

September 8 Nikolai Grundtvig *Bishop and Hymnwriter, 1872*

Nikolai Grundtvig was born in 1783, and at the age of 20 graduated from the University of Copenhagen with a degree in theology. At the University, he became absorbed in poetry and Norse mythology, and became convinced that poetry speaks to the spirit of man more richly than prose, and is the medium of choice for conveying and expressing spiritual truth. His book, *Mythology of the North*, published in about 1808, promotes this thesis. In 1810 his father, a pastor, fell ill and asked Nikolai to assist him with his parish. His first sermon, entitled "Why has the Lord's Word disappeared from His House?" caused an uproar, and led to his official censure, which gave him second thoughts about his calling. However, he was ordained the next year, and assisted his father until his father's death in 1813. It was a while before he got a parish of his own, and another denunciatory sermon of his led to his resigning the pulpit in 1826. In 1839 he was made chaplain at a home for aged women, a post that he kept for the remaining 33 years of his life. Meanwhile, he wrote books, including a version of Beowulf that advanced the study of Anglo-Saxon literature. He wrote more than a thousand hymns. (The *Lutheran Book of Worship* includes: "The bells of Christmas chime once more," "Bright and glorious is the sky," "Cradling children in His arm," "God's Word is our great heritage," "Spirit of God, sent from heaven abroad," "Peace, to soothe our bitter woes," and "Built on a rock the Church doth stand". The last of these is the most widely known and sung outside Lutheran circles.) His leadership helped to bring about the establishment of free public high schools for the masses in 1844, and the peaceful introduction of parliamentary government (retaining the monarchy) in 1849. In 1861, he was made a bishop, but without a diocese. He died 2 September 1872.

From www.satucket/lectionary biography, by James Kiefer

Collect: Almighty God, you built your Church upon a rock: Help us remember, with your hymn writer Nikolai Grundtvig, that though steeples may fall and buildings made by hands may crumble, Jesus makes our bodies his temple through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Help us to recognize Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life, that we may join our voices to the eternal alleluia; through the same Jesus Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

Reading: A reading from the book of Proverbs (3:1-2,5-8) My child, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; for length of days and years of life and abundant welfare they will give you. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil. It will be a healing for your flesh and a refreshment for your body.

Psalm: 86:1-12 (pg. 709)

¹Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me,
for I am poor and needy.

²Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you;
save your servant who trusts in you.

You are my God; ³be gracious to me, O Lord,

- for to you do I cry all day long.
- ⁴Gladden the soul of your servant,
for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
- ⁵For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.
- ⁶Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer;
listen to my cry of supplication.
- ⁷In the day of my trouble I call on you,
for you will answer me.
- ⁸There is none like you among the gods, O Lord,
nor are there any works like yours.
- ⁹All the nations you have made shall come
and bow down before you, O Lord,
and shall glorify your name.
- ¹⁰For you are great and do wondrous things;
you alone are God.
- ¹¹Teach me your way, O Lord,
that I may walk in your truth;
give me an undivided heart to revere your name.
- ¹²I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart,
and I will glorify your name forever.

Gospel: Matthew (8:5-10) When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to him and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible distress." And he said to him, "I will come and cure him." The centurion answered, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and the slave does it." When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, "Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith.