

# “Rise”

Psalm 98:1-8

Preached from the pulpit of First Presbyterian Church, Champaign, Illinois  
Sixth Sunday in the Season of Easter, May 6, 2018

**Music Sunday**  
Matt Matthews

There are many ways to respond to God’s grace, love, power, and deliverance. Many, many ways. Thinkers have written theologies. Architects have bent steel to span mountain chasms and river gorges. Story-tellers weave stories. Cooks make feasts. Whatever God’s gifts to us are, we use our gifts to glorify and to thank God.

Singers sing songs. Musicians regale us with melody.

As we use our gifts to thank God and to serve God’s people, we celebrate those gifts and the people who use them so artfully, so faithfully. We thank God for the artists, the surgeons, the truck drivers, the carpenters, the healers, the teachers—and all the rest who share their God-given gifts with the world.

Today we thank God for our Musicians.

But our musicians aren’t here to get clapped for by us; they are here to lead us all into deeper, more wondrous praise of God. So, we join our musicians in singing thanks to God.

The psalmist leads us deeper into the praise of God. Did you hear it?

*Sing to the LORD a new song,  
for God has done marvelous things.*

*Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;  
break forth into joyous song and sing praises.  
Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre,  
with the lyre and the sound of melody.  
With trumpets and the sound of the horn  
make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD.*

Even nature sings:

*Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;  
Let the floods clap their hands;  
Let the hills sing together for joy  
at the presence of the LORD.*

Psalm 150 puts it this way:

*Let everything that breathes, praise the LORD!*

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## Rise

Matt Matthews

Rise . . .  
Rise up in me, O God . . .  
Rise . . .  
Rise up in me.

Turning away from you is to fall,  
And turning toward your face is to rise.  
Standing before you, God, is to live,  
Abiding in your love forever.

Danger and darkness around me they crowd.  
Sorrows and duties blot out the light.  
Confusion and self-doubt weigh me down.  
Is there a dawn for this night?

I'm seeking your help and guidance and peace.  
My Lord and my God won't you please —

Rise . . .  
Rise up in me, O God . . .  
Rise . . .  
Rise up in me.

*O loving God,  
to turn away from you is to fall,  
to turn toward you is to rise,  
and to stand before you is to abide forever.  
Grant us, dear God,  
in all our duties your help;  
in all our uncertainties your guidance;  
in all our dangers your protection;*

*and in all our sorrows your peace;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Augustine 354-430)*