



He's Risen, He's Risen, Christ Jesus, the Lord

Text: C.F.W. Walther (1811-1887)

Tune: C.F.W. Walther (1811-1887)

As Lutherans move through the Church Year, many are inspired to add to the Church's hymnody to preach the Gospel of Christ in song. The first President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the Rev. C.F.W. Walther, was no exception. His Easter hymn, "He's Risen, He's Risen, Christ Jesus, the Lord" has been an Easter favorite of many since it was written. Walther presents the joy of Christ's Resurrection and the victory it brings to us who have been Baptized into the same.



A young C.F.W. Walther

Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther was born October 25, 1811 at Langenchursdorf, Saxony. He was from a long line of Lutheran Pastors. He received his early education in his hometown as well as in Hohenstein and graduated from Gymnasium (a type of advanced high school and college which gave the equivalent of a modern Bachelor's Degree) at Schneeberg in 1829. However, during his time at Gymnasium, he took a leave of absence because of health concerns and during that break began reading Martin Luther's writings. In November 1838, Walther, along with 700 Saxons (7 Pastors, 10 pastoral candidates, 4 teachers, 2 doctors, 2 lawyers, 515 other adults, and 160 children), departed for America to escape the unionistic tendencies of the German Lutheran state church. They arrived in St. Louis, Missouri in February 1839 and established Confessional Lutheranism in America. In 1841 Walther became the Pastor of Old Trinity Lutheran in St. Louis, as well as forming the log-cabin college at

Altenburg, the forerunner of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. To help spread Lutheranism in America, Walther began to write *Der Lutheraner*, a regular publication containing articles about Lutheranism and combatting American Evangelicalism, in 1844. About the same time, the Confessional Lutherans were finding it increasingly hard to be a part of the existing Lutheran Synods, as many had given into the American Evangelical tendencies. So, Walther and the Saxons established the *Deutsche Evangelische Luterische Synode von Missouri, Ohio, und andern Staaten* (the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States) in 1847, which later became The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the body to which Mount Olive belongs.

In addition to his vast theological writings, Walther was also an accomplished pianist and organist. With his musical abilities, he wrote several hymns and hymn tunes, but many were never published in any Lutheran hymnals. "He's Risen, He's Risen, Christ Jesus, the Lord" is Walther's only widely-known hymn. He wrote it in 1860 and gave it the heading, "On the First Easter Day, April 8, 1860, on the Ocean." Walther composed this eleven-stanza hymn while he was travelling to Germany for recuperation from a particularly bad bout of depression, a condition from which he suffered most of his life. It was not translated into English until 1937, at which time Anna M. Meyer translated it and published in *The Lutheran Witness*.



An older Walther

"He's Risen, He's Risen, Christ Jesus, the Lord" is an excellent hymn for recounting the physical and spiritual events of Good Friday and Easter. Walther pulls heavily from Paul's great Resurrection chapter, 1 Corinthians 15. All creation prolongs the paean (a song of praise) for Christ's defeat of Satan and his armies. (stanza 1) Though they thought they triumphed, their time was short as Christ soon destroyed them by His Resurrection (stanzas 2-3). Now Death's sting is gone because Christ's Blood has covered all our transgressions and made us His own (stanza 4). Redeemed by Christ, we will join the heavenly host in eternal life who sing "laud, honor, and praise to the Lamb who was slain" (stanza 5).