow after the readings), no music is provided. There is also no music found in *The Music for the Liturgy of The Lutheran Hymnal*²⁰ for these *Responsories* (or any of the other *Antiphons*, *Versicles* and *Invitatories*). The *Concordia Liturgical Series for Church Choirs* provided music for both *Introits* of the Church’s year²¹ and the *Graduals* of the Church’s year²², as well as provided music for *Sentences of the Seasons* and the *Sequence Hymns*, but did not provide music for the *Antiphons*, *Responsories*,

¹⁹ *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Authorized by the Synods Constituting the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America. Concordia Publishing House. St. Louis, MO. 1941.

²⁰ *The Music for the Liturgy of the Lutheran Hymnal*. Authorized by the Intersynodical Committee on Hymnology and Liturgics for the Synodical Conference of North America. Concordia Publishing House. 1944.

²¹ *The Concordia Liturgical Series for Church Choirs: The Introits for the Church Year*. Authorized by the Intersynodical Committee on Hymnology and Liturgy for the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America. Concordia Publishing House. 1942.

²² *The Concordia Liturgical Series for Church Choirs: The Graduals for the Church Year, Sentences for the Seasons, Sequence Hymns*. Authorized by the Intersynodical Committee on Hymnology and Liturgy for the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America. Concordia Publishing House. 1944.

Invitatories, or *Versicles*. There is not even music provided in the 1921 *Liturgy and Agenda*.²³ Although, the music for the Liturgy is provided at the end of that work. Therefore, even though the rubric states “The *Responsory* varies with the Season and may be sung after the last *Lesson* at Vespers and Matins”²⁴ no music is given in which one may “sing” this response to the readings.

Since much of the content of *The Lutheran Hymnal* was taken from the *Church Book for the Use of Evangelical Lutheran Congregations*²⁵ One can only surmise that the assumption was that one could go to that hymnal for the music of the *Invitatories*, *Antiphons*, *Responsories*, and *Versicles*. These public domain settings written by Harriet Reynolds Krauth (the daughter of Charles Porterfield Krauth) have been reproduced as an appendix to *The Psalter and Canticles of the New King James Version*.²⁶

While the rubrics in *The Lutheran Hymnal* state that the *Responsory* is sung after the last *Lesson* at Matins and Vespers, it was originally sung between all the readings, much like the *Gradual* is. The *Responsory* developed in such a way that it combined verses of holy Scripture that were appropriate for the various seasons of the Church’s year. The *Responsory* consists of series of verses, referred to as the *Responsory* proper, and a verse which is repeated after each set of verses. The *Responsory* concludes with the *Gloria Patri*, excluding the *et in terra pax*, but includes a final repetition of the verse. The *Responsory* for Passion season excludes the *Gloria Patri* completely.

The *Roman Breviary* at the time of the Reformation contained a huge number of

²³ *Liturgy and Agenda*. Concordia Publishing House. St. Louis, MO. 1921. The Music for the Liturgy is provided as an appendix to this work.

²⁴ *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Authorized by the Synods Constituting the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America. Concordia Publishing House. St. Louis, MO. 1941. Page 95.

²⁵ *Church Book for the Use of Evangelical Lutheran Congregations*. By the Authority of the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with Music. General Council Publication Board. Philadelphia, PA. 1872.

²⁶ Dulas, Jerald P. *The Psalter and the Canticles of the New King James Version*. Repristination Press. Malone, TX. 2012.

Responsories. There was one for every day of the year, and then some. On an ordinary Sunday or a Festival when there were nine readings appointed, eight *Responsories* were needed. The *Te Deum* was sung after the last reading. As can be expected, many of these contained material not from holy Scripture. Dialogues from the Greek tragedies made their way into many of these *Responsories*.

On account of the plethora of available *Responsories*, the Anglican Church got rid of much of them. The Lutheran Reformers, however, tried to retain as much as they could, obviously getting rid of *Responsories* that contained things outside of holy Scripture, or were contrary to the teachings of holy Scripture. A good example of this is contained in Lucas Lossius' *Psalmodia hoc est Cantica Sacra Veteris Ecclesiae Selecta*.²⁷ In this work he has a *Responsory* for many of the Sundays of the Church's year, and some of the Festivals. In all he has forty-seven *Responsories*. We see the same thing sixty years later in the *Magdeburg Cathedral Service Book* of 1613.²⁸ For Good Friday the *Magdeburg Cathedral Service Book* has three *Responsories* appointed, one of which (the second one) is the same *Responsory* from Lossius' work.²⁹ Both of these works are in Latin, which would assume the singing was done by a boys' choir. The Lutheran Reformers were also the ones who moved the *Responsory* to after the last *Lesson* in Matins and Vespers. Today, in *The Lutheran Hymnal* we have nine *Responsories* available for our use. Max Reger³⁰ also wrote music for twenty *Responsories* set to four-part harmony.

The origin of the *Antiphon* is beyond question of Jewish origin. The parallelism of the

²⁷ Lossius, Lucas. *Psalmodia hoc est Cantica Sacra Veteris Ecclesiae Selecta*. Noribergae apud Gabrielem Hayn. 1553.

²⁸ *Cantica Sacra, Quo ordine et melodiis per totius anni curriculum, in matutinis et vespertinis, itemq̄: intermediis precibus cantari solent, una cum lectionibus et precationibus in unum volumen congesta pro S. Metropolitana Magdeburgensi Ecclesia, excusa Magdeburgi, sumtibus praedictae ecclesiae, etc.* Typist Andreae Bezeli. Magdeburg. 1613.

²⁹ *Tenebrae factae sunt.*

³⁰ Reger, Max. *The Responsories: Musical Setting*. General Council Publication Board. Philadelphia, PA. 1914. This includes seven General *Responsories* and five *Responsories* for use at Burials, in addition to the same ones appointed in *The Lutheran Hymnal* all in SATB.

Psalms is peculiarly adapted to this method. Its introduction into Christian worship is commonly ascribed to St. Ignatius of Antioch, who, tradition says, saw in a vision of two heavenly choirs singing alternately. St. Theoderet, however, attributes its introduction to Sts. Flavian and Diodorus, two monks of Antioch, about the year 250. Its introduction into the Western Churches has been variously ascribed to either St. Damasus, St. Ambrose of Milan, or St. Celestine I. The honor is usually given to St. Ambrose, though St. Celestine I was probably the first to divide the *Antiphons* into verses and to prescribe rules governing the same. The Sixteenth and Seventeenth century Church Orders generally retained them. The rubrics governing them from the *Psalter and Canticles* of Harry G. Archer and Luther D. Reed state, “An Antiphon should precede and conclude the Psalmody, and on Sundays and other Festivals may precede and follow every Psalm. Announcing the thought of the Season, it should be given out by a solo voice, Tenor preferably, or by several of the Choir, before the Psalm and repeated by the entire Choir after the Psalm.”³¹ The rubrics from *The Lutheran Hymnal* state, “An *Antiphon* is used at Matins and Vespers with the Psalms, the *Magnificat*, the *Nunc Dimittis*, and the *Benedictus*. It is used in the same manner as the *Invitatory*”³² (meaning, before *and after* the Psalm).

The *Antiphon* in and of itself is not something that has been neglected by Lutheran parishes today, for the most part. What has fallen into disuse among us is the use of a “Special” *Antiphon*—an *Antiphon* that fits a particular day or season of the Church’s year. The *Antiphons* on pages 95ff in *The Lutheran Hymnal* are meant to either supplant the *Antiphon* associated with a particular Psalm, or be used in addition to the associated *Antiphon*. This special seasonal

³¹ Archer, Harry G., and Reed, Luther D. *The Psalter and the Canticles*. The Christian Literature Company. New York, NY. 1897. Preface, page xiv.

³² *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Authorized by the Synods Constituting the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America. Concordia Publishing House. St. Louis, MO. 1941. Page 95.

Antiphon would be repeated before, in between, and after each Psalm appointed for the day.³³

This serves to highlight and emphasize the particular theme of the season or day. This Special *Antiphon* may also be used with the *Canticles* at Matins and Vespers except for the *Te Deum* and the *Dignus est Agnus*.³⁴

The *Invitatory* can be called the *Antiphon* for the *Venite*. It is an extended “invitation” to worship. Matins being the first Service of the day exclusively contains this invitation to worship. The *Invitatory* is made up of a *Versicle* that invites the worshiper to worship, and a *Response*, which gives the reason why the invitation has been made. For example, the Common *Invitatory* has as the *Versicle*: “O come, let us worship the Lord.” (An invitation given.) The *Response* gives the reason: “For He is our Maker.” We are invited to worship, because He made us; He is our Creator. Luther D. Reed posits that the origin of the *Invitatory* was the monks calling their brethren to wake up for the Office, which they did by intoning passages of holy Scripture appropriate for the day or season as they passed through the halls to the chapel.³⁵

The *Venite*, Psalm 95:1-7, is an invariable *Invitatory* Psalm sung before the regular Psalmody of the day. The *Invitatory* is sung before *and after* the *Venite*, as is stated in the rubrics on page 95 of *The Lutheran Hymnal*. When Psalm 95 occurs in the daily praying of the Psalter, either Psalm 95 is omitted, or the *Venite* is replaced by Psalm 95. The former practice is more

³³ For example, on Christmas Day, December 25th, at Matins, one of the four Special Antiphons appointed for Christmastide would be used at the beginning of the Psalmody, then *Antiphon* for Psalm 19, Psalm 19, Gloria Patri, *Antiphon* for Psalm 19, Special *Antiphon*, *Antiphon* for Psalm 45, Psalm 45, Gloria Patri, *Antiphon* for Psalm 45, Special *Antiphon*, *Antiphon* for Psalm 85, Psalm 85, Gloria Patri, *Antiphon* for Psalm 85, and then ended with the Special *Antiphon* chosen for the day. If one was to include the Psalmody for the daily praying of the Psalter over Thirty-One days (in this case Psalm 119, parts XII-XVI) the pattern would continue for each separate part of Psalm 119.

³⁴ No Antiphon is used with these Canticles.

³⁵ Reed, Luther D. *The Lutheran Liturgy: A study of the Common Service of the Lutheran Church in America*. Muhlenburg Press. Philadelphia, PA. 1947. Page 386. Matins is the Morning Service and we usually pray it sometime between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m., but originally Matins was called the Morning Service because it began the first thing in the morning at Midnight.

common among Lutherans, the latter is common among the Anglicans.

As was the case with the Special *Antiphons* for the *Psalmody* and *Canticles*, the same is true of the seasonal *Invitatories*. The difference between the Special *Invitatories* and the Common *Invitatory* is that the invitation is given after the reason for the invite. The reason that is given embraces the particular theme of the season or day. For example, the *Invitatory* for Advent is: V: “Behold, the King cometh.” R: “Oh, come, let us worship Him.” The coming of the King, our Lord + Jesus, is the theme of Advent. Let us come worship Him, for He is coming to be our King. The only exception to this invitation and reason formula is the *Invitatory* for Eastertide. This *Invitatory* provides an exclamation of praise. V: “The Lord is risen indeed.” R: “Hallelujah!” It reflects the common Easter greeting of the Church during this time: V: “Hallelujah! Christ is risen!” R: “He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!”

The *Versicles* are similar in fashion to all of the other responsorial parts we just examined. They are introductory Psalm passages in the spirit of prayer. They occur quite often. In the Divine Service, there are *Versicles* in the *Confiteor*—the Confession of Sins which precedes the beginning of the Service at the *Introit*,³⁶—in the *Preface*, and at the end in the *Thanksgiving*. In the daily Offices they occur even more frequently. *Versicles* begin both Offices. They also introduce *Psalms*, *Canticles*, *Collects*, and other features. The *Versicle* is a concise passage of holy Scripture that embraces a succinct petition to the Lord God; it is a brief cry to the Lord God, in which the faithful also respond with holy Scripture. This is a form that also dates back to the synagogue; to the worship of the Jewish people. From ancient times people have

³⁶ Properly speaking the *Confiteor* is not part of the Liturgy. The Liturgy begins with the *Introit*. Luther in his Orders made no provision for a Confession before the service. Other Reformers followed suit. The *Confiteor* was always the private prayer of the clergy prior to the Mass in the Sacristy. This character was retained in the 1533 Brandenburg-Nuremberg, 1542 Schleswig-Holstein, 1543 Pfalz-Neuberg, 1544 Hildesheim Orders, and Pomeranian Orders until at least 1563. The earliest introduction of the *Confiteor* into the Liturgy is the 1531 Church Order of Sweden. It appeared in the 1537 Hamburg, the 1543 Cologne, 1566 Hesse-Kassel, and 1571 Austria Church Orders.

worshiped by using the Words of God as both cry and response. This is the very nature of the *Versicle*.

For examples, one can look at the *Versicles* supplied for Eastertide from *The Lutheran Hymnal*.³⁷ *Versicle 2*: V: “Then were the disciples glad.³⁸ Hallelujah!” R: “When they saw the Lord.³⁹ Hallelujah!” *Versicle 3*: V: “This is the day which the Lord hath made.⁴⁰ Hallelujah!” R: “The Lord is risen indeed.⁴¹ Hallelujah!” *Versicle 4*: V: “The Lord is risen indeed.⁴² Hallelujah!” R: “And hath appeared unto Simon.⁴³ Hallelujah!” Even the first *Versicle* for Eastertide, though not a direct quote of holy Scripture, reflects the words of holy Scripture. This would be referred to as a “Liturgical text.” Liturgical texts are based upon passages of Scripture. For example, the *Introit Antiphon* for the Feast of the Holy Trinity (“Blessed be the Holy Trinity and the Undivided Unity: Let us give glory to Him for He has shown mercy unto us.”) is based upon Tobit 13:1-2.

These Special *Versicles* on pages 95-101 of *The Lutheran Hymnal* are to be used in the Offices of Matins and Vespers. As the rubric on page 95 of *The Lutheran Hymnal* suggests, the Special *Versicle* replaces the *Versicle*⁴⁴ after the *Hymn* on certain days and seasons. This Special *Versicle* may also be used with the *Collects* at Matins and Vespers. A *Versicle* may precede and follow each of the *Collects* prayed at the Offices. This form is shown in *The Litany*. The *Litany Collects* (on page 112 in *The Lutheran Hymnal*) each have a *Versicle* associated with them.

³⁷ *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Authorized by the Synods Constituting the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America. Concordia Publishing House. St. Louis, MO. 1941. Page 97.

³⁸ St. John 20:20.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Psalm 118:24.

⁴¹ St. Luke 24:34.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ V: “Let my prayers be set forth before Thee as incense:” R: “And the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.” (Psalm 141:2).

These *Litany Collects* can be replaced with the *Special Versicles* given on pages 95-101 of *The Lutheran Hymnal*.

Sequence Hymns and the *Sentences for the Seasons* are not used in the daily Offices, but they have also found their beginning in these *Intervient Chants*—chants that serve to highlight and adorn the holy Scriptures—and so deserve to at least have mention made of them. As was said above, the *Gradual* and the *Responsory* grew out of the same place; they were Psalm verses that separated the various readings. The *Gradual* became to be used in the Divine Service and the *Responsory* found its use in the daily Offices. In essence they are the same thing with just different names; one name for use in the Mass and one name for use in the Offices. The *Sequence Hymns* and *Sentences for the Seasons* are the Church's creation to be added to the place of the *Gradual*. They are never to supplant the *Gradual*, which is taken from holy Scripture and relates to the particular theme of the day. But they do serve to adorn the Liturgy, and help focus the Church on the particular season in which they are used. Since the history of these is probably a whole other paper, and their use is beyond the scope of this paper, this will have to suffice for an explanation of these songs for now.

Thus, we have the history of the *Invitatories*, *Antiphons*, *Responsories*, and *Versicles* and how they have been used, and are meant to be used, in the Church. Next, we will look at how these treasures which have fallen into disuse among modern Lutheran parishes may be restored to full use.

The solution, simply put, is to start using them. I would venture to say that the reason that they are not used is two-fold. One, the clergy has not been aware of their existence. I certainly do not remember any training on these things during my seminary days, and I took every liturgical class I could. So, they lay dormant stuck in the middle of the hymnal, simply because we are not

aware that they exist. If we do know they exist, we are unsure of how to use them. Hopefully, this paper has shed some light on that. The second reason they are not used, is that the laity does not know they exist. Related to this is the fact that the use of the daily Offices as the daily corporate prayer of the Church has fallen into disuse. Since we do not use these Offices on regular basis, there is no reason for clergy or laity to delve deeper into the Offices than what is written on page 32ff and page 41ff of *The Lutheran Hymnal*.

Although reintroduction of the daily Offices as part of the corporate worship of the parish is ideal, modern time constraints within the lives of the bishop, pastors, and deacons of the diocese do not always make this possible. When one has to find secular employment, or has several mission sites (or both), finding time to pray the daily Offices by one's self is difficult enough, without trying to schedule set times for the parish. However, these elements may be introduced into the daily Offices whenever they are used in the worship life of parishes of the diocese.

One other major reluctance to their introduction is the trepidation that goes with introducing new music into the life of the parish. Although they are meant to be sung, if singing them is a problem at first, they may be introduced as spoken phrases. If one has a choir, or organist, this task is less daunting. If one does not have a choir or organist the best way to introduce new hymnody or music is to set aside time outside of the worship service, either before or after Bible class, or during the announcements, and rehearse the piece of music that you want to introduce into the parish. Another way I have found to be effective is singing the music as part of the hymnody during the Distribution of communion every Sunday for several weeks until they feel more comfortable with it; until it sounds like they know it. If one lacks an organist, or gifted singers, there are recordings that are available, or can be made available.

These issues really only apply to the *Invitatory* and the *Responsory*. The *Antiphons*, being taken from holy Scripture, have all been pointed to the appropriated Gregorian chant tones in *The Psalter and Canticles of the New King James Version*.⁴⁵ In the same book, the *Versicles* are set to the same setting as the *Versicle* in the Office of Vespers. One need only learn to sing the new words to the familiar setting. The *Invitatory* and *Responsory*, however, will need some extra care, since these are new settings. The *Invitatories*, being shorter, will be easier and quicker to learn using the methods described above. The *Responsories* will take longer to introduce.

At the parishes I serve, we have only learned, so far, the Common *Responsory*. They know that we will eventually learn all of them, but we desire to know well at least one of the *Responsories* so that we are not “putting too much on our plate” all at once. We do not sing the *Responsory* in unison, but sing it antiphonally: the pastor singing the Psalm verses, and the congregation singing the refrain. This has worked well, especially considering we do not have the benefit of accompaniment. We also employ the use of the *Versicle* before the *Litany Collect* when we pray the Litany during the Office at Vespers. Since we rarely do Matins, we have not, as of yet, introduced the Special *Invitatory*. We also do not use the Special *Antiphons* during the praying of the Psalter at this time. If we do pray Matins on a weekday, we will use the appropriate *Canticle* for the day. In short, introducing these treasures into the life of our parish is a work in progress. I say all of this to serve as an example of how to introduce these treasures into the worship life of the parish.

These are indeed treasures that have fallen into disuse among us. Rubrically speaking, employing their use is how the Offices are to be prayed. More than that, these treasures are designed to add beauty and variety to the worship of the Church. Using only the same form and

⁴⁵ Dulas, Jerald P. *The Psalter and the Canticles of the New King James Version*. Repristination Press. Malone, TX. 2012. See pages 380-448.

words every time is a betrayal of the intention of the Liturgy: to proclaim the whole of all that holy Scripture desires us to hear about our salvation. Seasons change and they bring all the gifts of the Lord God: sun, rain, snow, wind, and calm. These changes in the season reveal the beauty of the Lord God's creation. The same is true of the use of the *Invitatories*, *Responsories*, *Antiphons*, and *Versicles*, they help to draw out the beauty of the holy Scriptures during the particular season, or on the particular day, that tell of our Lord's grace and mercy toward us. Just as it would seem strange (and unwelcome) to have snow in July, so too would it be strange to have Lenten themes during Christmastide, or *vice versa*. The same would be true if we only had one season—if it was snowy year-round, or hot and humid year-round—we would grow weary of it right quick. We need the changing of the seasons, to help us appreciate the season in which we are currently. The same is true of the Liturgy.⁴⁶ The Church needs the cycle of the various Church seasons to not only help us appreciate the season we are in, but so that we hear all of the things our Lord + Jesus has done for us as we cycle through all the events of our Lord's life during the Church's year. Let us not lose these great treasures, but rather restore them to their rightful use among us, even as our Lutheran forefathers did.

Soli Deo Gloria!

⁴⁶ For example, how tired do we become of the Trinity season after Twenty plus weeks of it? It is so long I personally look forward to Advent. "Let's shed the green and put on some violet."

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