



Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

Text: Laurentius Laurenti (1660-1722)

Tune: Melchoir Teschner (1584-1635)

There is often a noticeable overlap in the hymns of Advent and the hymns for the end of the Church Year. Because both times discuss the Second Advent of Christ, hymns are often difficult to categorize. One such hymn is “Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers.” Though it was written for the Last Sunday of the Church Year (Trinity XXVII), it is also a fitting hymn for Advent. Regardless of its category in the hymnal, this hymn calls on Christians to rejoice in their Lord and Savior at His return to judge the living and the dead, bringing about the Resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.



Husum is indicated by the marker at the top of the map.

Laurentius Laurenti was the son of Herr Lorenz (or, Laurenti), a burgess (a merchant who operated outside the city walls) of Husum, Schleswig, and was born on June 8, 1660. In 1681 Laurenti began attending the University of Rostock, and studied there for a year and a half. He then transferred to the University of Keil, where he studied music. In 1864 Laurenti was appointed kantor (theologically-trained musician) and director of music at the Lutheran Cathedral Church of Bremen.

Julian's Dictionary of Hymnology calls Laurenti “one of the best hymnwriters of the Pietistic

school.” His hymns are founded on the Gospels for all the Sundays and Festivals of the Church Year and make application of these Gospels to the Christian’s life. They are characterized by a noble simplicity, careful attention to the Words of Scripture, and a

devotional tone. In all, Laurenti wrote 148 hymns, which he published in 1700 in his *Evangelia Melodica* (“Gospel Melodies”). He died May 29, 1722.

“Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers” is considered by many to be Laurenti’s finest hymn. It was written for the Twenty-Seventh Sunday after Trinity, the Last Sunday of the Church Year. The complete hymn is ten stanzas long. *The Lutheran Hymnal* includes only four stanzas—stanzas 1, the first half of 2 and second half of 3, 7, and 10. It was translated into English by sisters Sarah Findlater and Jane Borthwick, who translated several hymns and printed them in 1854 in a book entitled *Hymns from the Land of Luther*.

Stanzas one and two begin the hymn with a recounting of the Gospel for the day, Matthew 25:1-13, the Parable of the Ten Virgins. When we sing “and let your lights appear,” it is a reference to the effort to relight the lamps when the call came that the bridegroom was near. Though “the evening is advancing and darker night is near,” we must still “pray, and watch, and wrestle.” We must be diligent as we await Our Lord’s return. There are many things that can lull us to sleep, things that can destroy our faith in Christ and His promise to take us to be with Him.

Stanzas three and four are the application of this Gospel in the life of the Christian. Stanza three answers the question of why the five were found faithful, even though they, too, fell asleep. It is because “here in patience,” they “their cross and sufferings bore.” This is another way of saying that they remained faithful. They did not lose faith, and their patience in struggle was a good work that flowed from that faith. Because they remained faithful they “shall live and reign forever where sorrow is no more.” Finally, stanza four calls on Jesus to come quickly. There is one translation error. Where *TLH* says “Arise, Desire of nations,” the original German says *geh auf, verlangte Sonne*, better translated, “Arise, O Sun so longed for.” This is an allusion to Malachi 4:2, “But for you who fear My Name, the Sun of Righteousness shall rise with healing in His wings.” We wait for the ultimate healing that will be ours in heaven when we receive our perfected bodies. So we plead and wait for that Day which will bring us to Our Lord Jesus Christ.