

# Our Father, by Whose Name

Lutheran Service Book 863 | study by Shawn L. Kumm

## Introduction

“It is not flesh and blood but the heart which makes us fathers and sons.” So wrote the German poet and philosopher Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805).

It goes without saying that fatherhood has fallen on hard times. Oh, it’s never been easy for men to be fathers. Going all the way back to Adam and Cain and Abel and the descendants who follow shows us just that (see Genesis 4).

Men given the wonderful opportunity and privilege of fatherhood fail and fall short of the task every day.

- What things have led to the demise of fatherhood?
- Consider Schiller’s quote above. How is this true or not true for earthly fathers? How is this true or not true when we consider our heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus?

## Exploring the Scriptures

LSB 863 serves as the Hymn of the Day for two days in the Church Year. Read Mark 10:2–16, the Gospel appointed for Proper 22B, which falls on a Sunday in early October.

- What indication from the text tells you this was a tough topic in Jesus’ day?

- The Pharisees started with the topic of divorce. Where does Jesus instead lead them in their testing of Him?
- What indication in the text tells you the parents knew they needed Jesus in their children’s lives?

## Exploring the Hymn

### Background

Francis Bland Tucker (1895–1984) grew up knowing something about family and church families. He was the youngest of 13 children. His own father and two brothers served as bishops in the Episcopal Church; several nephews served as clergymen. Tucker also was a collateral descendent (a relative descended from a brother or sister of an ancestor and, therefore, a niece or nephew) of George Washington. His mother was one of the last children to be born at Mount Vernon. Tucker’s family was illustrious in both church and state lineage.

Known for his skills as a poet and hymn writer, Tucker served on the committees that produced the 1940 and 1982 hymnals of the Episcopal Church. In preparing the topical index for the 1940 hymnal, Tucker noted there were no hymns for the “Home and Family” section — and so he wrote one.

- Why do you think there were no hymns in 1939 concerning home and family for Tucker’s consideration? (*The Lutheran Hymnal* [1941] did have a section on “The Christian Home” with four hymns in “The Family” section.)
- If you have a copy of *Lutheran Service Book*, turn to Page 995 and find the “Home and Education, Christian” category.

and Holy Spirit — paralleled the family — parents, children and the spirit of the family.

- Let’s expand Tucker’s reading of Ephesians. Read Eph. 3:14–19. What does St. Paul have to teach us about each person of the Holy Trinity?

### Text

In stanza 1, the words “Our Father” immediately make all kinds of liturgical and worship connections for us.

- In what ways does stanza 1 reflect the following Scripture passages: Is. 63:16; Is. 64:8; Rom. 8:15; 1 John 3:1?
- In what ways does Tucker take the Invocation, the First Article of the Apostles’ Creed, and the Introduction to the Lord’s Prayer and bring them together in stanza 1 (see *LSB*, pp. 322–3)?

Stanza 2 moves us to the second person of the Holy Trinity, Jesus, the Son of God, the Son of Mary.

- What comfort is yours that Jesus left His heavenly home in order to grow up “within an earthly home”?
- What are the benefits of having the Lord Jesus in *your* home? Consider the lives of these biblical people: Mark 10:14–16; Luke 19:5–9; Acts 16:25–34.

Stanza 3 has us sing of the Christian home as a place where unity, love and peace are to be found.

Tucker wrote that he started with Eph. 3:14–15 as the basis for his hymn. He also noted that the Trinity — Father, Son

- What have been some of the best times in your Christian home life?

Original sin, the sin we have inherited from our first parents, Adam and Eve, and actual sin, the sins we commit against one another, break the unity, love and peace of Christian home life.

## Making the Connection

In the Large Catechism, Martin Luther has this to say about the Fourth Commandment, “Honor your father and your mother”:

Honor requires not only that parents be addressed kindly and with reverence, but also that, both in the heart and with the body, we demonstrate that we value them very highly, and that, next to God, we regard them as the very highest. For someone we honor from the heart we must also truly regard as high and great.

We must, therefore, impress this truth upon the young [Deuteronomy 6:7] that they should think of their parents as standing in God’s place. They should remember that however lowly, poor, frail, and strange their parents may be, nevertheless, they are the father and the mother given to them by God... . Therefore, we are not to

## In Closing

Jesus shows us the Father’s heart and His great love for all of humanity through His sacrificial love upon the cross. The true family of God is baptized into the Body of Christ and is fed with His body and blood. It is the heart of the Father and the flesh and blood of the Son and the work of the Holy Spirit that make us God’s family.

- Sing or read aloud together *LSB* 863, and then read Psalm 128.

- What is the one thing necessary to restore unity, love and peace?

- Consider the following Scripture passages in light of the homes of Christians, forgiveness and the restoration of peace: Psalm 133 and Eph. 4:1–6.

- In what ways do Holy Baptism, Holy Absolution and Holy Communion reestablish and strengthen Christ’s peace in your home?

consider who they are or how they may be, but the will of God, who has created and ordained parenthood. (LC I 107–108)

When the Church remembers St. Joseph, guardian of Jesus, on March 19, the day really becomes the Church’s “Father’s Day.” Once Joseph’s shock and disbelief are answered by God’s Word proclaimed by the angel, we see in Joseph true love, faith, diligence and quick action. He carries out his vocation as provider, protector and teacher of Jesus.

- What do the words and actions of Joseph have to say to today’s “blended” families, that is, stepfamilies, adoptive families and foster families? See Matt. 1:18–25; Matt. 2:13–23; and Luke 2:41–52 if your memory needs refreshing.

## Prayer

Almighty God, from the house of Your servant David You raised up Joseph to be the guardian of Your incarnate Son and the husband of His mother, Mary. Grant us grace to follow the example of this faithful workman in heeding Your counsel and obeying Your commands; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen (Collect for St. Joseph, Guardian of Jesus).