



Community of Christ

Historic Sites Foundation

Sing the Sacred Story! A Celebration of Our Hymns*

Sunday, September 15, 2013

Prelude & Gathering

Congregational Life (Announcements)

Prayer for Peace

You either may use the Prayer for Peace materials as posted on the Community of Christ website (www.cofchrist.org/prayerpeace) or adapt the prayer to reflect this special Heritage Day service.

Welcome

Reader 1: Welcome to this special celebration of Heritage and of Song. This morning we are going to experience a brief look at a collection of hymns that reflect the story of our faith tradition, Community of Christ, including a peek into the newest hymnal – *Community of Christ Sings*, debuting at the Peace Colloquy in October.

Community of Christ members have always been a singing people. In the very early days of our faith community, Emma Smith was directed to compile the first hymnal for the church, in a revelation that contained these well-known words from Doctrine & Covenants 24:3b:

My soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me.

So it was that the first hymnal of the Restoration Movement was published in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1835. As we sing hymns from that hymnal and others that followed, and as we tell the stories associated with those hymns and of the times during which they were written, we will appreciate anew something of the joys and sorrows of our spiritual ancestors as well as their most fervent convictions.

The Spirit of God, Like a Fire is Burning

Reader 1: It is fitting that we begin our musical journey this morning with a hymn that is dear to the heart of every Latter Day Saint. It is a hymn written by W. W. Phelps that captures the spiritual excitement and enthusiasm experienced by early church members in 1830s Kirtland. Emma included the hymn, *The Spirit of God, Like a Fire is Burning*, as the last selection in her first hymnal, which actually came off the presses only a few weeks before the Kirtland Temple dedication in March, 1836. As we sing this hymn, we experience something of the strong Pentecostal zeal that was felt in Kirtland in the days leading up to the dedication of the Temple.

***Hymn**

The Spirit of God, Like a Fire is Burning
(from *A Collection of Sacred Hymns for the Church of the Latter Day Saints*, 1835)

HS 33

***Prayer of Invocation**

***Response**

All Hail the Power of Jesus Name

Reader 2: As church members relocated from Kirtland to Missouri and later Nauvoo, their hymns continued to reflect their encounters with God, experiences in persecution, and longing for a place of peace. Shortly after arriving in Nauvoo, Emma began collecting hymns for her second hymnal. One of the hymns in Emma's 1841 Nauvoo hymnal that provided a more "mainstream" religious flavor is the great English hymn, *All Hail the Power of Jesus Name*. Written by Edward Perronet, this is a hymn that would have been popular during Emma's childhood in the Methodist church. As we sing the first three stanzas, let our voices express the same enthusiasm that Emma would have heard in her own day.

***Hymn**

All Hail the Power of Jesus Name HS 70 (stz 1,2,3)
(from *The Latter Day Saints' Selection of Hymns*, 1861)

Unmoved by Fear

Reader 2: Soon after her son, Joseph Smith III, was ordained president/prophet of the Reorganized church, Emma was invited to collect and publish hymns for a new hymnal. She published two more hymnal editions in 1861 and 1864 that continued to reflect the diverse theology of her faith community. Her 1864 hymnal included seven hymns by her youngest son, David H. Smith, born less than five months after her husband Joseph's death.

The 1870 hymnal, *The Saints' Harp*, was our faith community's first hymnal that did not involve Emma Smith. However, her sons filled her shoes by writing and selecting hymns for the new publication. *The Saints' Harp* was an impressive collection of no less than 1,120 hymn texts (i.e., words but no music), filling 792 4x6-inch pages. More than 2/3 of the texts in Emma's 1861 hymnal were retained, and hundreds from a variety of sources were added, including 49 by David H. Smith and 34 by Joseph Smith III.

Reader 1: One of the texts written by Joseph III is a moving, personal expression of faith: *Unmoved by Fear*. This hymn teaches us that true praise is not praise prompted by fear, but rather "taught" us by God's own all-encompassing love. Our only fear should be that we will not be worthy to walk beside our "noblest Friend." Young Joseph praises God for His mercy and counsel, and ends with the simple prayer of faith, "On thee, my Savior, I depend." These are the expressions of one who, in spite of doubts and perhaps even some fears, had reluctantly made the decision to accept the challenge of the prophetic role left by the death of his father. It is an affirmation of the faith of a leader who would shape the "new organization" of the church for decades to come

Hymn

Unmoved by Fear HS 131
(Joseph III, from *The Saints' Harp*, 1870)

Heavenly Father, We Adore Thee

Reader 2: As if the publication of 1,120 hymn texts were not enough, in 1871 the Conference held near Council Bluffs, Iowa, passed a resolution authorizing a new publication that would include music for the texts of *The Saints' Harp*. Mark Forscutt was appointed to head the work, but the monumental undertaking of assembling tunes and publishing musical notation for the first time progressed slowly, particularly since he was away on missionary trips much of the time.

Reader 1: Forscutt's life story is a fascinating one. As a boy in his native England, he had gone with friends one day to heckle a group of Latter Day Saint missionaries, and ended up joining

the church instead. Soon he was persuaded to “gather” to “the promised land” of Utah, and in 1860 Mark and his new bride, Elizabeth, sailed for America, joining the handcart brigade to Utah. Shortly after his arrival, the talented Forscutt was chosen to be a secretary to Brigham Young. When he strongly resisted the pressure to practice polygamy, he was labeled an “apostate” and began to feel his life was in danger. He left the church and eventually came in contact with the Reorganization, soon becoming close friends with Joseph III.

In 1889, Forscutt’s ambitious new hymnal, called *The Saints’ Harmony*, came off the presses. It was printed in a unique split-page format, with tunes for each hymn on the top and all 1,120 texts from *The Harp* on the bottom.

Forscutt, himself a talented writer and self-taught musician, wrote many of these hymns. One of the hymns included in *The Saints’ Harmony* was *Heavenly Father, We Adore Thee*. This hymn of praise is a congregational prayer for forgiveness and for the blessing of the Lord as we are drawn together in worship. It reflects Mark Forscutt’s personal experience of leaving his family and homeland and traveling on faith.

Hymn

Heavenly Father, We Adore Thee
(M. Forscutt, from *The Saints Hymnal*, 1895)

HS 112

Great and Marvelous Are Thy Works

Reader 2: It should not be surprising that Forscutt’s monumental *Saints’ Harmony* was not a success. Although it was a ground-breaking volume, it was much too large, too awkward to use, and too expensive for the average member, most of whom could not read music anyway. Thus, six years later, the Conference passed a resolution which dictated unusually detailed guidelines for a new, much smaller, less expensive, and more convenient collection, to contain hymns selected from the *Harmony*. The resolution even named a committee to produce the new hymnal, which would become the Reorganization’s 5th collection. Mark Forscutt’s name was not among them. In 1895, this “condensed” version of *The Saints’ Harmony* was published under the name *The Saints’ Hymnal*.

During this period at the turn of the century, the Sunday school movement had been spreading throughout the church, along with a “Religio Society” for youth. Responding to the urging of the General Sunday School Association, a committee was appointed to prepare, as a supplement to the 1895 *Saints’ Hymnal*, a songbook that would be better suited to these activities. Thus, in 1903, a collection of 232 musical compositions, primarily lively assembly songs and gospel hymns, was published in Lamoni under the name, *Zion’s Praises*.

This new hymnal quickly found acceptance, not only by the young, but by many older members as well. While most of the works in this hymnal would be considered overly sentimental today, a few, such as Charles Gabriel’s “Great and Marvelous Are Thy Works,” have survived as Community of Christ favorites.

The authorship of the hymn, “Great and Marvelous,” is interesting. The tune is credited to Charles Gabriel, while the text is attributed to “Charlotte G. Homer.” Actually, Gabriel wrote both the text and the tune. He wrote so many hymns that he decided to use a number of pen-names, and “Charlotte G. Homer” was one of them. This balance of male and female also are reflected in the line, “Oh, how wonderful is thy power, and yet how tender is thy love,” an affirmation that God is both a mighty father and tender mother.

Hymn

Great and Marvelous Are Thy Works
(from *Zion’s Praises*, 1903)

HS 48

There's an Old, Old Path

- Reader 1: During the early years of the 20th century, the church used both the 1895 *Saints' Hymnal* and the 1903 *Zion's Praises*. But in 1933, after the church's headquarters had moved from Lamoni, Iowa, to Independence, Missouri, a new *Saints' Hymnal* was published. This was the purple hymnal that many of our older members may remember from their childhood. (*Show the congregation a copy of this hymnal if one is available.*)
- Reader 2: In addition to the many gospel songs, a number of original hymns by members of the church had been published for the first time in *Zion's Praises*, and many of these were carried over to the 1933 *Saints' Hymnal*. One such composition was a song by Vida Smith and Audentia Anderson that has become arguably the best-loved hymn of the Reorganization, "The Old, Old Path." Audentia Anderson was a daughter of Joseph III and Bertha Madison Smith, and Vida Smith was her cousin. As members of the *Zion's Praises* committee, they collaborated on several hymns in addition to this one.
- Reader 1: Vida's narrative of the writing of "The Old, Old Path" is well known. One Sunday, as a morning worship service began at the Old Brick Church in Lamoni, the minister read as his scripture the passage from Jeremiah which says, in part, "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein." Struck by these words, Vida immediately tuned out from the rest of the service, and, admiring the beauty outside of the window, began writing. She said she felt "the nearness of congenial friends," and at home in the house of God. When the service was over, she had written a poem that eloquently expresses the treasure of close companionship with good friends and with the Master himself. She showed it to her musical cousin, Audentia, who proceeded to compose the tune for this beloved hymn. Let us sing it now in the spirit in which it was written.

Hymn

There's an Old, Old Path
(Vida Smith, from the *Saints' Hymnal*, 1933)

HS 158

From Isles and Continents Afar

- Reader 2: In 1943, President F. M. Smith felt the need to upgrade the music of the church and was moved to bring to Independence a talented musician from Michigan, who would become the church's first full-time director of music. Franklyn Weddle proceeded to greatly elevate the quality of music in the church on every level, from radio broadcasts, to events at the church's headquarters in the Auditorium, to aids for musicians in their congregations, to the publication of another new hymnal in 1956 known simply as *The Hymnal* (*Show the congregation a copy of this hymnal if one is available*). A high standard of musical, poetic, and theological integrity was maintained in the selection process for this 8th hymnal of the Reorganization. As a result, a number of "old favorites" were judged to fall short of this standard, and were not retained.
- Reader 1: One of the hymns included in the new hymnal was *From Isles and Continents Afar*. The hymn was written by Evan Fry in response to a long standing tradition that would take place at the end of every World Conference involving appointee ministers receiving their assignments on the Auditorium rostrum. The traditional hymn sung while the assignments were announced was "I'll Go Where You Want Me to go, Dear Lord." However, Fry, Weddle and others felt the hymn placed a greater emphasis on those assignments where ministers were called to "go" and not on an equal appreciation for those called to "stay."
- Reader 2: Evan Fry set out to write a hymn that lifted up all ministers, not just those who received geographically distant assignments. Fry tells the story of his hymn:

As was my custom at that time, I arrived at my office adjacent to Franklyn Weddle's a little after seven in the morning, and after getting settled, turned my attention

immediately to this hymn, thinking to see what I could do with it before anyone else arrived to disturb me. I think I can truthfully say that every hymn I have written—save this one—has cost me a considerable amount of work, study, revisions, and rewriting. This one seemed to come without effort, and aside from a later change of the prepositions beginning lines one and three in the first stanza, required no revision or rewriting. When Brother Weddle came in shortly after eight o'clock, the completed poem was on his desk.

Weddle wrote a tune for the new hymn and showed it to Fry, who proceeded to sit down at the piano and work out the harmony.

Hymn

From Isles and Continents Afar
(Evan Fry, from *The Hymnal*, 1956)

HS 417

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Reader 1: Due to health concerns, in 1969 Franklyn Weddle passed the baton, literally, to Harold Neal, who had been serving on the Graceland College music faculty. Two years later, an exhaustive 10-year process was initiated that would lead to the publication of the current hymnal of the church, *Hymns of the Saints*. The large and diverse committee that compiled this volume made a conscious attempt to enlarge the variety of music styles, adopt the concept of inclusive language, and update theological concepts whenever possible. The result has been acclaimed by hymnal experts from numerous denominations.

Reader 2: In addition to many new works in this hymnal, one of the great hymns of Protestant Christianity, *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*, was revised by Alan Tyree to more closely relate to denominational beliefs. Tyree, who one year after the publication of the new hymnal would be ordained a member of the First Presidency, made several changes to Martin Luther's original text. For example, in the first stanza, the original last five phrases read:

*For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great,
And, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.*

Tyree noted “that the idea that Satan is so powerful that he is unequalled on earth contrasts with Christ's statement: ‘All power has been given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore. . .’ There are many implications of this theological error, not the least of them being motivation by fear of Satan rather than identification with Christ.”

So, he made the following changes:

*We have no foe to fear—
Our strength, our help is near.
Whose power is manifest
To lay our fears to rest.
On earth Christ has not equal.*

So, let us now sing this great hymn of the Reformation, adjusted to the theology of our faith community during the 1980s.

Hymn

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
(M. Luther, revised by A. Tyree, from *Hymns of the Saints*, 1981)

HS 142

Disciples Generous Response

Both individuals and the congregation is invited to designate all or a portion of an offering for the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation in an effort to help preserve and share church heritage for future generations. Donations may be sent to: Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation, P.O. Box 338, Nauvoo, IL 62354. If individual donors wish to receive a receipt acknowledging their tax-deductible donation, please indicate as such when submitting the donation.

Offertory Story

Over the past 180 years, our faith community has been blessed with generosity, both in the giving and the receiving, just as it has been blessed by its sacred music. A number of the early church members perceived working towards building the kingdom of God took priority over the possession of things. One story comes from W. W. Blair, a missionary in the Reorganization and member of the First Presidency. Upon returning home after a church conference in 1862, the Blair family discovered their home had been robbed. W. W. Blair concluded that if anyone was in such desperate need as to rob a volunteer missionary and his family that they possibly needed what they obtained, “and so we 'let the dead bury their dead' and went about our Master's business.” In many ways, the Blair family was taking to heart Jesus' words in Matthew:

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

For Everyone Born, A Place at the Table

Reader 1: Next month, Community of Christ will unveil its twelfth hymnal. Titled *Community of Christ Sings* and sporting a distinctive blue cover, this monumental work will include more than 600 hymns and sacred songs in a wide variety of styles. For the first time a significant number of indigenous songs of the various countries where the church has a presence will appear. New texts and tunes have also been contributed by the membership. In addition, a large number of fresh new hymns from other denominations that have appeared during the 30 years since the publication of *Hymns of the Saints*, will also be included. The gift of modern technology will allow us to hear these new songs—even listen to our members from all over the world helping us with pronunciation and rhythm.

Although not written by a member of Community of Christ, Shirley Erena Murray’s hymn, *For Everyone Born, A Place at the Table* captures the unique vision and mission of our faith community in proclaiming Jesus Christ and promoting communities of joy, hope, love and peace. Murray’s hymn is a call to the church to work for human rights and justice for all people. As Lauren Hall notes, *For Everyone Born, A Place at the Table* “strongly resounds with the enduring principles of the denomination, created by an international council representing its global membership.”

Hymn

For Everyone Born, A Place at the Table
(S. Murray, from *Community of Christ Sings*, 2013)

Insert

***Prayer of Benediction**

***Response**

***Postlude**

* The majority of the hymn readings and accompanied histories were drawn from Richard Clothier's 2010 hymn festival shared at the closing session of the John Whitmer Historical Association conference in Rockford, Illinois and his 2003 hymn festival shared at the closing session of the Mormon History Association conference in Kirtland, Ohio. The reading, *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God* was taken from Clothier's 1996 publication, *A Heritage of Hymns* (Independence, MO: Herald Publishing House, 2010).

Interested in learning more about Community of Christ hymnody and history?

We recommend the following books from Herald House:

1. Richard Clothier: *150 Years of Song: Hymnody in the Reorganization 1860-1950* (Independence, MO: Herald Publishing House, 2010). ISBN: 9780830914913
2. Richard Clothier: *A Heritage of Hymns: An Exploration of Music and Religion, Music and Our Hymns, and the Stories of Hymns and Hymn Writers of the Restoration Movement* (Independence, MO: Herald Publishing House, 1996). ISBN: 0-8309-0737-8