

Our Song of Hope

“Our Song of Hope” is an expression of our understanding of the way the gospel functions in our lives and in the world. The song is not part of our Forms of Unity (The Heidelberg Catechism, Belgic Confession, Canons of Dort, and Belhar Confession), nor are they a literal song with accompanying melody. Rather, the words

We sing to our Lord a new song;
We sing in our world a sure Hope:
Our God loves this world,
God called it into being,
God renews it through Jesus Christ,
God governs it by the Spirit.
God is the world’s true Hope.

I. Our Hope in the Coming of the Lord

1. We are a people of hope
waiting for the return of our Lord.
God has come to us
through the ancient people of Israel,
as the true Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth,
as the Holy Spirit at work in our world.
Our Lord speaks to us now through the inspired Scriptures.
Christ is with us day by day.

II. Our Song in a Hopeless World

2. We know Christ to be our only hope.
We have enmeshed our world in a realm of sin,
rebelled against God,
accepted inhuman oppression of humanity,
and even crucified God's son.
God's world has been trapped by our fall,
governments entangled by human pride,
and nature polluted by human greed.

III. Jesus Christ our only Hope

3. Our only hope is Jesus Christ.
After we refused to live in the image of God,
He was born of the virgin Mary,
sharing our genes and our instincts,
entering our culture, speaking our language,
fulfilling the law of our God.
Being united to Christ's humanity,
we know ourselves when we rest in Him.

4. Jesus Christ is the hope of God's world.
In His death,
the justice of God is established;
forgiveness of sin is proclaimed.
On the day of the resurrection,
the tomb was empty; His disciples saw Him;
death was defeated; new life had come.
God's purpose for the world was sealed.

5. Our ascended Lord gives hope for two ages.
In the age to come, Christ is the judge,

rejecting unrighteousness,
isolating God's enemies to hell,
blessing the new creation in Christ.
In this age, the Holy Spirit is with us,
calling nations to follow God's path,
uniting people through Christ in love.

IV. Our Hope in God's Words

6. The Holy Spirit speaks through the Scriptures.
The Spirit has inspired Hebrew and Greek words,
setting God's truth in human language,
placing God's teaching in ancient cultures,
proclaiming the Gospel in the history of the world.
The Spirit speaks truly what the nations must know,
translating God's word into modern languages,
impressing it on human hearts and cultures.

7. The Holy Spirit speaks through the Church,
measuring its words by the canonical Scriptures.
The Spirit has spoken in the ancient creeds,
and in the confessions of the Reformation.
The world is called to bear witness to Christ
in faithfulness to the Scriptures,
in harmony with the church of the ages,
and in unity with all Christ's people.

8. God's Spirit speaks in the world
according to God's ultimate word in Christ.
In every time and place,
in ancient cities and distant lands,
in technology and business,
in art and education,
God has not been left without a witness.
The Word has entered where we have failed to go.

9. In each year and in every place
we expect the coming of Christ's Spirit.
As we listen to the world's concerns,
hear the cry of the oppressed,
and learn of new discoveries,
God will give us knowledge,
teach us to respond with maturity,
and give us courage to act with integrity.

V. Our Hope in Daily Life

10. As citizens we acknowledge the Spirit's work in human government
for the welfare of the people,
for justice among the poor,
for mercy towards the prisoner,
against inhuman oppression of humanity.
We must obey God above all rulers,
waiting upon the Spirit,
filled with the patience of Christ.

11. We pray for the fruits of the Spirit of Christ
who works for peace on earth,
commands us to love our enemies,
and calls for patience among the nations.
We give thanks for God's work among governments,
seeking to resolve disputes by means other than war,
placing human kindness above national pride,
replacing the curse of war with international self-control.

12. We hear the Spirit's call to love one another
opposing discrimination of race or sex,
inviting us to accept one another,
and to share at every level
in work and play,
in church and state,

in marriage and family,
and so fulfill the love of Christ.

13. As male and female we look to the Spirit
Who makes us the stewards of life
to plan its beginning,
to love in its living,
and to care in its dying.
God makes us the stewards of marriage
with its lifelong commitment to love;
yet God knows our frailty of heart.

14. The Spirit leads us into Truth—
the Truth of Christ's salvation,
into increasing knowledge of all existence.
He rejoices in human awareness of God's creation
and gives freedom to those on the frontiers of research.
We are overwhelmed by the growth in our knowledge.
While our truths come in broken fragments,
we expect the Spirit to unite these in Christ.

VI. Our Hope in the Church

15. Christ elects the church
to proclaim the Word and celebrate the sacraments,
to worship God's name,
and to live as true disciples.
He creates a community
to be a place of prayer,
to provide rest for the weary,
and to lead people to share in service.

16. The Holy Spirit sends the church
to call sinners to repentance,
to proclaim the good news
that Jesus is personal Savior and Lord.

The Spirit sends it out in ministry
to preach good news to the poor,
righteousness to the nations,
and peace among all people.

17. The Holy Spirit builds one church,
united in one Lord and one hope,
with one ministry around one table.
The Spirit calls all believers in Jesus
to respond in worship together,
to accept all the gifts from the Spirit,
to learn from each other's traditions,
to make unity visible on earth.

18. Christ places baptism in the world
as a seal of God's covenant people,
placing them in ministry,
assuring them of the forgiveness of sins.
God knows those who are baptized in Jesus' name,
guiding the church gently to lead us,
calling us back when we go astray,
promising life amid trials and death.

19. Christ places the Lord's table in this world.
Jesus takes up our bread and wine
to represent His sacrifice,
to bind His ministry to our daily work,
to unite us in His righteousness.
Here Christ is present in His world
proclaiming salvation until He comes,
a symbol of hope for a troubled age.

VII. Our Hope in the Age to Come

20. God saves the world through Jesus.
Those who call on that name will have life.

Christ's hand reaches out beyond those who say "Lord"
to the infants who live in the atmosphere of faith,
even to the farthest stars and planets all creation.
The boundaries of God's love are not known,
the Spirit works at the ends of the world
before the church has there spoken a word.

21. God will renew the world through Jesus,
who will put all unrighteousness out,
purify the works of human hands,
and perfect their fellowship in divine love.
Christ will wipe away every tear;
death shall be no more.
There will be a new heaven and a new earth,
and all creation will be filled with God's glory.

Our Prayer

Come, Lord Jesus:
We are open to your Spirit.
We await your full presence.
Our world finds rest in you alone.