

## LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

May 8, 2018

### PRESBYTERY OF MIAMI VALLEY MONTHLY HYMN FOCUS 2018-2019

To sing is to pray twice, a quote attributed to St. Augustine, provides the inspiration for the Monthly “Hymn” Focus of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley. This is a mix of old and new hymns which carry the rich theology of Christian life. The first hymn included for each month has been selected from the three most recent Presbyterian hymnals: the blue, *Presbyterian Hymnal*; the red or purple, *Glory to God*; and the slimmer blue volume, *Sing the Faith*. Knowing that not all churches are making use of these, alternative hymns have been included when we think your hymnal might not include the highlighted hymns. We invite you to sing the hymns, worship with hymns, read the hymns, learn about the hymns and answer the questions, and make them a part of every meeting throughout the month they are assigned. Hymns can be played on musical instruments or downloaded on a variety of electronic devices, so you won’t have to sing without accompaniment. Know that as you are doing this, so are your brothers and sisters throughout the Presbytery of the Miami Valley.

#### MAY 2018 Easter/Pentecost

Hymn of Praise

*When in Our Music God is Glorified*

Words by Fred Pratt Green

Glory to God #641

Presbyterian Hymnal #264

“Hymn singing is a dangerous activity, you get this glow that you can mistake for a religious experience.” These words of Fred Pratt Green set alongside his hymn, *When in Our Music God is Glorified*, speak volumes about the potential power of words and music in our life as Christians, to give voice to creation, to invigorate our faith, to help keep our faith authentic and as something to rely on/hold onto in times of deepest darkness.

1. Does only church music glorify God?
2. How important an ingredient is music in your life of faith?

#### Alternative Hymn

Hymn of Praise

*Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart!*

Words by E.H. Plumptre

Glory to God #804

Presbyterian Hymnal #145

Originally written in 11 stanzas for church celebrations, this is a call to rejoice, give thanks, and sing, which goes out to all people at all times along life’s journey.

1. How important an ingredient is music in your life in faith?
2. What feelings does the repetition of the refrain evoke?

#### JUNE 2018 - Ordinary Time

Hymn – God

*A Mighty Fortress is Our God*

Words by Martin Luther

Glory to God #275

Presbyterian Hymnal #260

This hymn, the theme song of the Reformation, was written by Martin Luther himself, who once said that “next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world.”

1. What emotions does this hymn evoke in you?
2. Do the words and music speak to you and your relationship with God in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? If so, how? If not, why not?

#### JULY 2018 - Ordinary Time

Hymn – Jesus/Christ

*Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love*

Words of a Ghanaian folk song

Glory to God #203

Presbyterian Hymnal #367

Brought to us by Tom Colvin, a missionary who served in Ghana and other parts of western Africa, *Jesu, Jesu* shares a song and prayer refrain from a place where hospitality carries special importance and where Christianity is not the primary religion.

1. Do the words and music speak to you as a 21<sup>st</sup> century Christian? If so, how? If not, why not?
2. Which Bible stories would you include if you were writing a hymn about Jesus? Why?

**Alternative Hymn:**

**Hymn – Jesus/Christ**

***Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine!***

*Words by Fanny Crosby*

**Glory to God #839**

**Presbyterian Hymnal #341**

Blinded as an infant, Fanny Crosby, with the help of her mother and grandmother, came to write over 9000 hymns in her lifetime. Fanny once said, "it may seem a little old-fashioned always to begin one's work with prayer, but I never undertake a hymn without first asking the good Lord to be my inspiration." *Blessed Assurance* is her personal testimony of faith and salvation.

1. Do the words and music speak to you as a 21<sup>st</sup> century Christian? If so, how? If not, why not?
2. What kind of language and metaphors would you use if you were putting your faith story to song?

**AUGUST 2018 - Ordinary Time**

**Hymn – Holy Spirit**

***Come, O Spirit, Dwell Among Us***

*Words by Janie Alford*

**Glory to God #280**

**Presbyterian Hymnal #129**

*Come, O Spirit, Dwell Among Us* was written by a ninety-two-year-old Presbyterian woman named Janie Alford, who wrote much poetry over her lifetime. Her words provide a powerful match to the stirring music which is the tune EBENEZER.

1. What feelings and images does this hymn evoke for you?
2. Does the music fit your idea of the Holy Spirit? Why or why not?

**Alternative Hymn**

***Breathe on Me, Breath of God***

*Words by Edwin Hatch*

**Glory to God #286**

**Presbyterian Hymnal #316**

In both Hebrew and Greek, the word for "spirit" is the same as "wind/air/breath" and so, this hymn invokes the Holy Spirit as the Breath of God and is a prayer for personal renewal.

1. What feelings/thoughts are evoked by reading/singing this hymn?
2. How does this hymn fit with your idea of the Holy Spirit?

**SEPTEMBER 2018 -- Ordinary Time**

**Hymn – Call of Discipleship** *Will You Come and Follow Me* *Words by John L. Bell & Graham Maule*

**Glory to God #726**

**Sing Our Faith #2130**

You can hear the voice of Christ calling us to follow him in the first four verses. Then our voices respond to Christ in verse five. Such a personal call to discipleship wrapped in this traditional Scottish tune! This hymn was written to celebrate the ministry of a beloved youth ministry volunteer.

1. What emotions does this hymn evoke?
2. How have you felt called in your life? To whom or what have you been called?

***Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore***

*Words by Cesáreo Gabaráin*

**Glory to God #721**

**Presbyterian Hymnal #377**

This calling hymn speaks to disciples of Jesus across the world. We are able to walk in the footsteps of the disciples as they seek to follow Jesus. Birthed out of the Spanish revival of the 1970s, this popular hymn gives us both the English and the Spanish lyrics to sing.

1. What emotions does this hymn evoke?
2. How have you felt called in your life? To whom or what have you been called?

**Alternative Hymn**

***Jesus Calls Us***

*Words by Cecil Frances Alexander*

**Glory to God #720**

Cecil Frances Alexander is known for writing children's hymns. This one first sung by some of us in our childhoods was written for St. Andrew's Day and celebrates the call of Andrew and Simon Peter, the fishermen disciples.

1. What emotions does this hymn evoke?
2. How have you felt called in your life? To whom or what have you been called?

**OCTOBER 2018 - Ordinary Time**

**Hymn - Peacemaking**

***O for a World***

*Words by Miriam Therese Winter*

**Glory to God #372**

**Presbyterian Hymnal #386**

This hymn shows us a glimpse of the Kingdom of God that Jesus came to establish. Even though it is filled with longing for a just world yet to be realized, it also gives us examples of what that world will look like, and hope that such a world can be. The powerful words of this hymn are written by Miriam Therese Winter, a Catholic sister.

1. What connection is there between music and the kingdom of God?
2. How does the vision proclaimed fit with your understanding of God's transforming love?

***Your Only Son***

*Words by Twila Paris*

**Glory to God #518**

**Sing Our Faith #2113**

Popular Christian artist, Twila Paris, wrote this praise song in the 1980s. The "Lamb of God" image reminds us of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

1. What do the words of this hymn tell us about humankind?
2. What does this hymn tell us about the redemptive nature of God's only son?

**Alternative Hymn**

***In Christ There is No East or West***

*Words by John Oxenham*

**Glory to God #317, #318**

**Presbyterian Hymnal #439, #440**

Oxenham, a well-traveled businessman, began to write to relieve the tedium of long travel and found out he preferred writing to business. Written in a time of world missions, this hymn has become a celebration of Christian unity and peace today.

1. An earlier version of this hymn's stanza 3 includes the word "brothers" rather than disciples. How important is inclusive language as you sing your faith?
2. This hymn is often included in hymnals with two different tunes, ST. PETER and MCKEE. How does the use of each tune enhance/detract from the meaning of each hymn?

**NOVEMBER 2018 - Ordinary Time**

**Hymn of Thanksgiving**

***Let All Things Now Living***

*Words by Katharine K. Davis*

**Glory to God #37**

**Presbyterian Hymnal #554**

This beloved Thanksgiving hymn evokes deep emotions of gratitude in this season of giving thanks. Sung to a simple folk melody from England and Wales, this hymn calls upon all of creation to raise a song of thanksgiving for the Creator God.

1. What attributes of God are found in this hymn?
2. For what are you thankful to God?

**Alternative Hymn**

***Now Thank We All Our God***

*Words by Martin Rinkart*

**Glory to God #643**

**Presbyterian Hymnal #555**

This well-known and popular Thanksgiving hymn began as a simple family table prayer in the 1600s. The words to this hymn read as a prayer and petition for the people of God.

1. What attributes of God are found in this hymn?
2. For what are you thankful to God?

**DECEMBER 2018 - Advent/Christmas**

**Hymn - Christmas**

***Of the Father's Love Begotten***

*Words by Aurelius Clemens Prudentius*

**Glory to God #108**

**Presbyterian Hymnal #309**

These ancient words from the 5th century tell of the sacred Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The plainchant melody from the 12th-13th century sets these words to a simple, sacred, rolling tune, and remind us of the eternal One.

1. How do the words of this hymn speak God's message to this generation?
2. How does this measure up as a statement of faith in song?

**Alternative Hymn**                      ***O Come, O Come, Emmanuel***                      *Words from Latin prose 9<sup>th</sup> century*  
**Glory to God #88 (vs 1, 6, 7) Presbyterian Hymnal #9**

This ancient hymn finds its beginnings in the 9th century as a series of antiphonal phrases and liturgy sung during Advent. The tune is plainsong, a type of music used in the church in medieval times. The title “O Antiphon” invites us into the presence of the Christ child born for us.

1. What do the names for Christ in this hymn tell you about the nature of Christ?
2. Why is it important to include ancient hymns like this in our worship?

**JANUARY 2019 - Epiphany**

**Hymn – Baptism**                      ***I Was There to Hear Your Boring Cry***                      *Words by John C. Ylvisaker*  
**Glory to God #488**                      **Sing the Faith #2051**

As we sing this hymn, we can imagine that God is speaking to us as God tells the one being baptized that God will always be with us throughout the stages of our lives.

1. What feelings/thoughts does this hymn evoke?
2. How have you felt the presence of God throughout your life?

**Alternative Hymn**                      ***Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing***                      *Words by Robert Robinson*  
**Glory to God #475**                      **Presbyterian Hymnal #356**

Robinson went from being a heckler of Christians to being a Christian minister. While preparing a sermon, he wrote the words that remind us of the wondrous grace of God which brings us back whenever we wander.

1. What attributes of God are found in this hymn?
2. What exemplifies grace in your life?

**FEBRUARY 2019 - Epiphany**

**Hymn – Lord’s Supper**                      ***I Come with Joy***                      *Words by Brian Wren*  
**Glory to God #515**                      **Presbyterian Hymnal #507**

Verse by verse we joyfully move through the Lord’s Supper. We begin as “I” a “child of God, forgiven, loved and free,” and move to a “we” friends and strangers in a community of love through whom the Spirit of the Risen Christ is known and with whom we go out to “give the world the love that makes us one.”

1. We are all invited to the Lord’s Table. To what other tables are you invited?
2. What is your earliest memory of sharing in the Lord’s Supper?

**Alternative Hymn -**                      ***Here, O Our Lord, We See You Face to Face***                      *Words by Horatius Bonar*  
**Glory to God #517**                      **Presbyterian Hymnal #520**

This hymn as found in the newer Presbyterian hymnals is written in the third person and highlights the communal nature of the Lord’s Supper. In its original form found in many of our older hymnals, this hymn was written in the first person, emphasizing a more personal faith experience and was used as a reflective piece for those who had received communion.

1. We are all invited to the Lord’s Table. To what other tables are you invited?
2. What is your earliest memory of sharing in the Lord’s Supper?

**MARCH 2019 - Epiphany/Lent**

**Lenten Hymn**                      ***Were You There?***                      *African American Spiritual*  
**Glory to God #228**                      **Presbyterian Hymnal #102**

Note by note we sing through the crucifixion of Jesus our Lord. In the midst of each stanza we cry out an “O” that just goes on as the pain becomes more real with every verse.

1. What feelings are evoked as we sing this spiritual?
2. Why is it important to sing this hymn as we move toward Easter?

**APRIL 2019 - Lent – Easter**

**Easter Hymn**

***In the Bulb There Is a Flower***

*Words by Natalie Sleeth*

**Glory to God #250**

While pondering life and death, Good Friday and Easter, and the reawakening of the world in the spring, Sleeth was inspired by a line from T.S. Eliot “in the end is my beginning,” to write this gentle hymn of resurrection and the ebb and flow of life.

1. This hymn has become one used at memorial services and funerals. Why do you think that is?
2. What other images from nature has God given to better understand the mystery of faith?

**Alternative Hymn**

***Christ the Lord is Risen Today!***

*Words by Charles Wesley*

**Glory to God #245**

**Presbyterian Hymnal #113**

Charles Wesley had much reason to celebrate when he wrote this song of Easter joy, as this was the year he experienced his life-changing conversion. Set to a Welsh tune, we sing in the celebration of God’s love for the world and us.

1. What emotions are evoked in singing this song?
2. How do you celebrate Easter with music today?