# Church Music Forward

"Preserving tradition with imagination"

## **October 2016 Publication**

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#### In Search of Perfection

**Chanelle Schaffer** 

November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016, will mark the two-year anniversary of one of the most significant changes I've ever made in my 25+years of music ministry. In 2014, following a long,

painful, and toxically dysfunctional leadership transition at my previous church, I decided to leave New York City, my home of over 15 years, and accept a call to be the Minister of Music & Arts at a church on the island of St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Initially, I'd planned to spend a year in 'paradise' and then return to my 'real life' back in New York-but God had other plans. I'd spent months on my knees, praying my heart out, pleading with God to give me the courage and strength to hold fast while witnessing the faith community that I served and loved being torn apart. When God answered, it wasn't to fortify my heart, but rather, to change my situation ... and God apparently had something more long-term in mind.

I'd made a number of other big moves in the past—from Boston to the Bay Area and from San Francisco to NYC, but I'd never experienced the kind of culture shock I felt during the first few months of my recent relocation. Other than moving to a place like Montana and trying to live off the land, I can't think of anything that would be a more drastic change than moving from a city of 8 million people to a tiny island in the Caribbean with a total population of 32,000, give or take the number of cruise ship passengers taking tours on any given day.

The most definitive change for me was in worship itself: I came from a diverse, urban, progressive church with a large music budget, services of contemporary/blended worship led by a professional Praise Team & Worship Band, a Dance Ministry headed by a former Ailey dancer, and a Drama Ministry led by wellknown Broadway actors. We also relied upon a Worship Arts Planning Committee that met monthly to discuss ways to use the creative and performing arts to deepen the congregation's worship experience, and to speak to people's hearts in a language beyond words. I came to a much more traditional church with a congregation who, for the most part, had never even heard of the term "Worship Arts", and who were accustomed to hearing/singing primarily traditional hymns, sacred music, and choral anthems, accompanied by an organ (an instrument that terrified me, having worked for the last 20 years solely as a pianist, but that's a story for another day).

Have I mentioned that St. Thomas is a very small island? While there are many highly skilled and gifted individuals, it is not a place where you'll find an ever-expanding talent pool of world-class musicians, dancers, singers and artists. Now, here's the interesting part: I have found that there is great joy in working with people exactly as they are, in coming to know their capabilities and their limitations, in challenging them to reach a higher level of excellence—and also in celebrating the beautifully imperfect gifts that they offer up to the Lord.

Here's the thing: there is a difference between what is excellent and what is perfect. I can easily list hundreds of performances and recordings I've heard that display the highest possible level of excellence; many left me impressed, but not moved. Conversely, one of my all-time favorite recordings is the folk singer Iris DeMent's version of 'Leaning On the Everlasting Arms'. Iris's is not a 'pretty' voice it's raw and piercing. I usually gravitate toward singers who possess a more traditionally 'beautiful' tone. There's something about this recording though that cuts straight through to my heart; hers is the most perfect rendition of this beloved hymn I've ever heard. The very rawness, openness and honesty of the sound give the hymn a depth of beauty that transports the listener to a place of holiness.

Here in St. Thomas, mine is not a choir of professionally trained singers, but a choir of people who love the Lord, and worship in spirit and in truth. They sometimes struggle with syncopation and intonation, but they sing with all their hearts. They may struggle with balance and blend, but they love each other, and that's clearly reflected every time they sing. I have to choose repertoire more carefully, but I'm finding beauty in simplicity. They're not perfect—but there's perfection in what they bring to worship.

I look back at my approach to music ministry over the past 20+ years, and I wish I'd understood the importance of this more fully. I wish I'd had more patience with volunteers, been willing to put my ego—which demanded weekly displays of technical excellence—aside, and allowed **everyone** to musically express their love for God, and to touch others' hearts in doing so-- demonstrating that while the pursuit of excellence is a part of our calling, the commitment to love is our higher calling.

I thank God for placing me in a position where I'd be forced to learn the spiritual disciplines of acceptance and patience—never my strong suit. I've frequently prayed St. Augustine's prayer— 'Lord, give me patience—but do not give it yet!' I now find myself living in a place where there's no choice but to slow down, to breathe mindfully, to take time to appreciate the extraordinary beauty that surrounds me, and to turn to God rather than getting lost in any number of the myriad distractions that come with New York City living. I'm not perfect-I still struggle to find the balance between challenge and acceptance, forcing vs. allowing, and seeing the perfection in every situation. But in learning and adapting to this new pace and way of life, I'm finding more beautiful and loving parts of myself that were forced to stay hidden in order to survive the daily onslaught of stress, smells, crowds, and noise-not to mention the constant undercurrent of tension and barely repressed rage one experiences when walking through Times Square or riding the MTA!

I have been moved to tears by any number of performances my choir has offered in worship. I continue to be amazed by the speed of their learning curve and by their commitment, openheartedness, and improvement on a monthly, even weekly, basis. And these qualities are not unique to the choir-one of my first projects upon arriving was the creation of a Worship Arts Planning Team. There was an existing Worship Team, but their focus had been on purely logistical elements-Sanctuary decorations, flowers, Christmas Pageant costumes, etc. Rather than disbanding the group or starting a separate one with a different focus, I decided to challenge the existing team to shift its focus to the bigger picture-what could we do to add artistic as well as practical elements to worship services? We struggled a bit early on—people need encouragement to think of themselves as creative, and it takes great courage to brainstorm aloud about artistic possibilities that lie outside of one's personal skills and talents. But we stuck with it, retaining virtually all of the original members, and adding several new members with a variety of creative and

artistic backgrounds. The team began to think further and further outside of the box as they saw their ideas implemented in worship with powerful impact. We recently spent a full day together, brainstorming ideas to use throughout the coming church year. I saw people who'd originally been timid and unsure of themselves become vocal proponents of many wonderful ideas. The Holy Spirit was moving mightily in the room and all who attended left on fire with a passion for reaching hearts and minds in the special ways that only the arts can access.

I moved to New York City believing that it was the only place I could surround myself with the gifted, the accomplished, the passionate and the professional—the only place I could find my own inspiration and constantly learn and grow through collaborating with kindred spirits. While the city certainly offered me constant opportunities to hone my skills and learn from the best of the best, I'm now experiencing a different kind of learning curve. It's a curve with love and humility at its apex—and it's exactly what my spirit needed to heal, and to transform exhaustion and bitterness into inspiration and joy. I have no idea if God will call me to stay here for the long haul, but it is an amazing blessing to know that right here, right now, I am exactly where I'm supposed to be, doing exactly what I was created to do.

Like many of us, I have a quotation attached to my email signature: 'Go forth, my friend, as a musician of the soul, and tune the hearts of all to the Divine Harmony'—Inayat Khan. May we continue to live into this calling, and may it ever be so.



Chanelle Schaffer is a graduate of Stanford University and the M.F.A. acting program of San Francisco's American Conservatory Theater. She has extensive performing and teaching experience, and is currently on the music faculty of the University of the Virgin Islands. She spent fifteen years in New York City, where she served as Music Director for historic Judson Memorial Church, Music Director for Marble Collegiate Church's 'Wednesday Worship' services, and as the Director of Music & Worship Arts at Fort Washington Collegiate Church. Chanelle currently serves as Minister of Music & Arts at the St. Thomas Reformed Church.

### Are We Awake?

#### **Tripp Hudgins**



As most of these stories do, it all began with a meal. It was the summer of 2015 and I was sitting in a restaurant in Hot Springs,

NC with musician Matt Morris. He was scheduled to appear on stage after The Rev. Dr. William Barber (now famous for his address at the Democratic National Convention) at the opening ceremonies of the Wild Goose Festival. Dr. Barber was there to represent Moral Mondays. With him was theo-musicologist, Yara Allen, his musical partner in the movement. We called this "opening ceremonies" but I knew we were about to have church and I was insistent that we not lose that stream, that connection as we moved from Dr. Barber's sermon to the musical offerings scheduled after.

The Rev. Rosa Lee Harden, Executive Director of the Wild Goose Festival, had recruited me to serve as "Liturgical Coordinator" for the threeday event. The theme was "Blessed Are The Peacemakers."

It's an incredible undertaking to track and resource all the various liturgies that occur over the three-day weekend. From Anglo-Catholic, thurible wielding campers to Baptists sharing their micro-brew recipes and hipster charismatics selling beard oil, a lot happens and much of it is somewhat incongruous with everything else happening around the festival. My job was to make sense of it all. To begin to do that work would involve setting a tone, to make "opening ceremonies" less ceremonial and more liturgical. Here's how I addressed the gathered that afternoon. What is going on here?

You have stepped through the veil into a temple without walls jet-lagged, road weary, burned out, intrigued, hopeful, enthusiastic, and just a little confused.

You have entered a basilica where the dome of heaven itself is the ceiling. Shrines and altars line the route on our pilgrimage together; a holy time; a thin place crafted by your hands and kissed by the Holy Spirit inviting you to join in the rhythms of our time together.

Blessed are the peacemakers.

This is the three great days of Holy Week, a continuous liturgy that begins on Thursday night and concludes on Sunday morning.

Blessed are the peacemakers.

This is a tent revival where we will testify to the movement of The Divine in our streets, classrooms, courthouses, homes, and even our churches urging one another to wake up to the truth that the holy is in each of us.

Blessed are the peacemakers.

This is a festival of art and music where we are reminded that we are bodies-good creatures-blessed icons of heaven on earth and we can move and sing and be engulfed in landscapes and soundscapes of hope.

Blessed are the peacemakers.

Blessed are you, the peacemakers.

Blessed are we, the peacemakers.

This is the liturgy of Wild Goose. Welcome.

This text was in my mind as I sat with Matt Morris and talked with him about the relationship between music and liturgy, about how the Spirit can be strangled or set free. We talked about his set, his new CD and what kind of offering he might make so our opening ceremonies didn't go from sermon to concert in a heartbeat. It takes some skill and presence of mind to know where that line is for any given moment, community, or context. As the Wild Goose is a moving target, we would all have to be wide awake to what might happen. We would have to be awake to the Spirit.

This is the craft of liturgy no matter what our tradition or liturgical predilections. We have to be awake to the moment, how God is present with us through symbol and action. Our work is sacramental.

Yara got the group singing protest songs from the Moral Mondays movement. Someone read scripture and then Dr. Barber stood up. He preached for 30 minutes or more on the anemia of the church where issues of justice are concerned, of the power of lament, and how the church needs to respond to its calling, its responsibility to be the justice—bringing leaven in the loaf of society. It was a powerful word and the gathered were excited, encouraged, challenged, and ready for whatever would come next.

Then Matt Morris stepped on stage. I knew how he planned on beginning his set. But that's not what happened. He stood up there instead and sang "Poor Wayfaring Stranger" a cappella. He has a powerful voice. Not many people could have responded like he did, but he stood in the spirit of lamentation that Dr. Barber offered and gave music to it. He held on to the space that Yara Allen and Dr. Barber had created, that liturgical social space, and expanded it, stepped into it and enfolded all of us in it.

We were in church. Song after song was a testimony, a proclamation of how we are called to move in the world in lament and in justice. How many hours, Lord? How many hours Will he lay out in the sun Under the gaze, Lord, Under the gaze Of Darren Wilson's gun? Four hours... Four hours... Is four hours long enough For Michael Brown To lay out in the sun?

Eventually, Dr. Barber joined Matt on stage, like the preacher he is, and encouraged people to sing along, to uplift them from outrage and lament to praise and social action. We were in church.

Love, for lack of a better word Love, in spite of what you have heard Love, is perfect and plenty enough It's plenty enough Love, for lack of a better word Love, in spite of what you have heard Love, is perfect and plenty enough It's plenty enough

The preacher danced. We sang. And a wind blew across the camp.

My research as a liturgical scholar focuses on such moments, moments where a concert or a ceremony becomes a liturgy, where the Spirit is not only present (as the Spirit is promised to be) but is somehow palpable and people take one social event and turn it into another kind of social event. I want to know what's at work, who enables it, who perceives it, and what they then do with it. Ritual theorist, Victor Turner, wrote of "comments" and "collective effervescence," a collective ritual sense where people "come alive" and know themselves to be part of one another in some profound way. Later in the festival, Yara Allen would use this same notion to frame her own work as an activist and as a theo-musicologist. For her, this is where the Spirit resides, how consistency during and between events becomes possible. This is where the identity of a movement and

the people who participate in it know what it is that they are doing.

It's a notion that might seem outside of the experience of many Episcopalians. Yet, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry reminds us that we Episcopalians are part of a movement. The Jesus movement. How do we know? How might our liturgies, even the ones we consider tired and worn, become effervescent with the Holy Spirit? How might we, we who lead the people of God in song, help awaken the people to the movement in which they find themselves?

The streets of Charlotte are in an uproar. People are lamenting death and destruction. Dr. Barber is in Charlotte as I write this. So is Yara Allen. Matt Morris started his seminary training this fall, in part because of what he experienced that night at Wild Goose. He is active in his parish in Portland, OR. Their work is far from done. Bishop Curry reminds us all that our work is far from done, that God is far from done. As that night progressed, the liturgy did eventually become a concert. Matt's set ended and another artist came to the stage. I cannot tell you at what moment the liturgy became concert. But it did and we all moved on into the night. Throughout the festival this would happen again and again. Ana Hernandez would lead us. The Brilliance and The Liturgists would lead us. Individuals and groups would step in the gap again and again turning concerts into liturgies and back again.

Though I tried to frame the festival as a single liturgy, it wasn't. It was lots of things all at once. A liturgy isn't a liturgy because we say so or because we are told so. A liturgy is a liturgy because the Spirit moves in a certain way and we who are present recognize the Spirit's movement. It can happen at the 8:00 Rite I eucharist. It can happen at summer camp. bidden or unbidden, God is present. Are we awake?



Tripp Hudgins is a Ph.D. candidate at Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA in Liturgical Studies and Ethnomusicology. He attends All Souls Episcopal Parish in Berkeley with his family and is a member of the Parish House community there. Follow him on twitter @tripphudgins.

## An Interview with Jessica Nelson

This is a brief article on the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music of The Episcopal Church. Martha Burford and Jessica Nelson are members of the Commission for this and the next Triennium; their terms will expire 2020-21. For a full explanation of the work of the Standing Commission, go to the roster and mandate: http://www.generalconvention.org/ccab/rost er?id=632. For a more informal and relational look at the Commission, Martha interviews her colleague Jessica below. At a later time, Jessica will interview her colleague Martha; the two of them co-chair the Subcommittee on Congregational Song.

Martha: In a nutshell, what is the work of the Commission?

Jessica: We do whatever General Convention tells us to do. We collect, collate, and catalogue musical and liturgical resources that might be helpful in future revisions of the Prayer Book and Hymnal and other resources. We also make recommendations to General Convention about musical and liturgical issues. And, this is not in our mandate, but I believe it's our responsibility to model best practices in our own work, especially those of us who are in parish ministry.

Martha: How does the Commission work? Jessica: We are divided into subcommittees, each of which is tasked with a more narrow scope of the work our mandate charges us with. We work in small groups and report back to the larger group and seek input and help. The majority of this work is done via videoconference and phone conference. (And text messages and smoke signals, Jessica added with a laugh.)

Martha: When asked to be on the Commission, why did you say yes? Jessica: I saw it as a learning opportunity to understand more about how the church as a whole works. And especially to learn about the liturgical revision process, because I think that the idea of working on the SCLM at a time we've been tasked with such important work is fascinating.

Martha: What are two things you hope to do with your time on the Commission? Jessica: The first is to rekindle some of the relationships we've had with other organizations such as AAM, and to connect on a personal level with other musicians in the church to give them a direct contact to the SCLM. There's a lot of curiosity and interest among church musician colleagues about this.

The second is to be a good millennial voice, offering one millennial's perspective, because I fall into that category even though I hate that label.

#### Martha: Anything else?

Jessica: What makes me hopeful about the work is that it is such a balanced group: we've got millennials, folks approaching retirement age, people who self-identify as Anglo-Catholic, people who self-identify as more Evangelical, and folks who don't fall into either category; we've also people who represent a variety of cultures. I hope we embody the *via media*. I also hope that we are able to model good collaboration, healthy disagreements, and active listening, both with each other and the Church at large.

## Song Builds Community

#### Martha Burford



Retreats and Hymn Sings, Homilies and Firefighters

Random Gratitude and When a Hymn Sing is The Kingdom of God (the two are related)

#### Gratitude:

I belong to The Episcopal Church and am starting this piece with gratitude for my Chief Pastor and Primate. Who can help but feel inspired and moved when hearing or reading words of the Most Reverend Michael Bruce Curry, Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church? He reminds us to work to stay on track; he also reminds us to believe in the healing power of music. His prayer for a church that "...will proclaim the word of God with power, evangelize as much by listening as by sharing, embody hospitality with authenticity, serve, witness and prophesy deliverance in our local and global societies," for a church "...that will truly follow in the way of Jesus of Nazareth and make a transformative difference in this world"<sup>1</sup> is a prayer for the Church I want to inhabit. It is also the Church of which I want to be an apostle.

<sup>1</sup> The Election of the 27th Presiding Bishop: The Nominees.

https://extranet.generalconvention.org/staff/files/do wnload/13096.pdf It is no surprise to me that Bishop Curry opens and closes his "A Vision for the Episcopal Church" with song: opening with "Eyes on the Prize" adapted from "Gospel Plow," closing with a verse from "Come, Labor on."<sup>2</sup> His *Songs my Grandma Sang*<sup>3</sup> shares stories about the deep, lasting impact those songs made on his formation as a Christian.

As musicians, we have one of the most direct, straight-to-the-heart venues for proclaiming, listening, sharing, and embodying hospitality with our neighbors. Neighbors well known and less known.<sup>4</sup> I'm so grateful for a leader who not only gets it but who shares that he gets it. His witness reminds me that a Hymn Sing is not just a Hymn Sing. It's a chance to follow in the way of Jesus of Nazareth.

When A Hymn Sing is the Kingdom of God:

I've been at my parish for six months. We've had two Community Hymn Sings in that time, and both have been successful, even wildly successful. By that I mean our parish hall was packed, we had members and guests, visitors who showed up, strangers who came in the door and stayed to sing, and pockets that opened to benefit needs in the local community. Have you read some of the blogs and literature that speak to how difficult it can be for people to walk onto the grounds of a church of which they're not members? If so, vou know why I advise that if you invite the community, you have to mean it, sincerely, and that might mean going with the flow at moments. Two of the most powerful moments at these events: one was greeting a father, mother, daughter and her date; standing just outside the door the father said, "Do you all mean, really, that anybody can come in?" Truly, people asking if they have the right to come in to God's Church. People, that's a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The Election of the 27th Presiding Bishop: A Vision for The Episcopal Church.

https://extranet.generalconvention.org/staff/files/do wnload/13096.pdf

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Curry, Michael B. Songs my Grandma Sang.
Moorehouse Publishing, 2015.
<sup>4</sup> Luke 10:29

reality we have to acknowledge. The other was stepping away from the piano because the guy who showed up with some other guests was rocking the room with his gospel playing, and the Spirit was blowing the music through him. But more on that in a minute.

I'm sharing some things we did to set the stage, to welcome the stranger, to make the food and music happen, and some things I let go of in the moment because the Holy Spirit is smarter and bigger than I am.

Initial Focus and Planning: I brought the idea of a Hymn Sing and Fundraiser to the rector; we sat down with our parish administrator and vocational deacon (in charge of outreach) to brainstorm what we wanted to create. Together, we envisioned people gathering to and eat and sing. We agreed to ask for free will donations to raise money for good causes in the neighborhood that surrounds our parish. Both of these decisions came from a desire to offer hospitality and to bear witness outside our walls in our local community. Both decisions had the added benefit of including outreach and parish life committee members in ownership of the event. Our deacon (don't have a deacon?-you could ask chair of your outreach committee) polled the outreach committee to designate where the donations would go.

**Promotion**: We printed promotion big and little. We hit the streets. A banner hung on the church grounds two weeks before each event. Posters went into several local restaurants and coffee shops. And I talked with people and invited them as I put the posters up. Oh, how faces lit up, most especially when I explained that we were sharing food and song to benefit specific causes in the neighborhood. Little cards went into neighborhood door slots and mailboxes. I posted the events, with an explanation on nextdoor.com and eventbrite.com, with the neighborhood association's newsletter, and on the urban social media calendar for the neighborhood. My rector talked it up at the neighborhood association meetings.

**Food/Set Up-Clean Up:** Our parish life group figured out how food would happen. Members of the choir agreed to help with set up and clean up. OK, honestly, I helped with the first one, but by the second time, others were on board, and lots of people brought potluck even though we hadn't asked. I think people knew lots of visitors came and wanted to be sure we provided. And, for our upcoming one in October, two members have already contacted me, "Don't worry about the food; we've got it going on." Takeaway: get others on board from the beginning.

The Music: Both events so far had two sources from which we sang: The 1982 Humnal and a booklet of hymns for which I purchased permissions to copy or that were public domain. Public domain hymns are searchable. OneLicense is a resource; Riteseries is a source. I clarified in writing and out loud at the event that the booklets were licensed for the specific event of our Hymn Sing and were to be left with us. I created charts for several hymns and purchased some from Charles Millings' Live Hymnal in case other musicians showed up (they did, and I'll get to that in a minute). I put up newsprint around the room and asked people to write down hymns they hoped to sing. We worked through the lists, while I interspersed requests with the occasional hymn I wanted to introduce and with a few pieces from Music that Makes Community.

The Musicians and Letting Go: (know your strengths, know your weakness, think ahead, and be humble) My main hope (and worry) going into both events was to welcome all into song and hospitality. I wanted to be able to sing a variety of music well at the events. I considered my role as song leader, as emcee, as one who needed to look around the room and notice how people were responding, and to be an instrumentalist. Hard to do all of that well at once, at least for me. So, I placed some choir members around the room; I asked some of our more gregarious folk to sit with strangers and those less comfortable in large groups. I worked to have a breadth of instrumentalists. I am an adequate accompanist: put a hymnal in

front of me and I can play in a way that makes people confident in singing. I'm not an inspiring Gospel music accompanist. I think some of the folk hymns cry for guitar, bass, harmonica, other instruments. Some pieces are great a cappella. To that end, here's what I set in place and here's where the Holy Spirit took over. For the first hymn sing, Jeremy Sullivan, who can rock a Gospel Hymn to heaven came down and lifted us all in the Gospel Hymns and did amazing accompanying by ear with other hymns. I invited some additional instrumentalists and had charts or instrumental parts ready for them on enough hymns to make it worth their while. I was able to Emcee and lead the singing. For the second event, another amazing thing happened: a member of the Virginia State University Chapter of Choir Psi Phi National Music Society saw the Hymn Sing posted on social media; she called and asked if some of her brothers and sisters could come sing with us. I had no idea who they were, but, YES. I cannot tell you the joy and energy and dancing that

came out of stepping back halfway into the second hymn sing and participating as they led "The Jesus in Me," and other songs they wanted to teach us. I could write a whole separate piece on the feeling of harmony and joy.

In the end, I know we all construct events in different ways, and we all have different modes of leadership. This is just one model for some ways to think about setting up a hymn sing and some of the preparation we did at St. John's. Our parish retreat was last week: loud and clear people at the retreat asked for more Hymn Sings as a way to connect with each other and the surrounding community. I would love to hear from others about your Hymn Sings/Beer and Hymns/...venues you create for bringing together God's People in Song.



Martha Burford Co-Editor/ Co-Founder Church Music Forward editor@churchmusicforward.com

Director of Church Music St. John's Church, Richmond, VA <u>marthoo@gmail.com</u>

## Sing a new song to the Lord

#### John-Westley Hodges



My journey in the Episcopal Church started in 2007 when I accepted the Director of Music position at St. Patrick's Episcopal Church in Long Beach, MS. St. Patrick's was

destroyed by Hurricane Katrina and held their services in a gym, another church's worship space, and a metal building. When I started, we were meeting for our weekly worship services in the Camp Coast Care metal building. Nothing fancy, just enough space for folding chairs, a makeshift altar, and Yamaha digital piano.

Four years into my tenure, we rebuilt our church about one mile inland and started worshipping in our new space. Before I started at St. Patrick's, my only experience in church music was in the Southern Baptist Church. Liturgy was foreign to me, and singing the psalm was something I thought I had never done, but now that I look back and think of songs like *Eagle's Wings* and *Taste and See*, I realize that I had a little experience with singing the psalm.

Psalms are meant to be sung. These beautiful and meaningful texts were the songs the people sang to praise, honor, and worship God. I am sure the musical offerings of psalms varied in local practices, but I think we can all agree that psalms were meant to be sung. While at St. Patrick's, I noticed that the congregation was not a fan of singing the psalm. Over the years of continuing education in the Episcopal Church, I learned different ways that the Psalm could be musically presented, but the consensus was always the same: we prefer to speak the psalm. We would sing it for a few weeks, and I would hear from multiple people, "can we just go back to speaking the psalm?"

This used to frustrate me. I just wanted to do psalms like my colleagues were getting to do in their churches, but my church just was not responding! Then, a light bulb went off. I started reflecting on how I was offering the psalm and realized that all the settings I was using had one thing in common: lack of congregational participation. No, it was not that they were not participating in the psalm settings; I was not allowing them to. I was allowing the choir to present the psalms and excluding the congregation from participating.

Over two years ago, I took a keen interest in the way we present the psalm in worship. How can I include the congregation more? I started composing my own settings of psalms with congregational refrains and other ways to involve the congregation. Over the past couple of years, the congregation's comments have changed drastically. Mostly that the psalms are meaningful, meditative, and reflective and that they enjoy the different ways they are presented. However, I would be lying if I said I do not receive any negatives anymore about the psalm settings, but you simply can't please everyone.

Below are the different ways I compose the psalm settings every Sunday. If you are interested in trying one of my psalm settings, please email me. I would be honored! Also, I would encourage you to try to arrange or compose your own settings for your communities.

1. Congregational refrain with spoken text: This configuration is simple. You come up with a refrain that complements the psalm (sometimes I use words from the psalm text, or I create words that amplify the meaning). Then, you have the congregation sing the refrain and speak the text with a musical background. Often, I just improvise on the refrain softly as the text is spoken. I usually practice this with the choir because when background music is added to spoken text it seems that people slow down their speaking. I always tell the choir just to move forward and speak it like they normally do; the music reminds us that the psalm is a musical offering.

I usually do the refrain twice at the beginning and then once after every two or three verses.

2. Congregational refrain with text sung to Simplified Anglican Chant/Anglican Chant: In this setting, the congregation is invited to sing the refrain at the beginning and where indicated in the text. The verses are sung by the choir. If you have a church that is a singing church used to singing Anglican Chant, you could easily put the chant setting in the bulletin and invite the congregation to join in on the verses. In my experience, it works best to have the congregation do the refrain, and the choir do the verses. Make sure you put the verses in the same format in the bulletin as the choir is singing; this helps the congregation follow and know when to sing the refrain.

I hope this has been a helpful article and gets your wheels turning on how you can be more creative with the psalm. I know people have been creating beautiful psalm settings well before I started, but it is just wonderful when you can sit down and create something beautiful for your church to offer to God in worship.



John-Westley Hodges Director of Music Ministries—St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Peoria, IL jwhodges@stpaulspeoria.com

Co-founder/Co-editor—Church Music Forward editor@churchmusicforward.com

### Meet the composers:

All music is under the composer's copyright and they have kindly given Church Music Forward permission to copy and use. If you use a piece, email them and let them know!



**Theodore S. ("Ted") Davis** is an active organ and harpsichord soloist, collaborative performer, and liturgical musician. He has achieved national recognition in organ-playing competitions, and is an active composer with works printed by two publishers. Other musical interests have led to studies in *a capella* vocal music, as well as music for medieval, renaissance, and baroque ensembles. He has also served as assistant to the music directors in Baroque opera productions at the *Boston Early Music Festival* and the *Amherst Early Music Festival*. Ted is organist and choirmaster at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Baltimore, Maryland, a position he accepted in 2005 following a nearly 20-year career including previous positions in Richmond, Virginia and Cambridge, Massachusetts. He holds music degrees in organ performance from Birmingham-Southern College, choral

conducting from Northwestern University, and harpsichord from the Longy School of Music (Cambridge, Massachusetts). He is currently a doctoral candidate and teaching assistant at the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University.

As part of the music series Ted has established at St. Bartholomew's, he conducts the church choir in choral evensong services, presents an annual "Bach at St. Bartholomew's" series (music of J.S. Bach for organ and harpsichord), and conducts choral concerts. In the latter, the church choir is joined by additional singers from the community and orchestra, performing works which have recently included Monteverdi *Vespers* (with period instruments) and Beethoven's *Mass in C*.



Bob Moore is a composer with a multifaceted résumé.

To date he has published nearly 200 choral and instrumental works, many of which have been recorded on six CDs and appear in various hymnals. He was a resident composer in the Faith Partners Program, sponsored by the American Composers Forum, a finalist in the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra's Fresh Ink Competition, and composer in residence for the St. Augustine Music Festival (of which he was a co-founder). As the composer in residence for the St. Augustine Orchestra, he has premiered several new works, including Aurelia, commissioned in celebration of their 50th anniversary. In addition to sacred music, his catalog contains art songs and compositions for solo piano, chamber ensembles, band and orchestra. Several of his works have received awards and many have been composed on commission.

He served for 20 years as the Director of Liturgical Music at San Jose

Catholic Church in Jacksonville, Florida. He was the Director of Music Ministry at the Cathedral-Basilica of St. Augustine and the Director of Music for St. Patrick's Episcopal Church. He is currently the Director of Music Ministry at The Episcopal Church of Our Saviour and an adjunct faculty member at Jacksonville University. He has taught privately as well as band, chorus and general music in public and private schools while serving as artistic director for two community choruses (The Amelia Island Chorale and The Orange Park Chorale). With percussionist Tony Steve, he has performed jazz and experimental music, including a series of innovative live silent film scores. Joe Yorio joins them in the trio, De Profundis, which performs sacred jazz and world music.

His publishers include G.I.A. Publications, World Library Publications, Santa Barbara Music Publishers, Hal Leonard, Augsburg Fortress, MusicSpoke and Oregon Catholic Press.

Bob studied composition with Richard Proulx, William Schirmer, Gordon Goodwin, and Bud Udell at the University of South Carolina, Jacksonville University, and the University of Florida.

## From Bob Moore on Evensong:

Anglicans are blessed with one of the great traditions in all of church music, the glory that is Evensong. I currently serve at a medium-sized Episcopal parish with a proud history - we were founded by none other than Harriet Beecher Stowe! Our musical resources are modest, but we have a great spirit and even greater ambition for the future. During our recent search for a new rector, I wanted to challenge my choir with a project outside of our usual Sunday ministry. The idea I landed on was to offer the parish Evensong during the season of Advent. As so much of this sturdy and inspired repertoire was a bit beyond our means, I settled in at the end of the summer to compose a setting that would suit our choir. This is the result, a setting of Evening Prayer Rite One from the 'Book of Common Prayer.' We joined with a neighboring parish, whose director played the organ while I conducted. At the end of the evening, while enjoying punch and cake, we all agreed that God was suitably praised by our humble efforts. Incidentally, there are versions of the Magnificat and Nunc dimittis in which the Gloria Patri and Amen are through composed, and I will happily make that available to anyone who is interested (contact me directly at <u>bobmooremusic@gmail.com</u>. I've also posted excerpts from our slightly imperfect premiere on Soundcloud: <u>https://soundcloud.com/evensong-3</u>

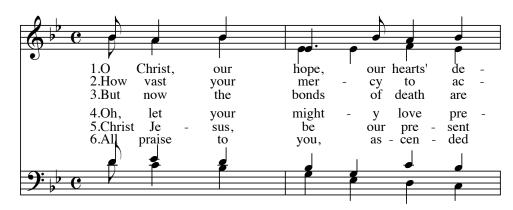
## Christ, our hope

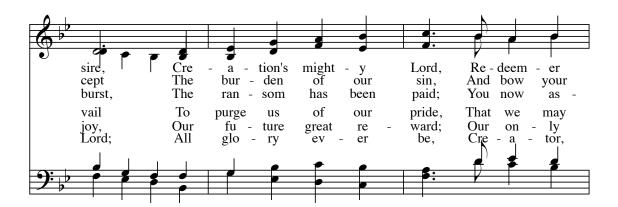


Text: Latin hymn, c. 8th century, trans. John Chandler, 1806-1876, adapt.

# **O** Christ, our hope

SATB harmonization



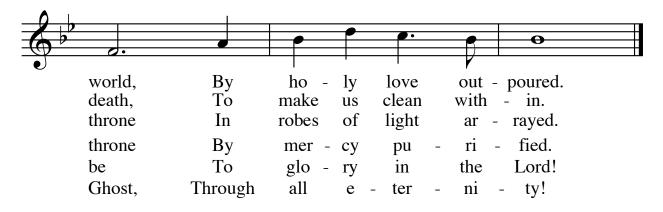




Text: Latin hymn, c. 8th century, trans. John Chandler, 1806-1876, adapt.

		•	<b>.</b>		•	0.	
U U	vast yo	our	hope, our mer - cy bonds of	to	ac -	cept	The
	Je - su	ıs,	might - y be our you, as	pre -	sent	joy,	Our





Text: Latin hymn, c. 8th century, trans. John Chandler, 1806-1876, adapt.

Christ, our hope verse 6 descant



Text: Latin hymn, c. 8th century, trans. John Chandler, 1806-1876, adapt.



Evening Prayer II The Book of Common Prayer Music by Bob Moore

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# The Invitatory

Bob Moore



Music  $\ensuremath{\mathbb{C}}$  2014 by Bob Moore



# Phos Hilaron

unison with descant

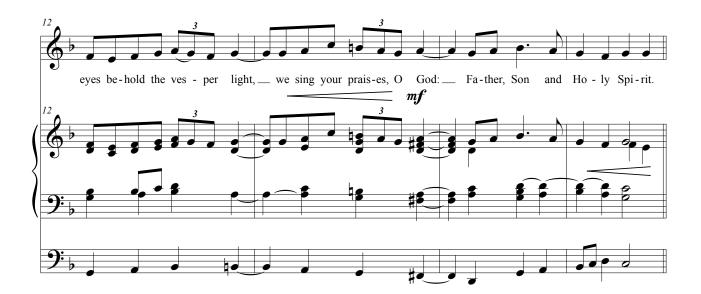
Bob Moore



Music © 2014 by Bob Moore

Phos Hilaron





Phos Hilaron



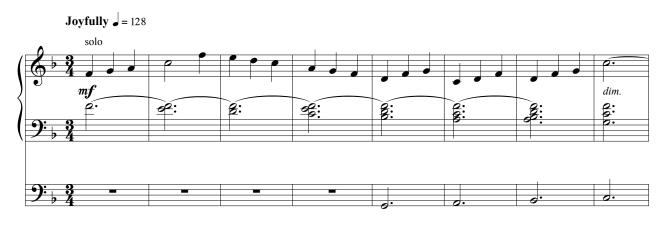
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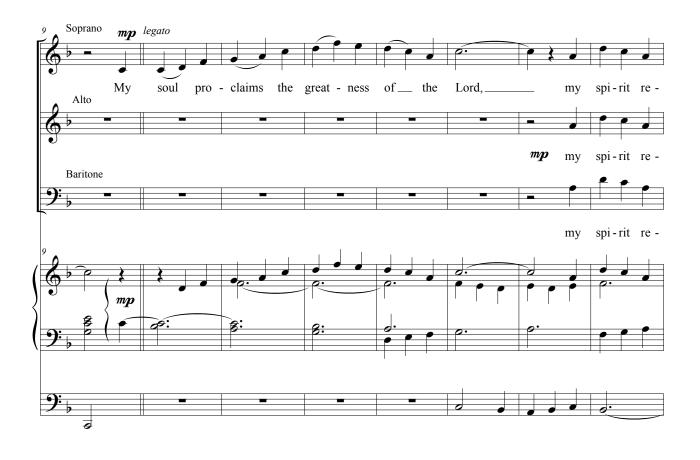
Phos Hilaron



# Magnificat

Bob Moore

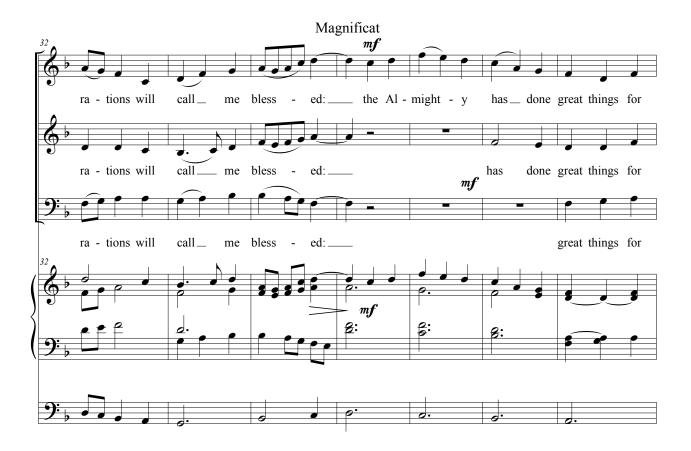


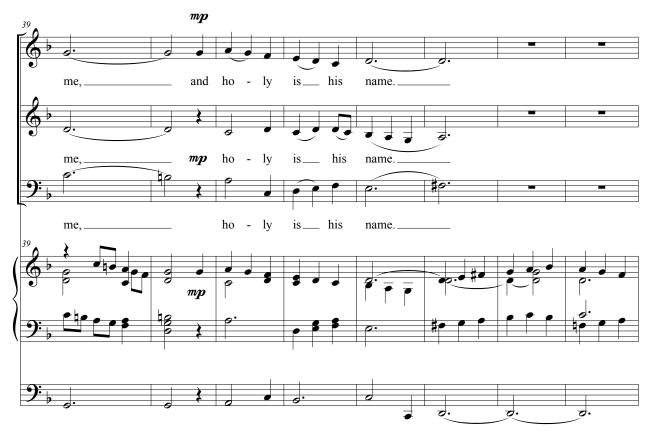


Music © 2014 by Bob Moore



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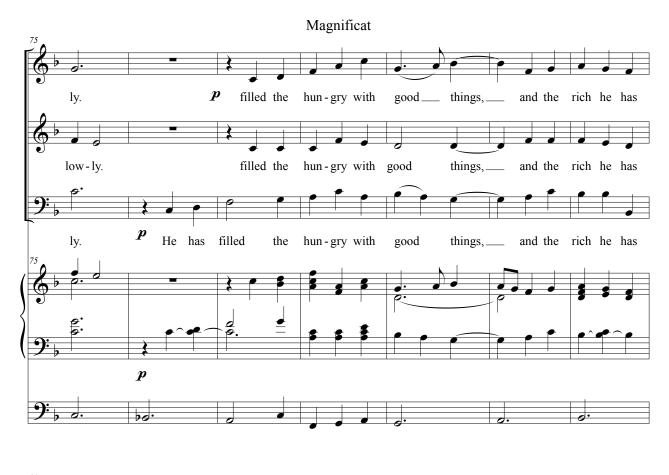


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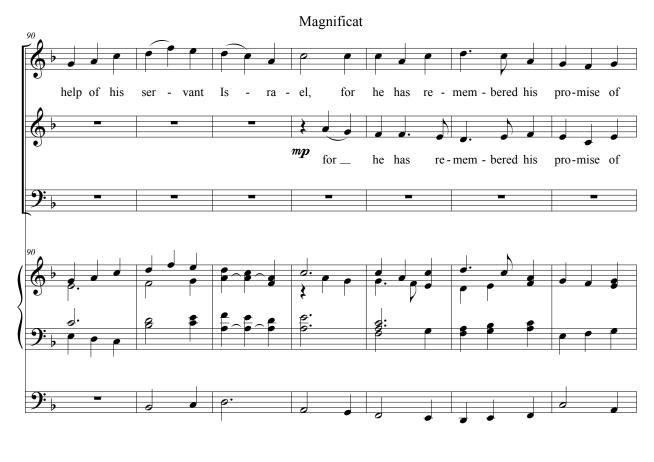


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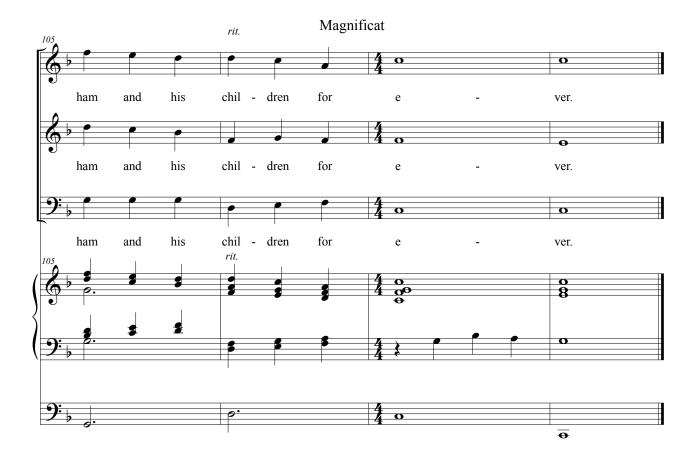


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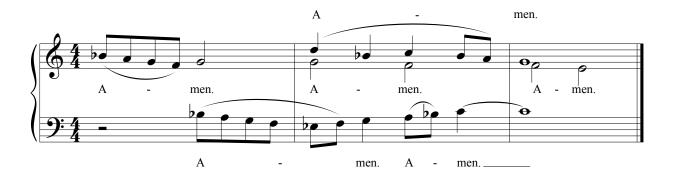




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# Amen in C



Music  $\ensuremath{\mathbb{C}}$  2014 by Bob Moore

# Nunc Dimittis

Bob Moore



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Nunc Dimittis



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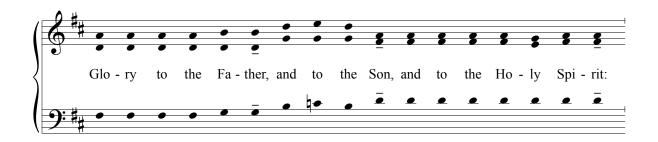
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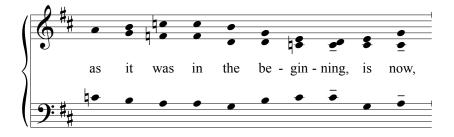
Nunc Dimittis



Glory to the Father

Bob Moore



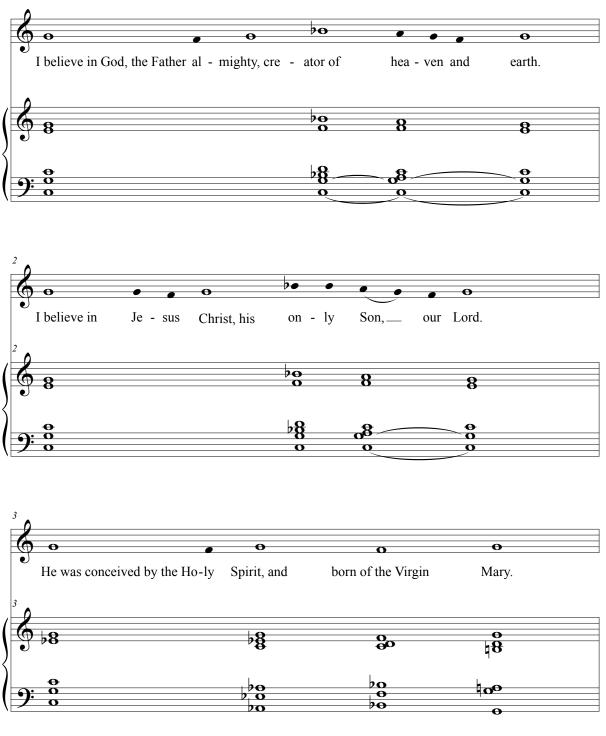




#### Music $\ensuremath{\mathbb{C}}$ 2014 by Bob Moore

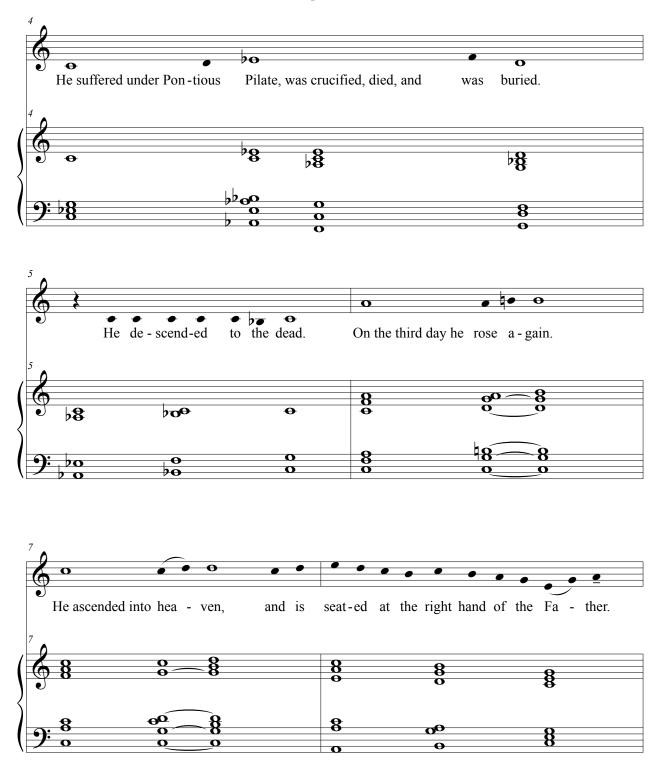
# The Apostles' Creed

Bob Moore

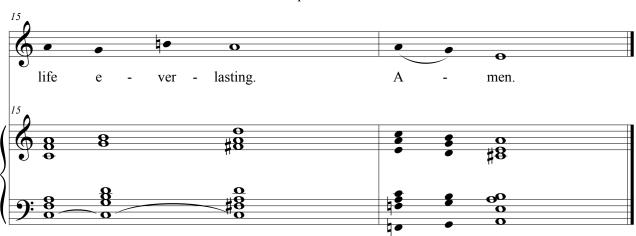


Music  ${\ensuremath{\mathbb C}}$  2014 by Bob Moore

The Apostles' Creed





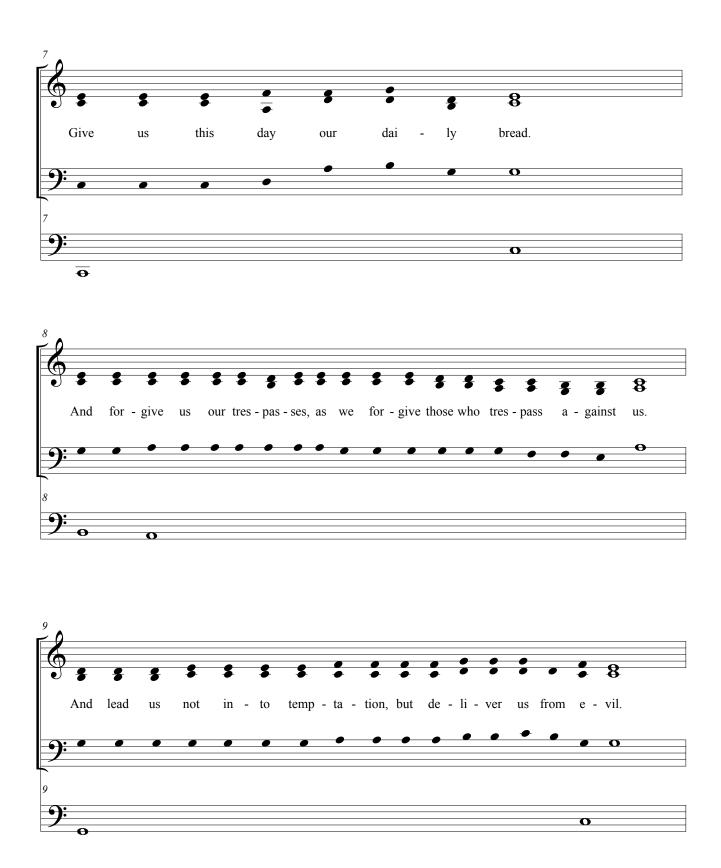


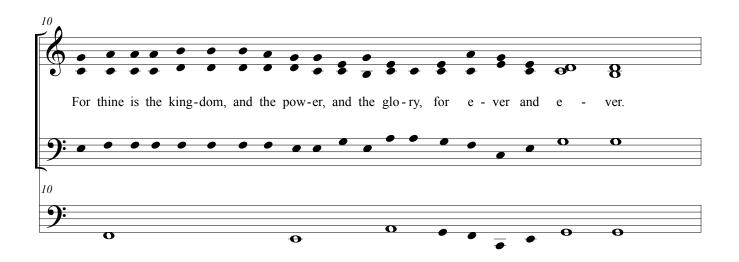
The Apostles' Creed

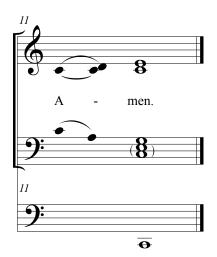
# The Lord's Prayer



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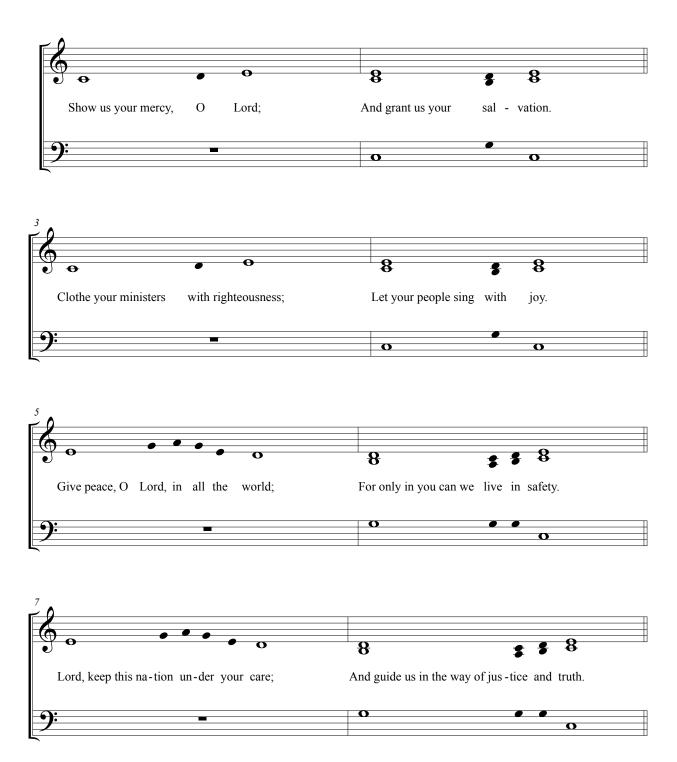






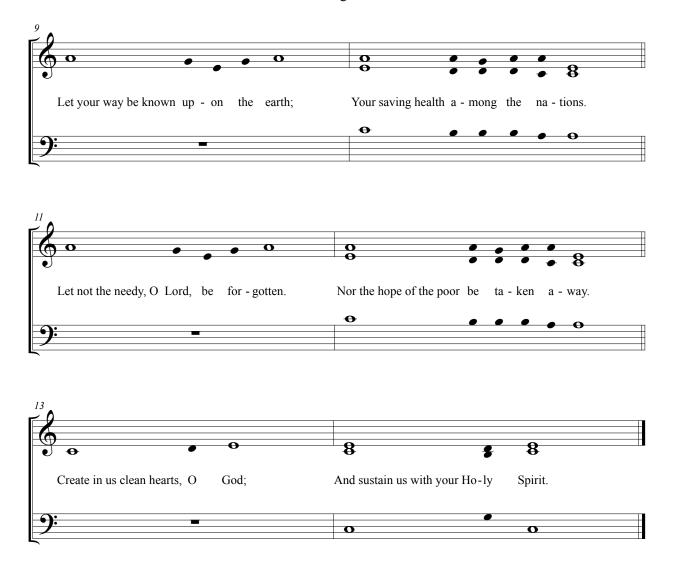
# Suffrages A

Bob Moore



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Suffrages A



# Dismissal

#### Bob Moore



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