

Martin Luther's First Hymn:  
"Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice" (1523)  
Richard Massie, Translator  
Text Transcribed From:  
THE HANDBOOK TO THE LUTHERAN HYMNAL

1. Dear Christians, one and all, rejoice,  
With exultation springing,  
And, with united heart and voice,  
And holy rapture singing,  
Proclaim the wonders God hath done,  
How His right arm the victory won;  
Right dearly it hath cost him.
  
2. Fast bound in Satan's chains I lay.  
Death brooded darkly o'er me.  
Sin was my torment night and day.  
In sin my mother bore me.  
Yea, deep and deeper still I fell.  
Life had become a living hell,  
So firmly sin possessed me.
  
3. My own good works availed me naught,  
No merit they attaining.  
Free will against God's judgment fought,  
Dead to all good remaining.  
My fears increased till sheer despair  
Left naught but death to be my share.  
The pains of hell I suffered.
  
4. But God beheld my wretched state  
Before the world's foundation.  
And, mindful of His mercies great,  
He planned my soul's salvation.  
A father's heart He turned to me,  
Sought my redemption fervently.  
He gave His dearest Treasure.
  
5. He spoke to His beloved Son:  
'Tis time to have compassion.  
Then go, bright Jewel of My crown,  
And bring to man salvation;  
From sin and sorrow set him free.  
Slay bitter death for him that he  
May live with Thee forever.
  
6. This Son obeyed His Father's will,  
Was born of virgin mother.  
And God's good pleasure to fulfil,  
He came to be my Brother.  
No garb of pomp or power He wore,  
A servant's form, like mine, He bore,  
To lead the devil captive.

7. To me He spake: Hold fast to Me,  
I am thy Rock and Castle;  
Thy ransom I Myself will be,  
For thee I strive and wrestle;  
For I am with thess, I am thine,  
And evermore thou shalt be mine.  
The foe shall not divide us.
  
  8. The foe shall shed my precious blood,  
Me of My life bereaving.  
All this I suffer for thy good  
Be steadfast and believing.  
Life shall from death the victory win.  
My innocence shall bear thy sin;  
So art thou blest forever.
  
  9. Now to My Father I depart,  
The Holy Spirit sending  
And heavenly wisdom to impart  
My help to thee extending.  
He shall in trouble comfort thee,  
Teach thee to know and follow Me,  
And in all truth shall guide thee.
  
  10. What I have done and taught, teach thou,  
My ways forsake thou never.  
So shall My kingdom flourish now  
And God be praised forever.  
Take heed lest men with base alloy  
The heavenly treasure should destroy.  
This counsel I bequeath thee.
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