

Welcome!

TO THE

Psalms of Praise

celebrating the 147th Anniversary of

First United Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

Xenia, Ohio

November 6, 1994

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Praise the Lord!
Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him
in his mighty firmament!
Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his
surpassing greatness!
Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
Praise him with
tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
Praise him with clanging cymbals;
praise him with
loud clashing cymbals!
Let everything that breathes
praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord!

(Psalm 150, NRSV)

Gregorian Chant: Sanctus
from the *Liber Usualis*

Since the beginning of the church, music has been an important part of worship. The oldest form of music that we can reproduce today is chant. In its purest form, it is sung one note to a syllable. As time went on, it was embellished, and many notes would be sung on one syllable. This music was not sung by the people, but by the priest or a choir.

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus | Holy, Holy, Holy |
| Dominus Deus Sabaoth | Lord God Almighty |
| Pleni sunt coeli et terra | Earth and heaven are full |
| Gloria tua | of the glory of God |
| Osanna in excelsis | Save us, O God! |



A Mighty Fortress, #333
Martin Luther

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theses and started the Protestant Reformation. Up to this time, the participation of the people in the service had been minimal. Luther wanted the service to be conducted in a language the people knew, and he wanted the congregation to participate. Luther said that "Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise". He knew that when we sing we participate in worship, and exemplify the priesthood of all believers.

Luther needed songs for his people to sing, though. He used many sources for his songs. One was the popular songs of the day, from which he took the melody and adapted the words to reflect faith in God.



Old Hundredth, #27 and 40
Genevan Psalter

A later voice in the Reformation was John Calvin. Calvin is known to many for the idea of predestination, but he also made important contributions to music. He lived in Geneva, where at first, no music was allowed in the services. He was exiled, but returned in 1542, when music was permitted. At this time, he assembled the *Genevan Psalter*. To do this, he commissioned composers to write tunes, and poets to take the words of the Bible and adapt them to music.

In England, the Reformation was more political: Henry VIII wanted a divorce which the Pope would not grant. In response, he started his own church. Not everyone was happy with this. A group known as the Puritans looked to the Bible instead of politics to guide them. For a time, they were in control, but became persecuted, and some came to America.

The Pilgrims brought this music with them in 1620. The first book printed in America was the *Bay Psalm Book* of 1640. It had only the words. In the service, the music was "lined out": the leader sang a line, and the congregation repeated it. One of those Psalms is Old Hundredth, based on Psalm 100.



We're Marching to Zion, #475
Isaac Watts

Calvin had arranged for music based on Biblical texts, believing that only the Word of God was worthy of being sung in the services. Isaac Watts (1674-1748), was an English physician who was also not a member of the Church of England. He started to write songs of praise and songs that expressed his feelings about God. In 1707 he published *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*. It had three divisions: scripture songs, divine subjects, and the Lord's supper. He stayed with tunes he knew, so his work often resembles the Psalm songs. He became a pastor in London, but resigned in 1712 to spend time writing. Because the tunes were known and the songs were more personal and expressive, Watts became a popular writer. He wrote about 600 hymns.



O For a Thousand Tongues To Sing, #62
Charles Wesley

The 1730's were a particularly troubled time in England. Widespread industrialization created poverty and broke up families. A priest named John Wesley and his brother started what we call the Wesleyan Revival in the 1730's. John preached and his brother wrote about 6500 hymns.

Wesley was very strong in his belief that Christ died for all people, and carried his ministry to the poorest people in England. As these people sought a better life, they moved to America, and took their practices with them. The "Methodists", as they were called, soon became one of the fastest-growing groups in America.

Wesley regarded the hymnal as a doctrinal statement, and the songs carefully and closely reflected what he believed. And, much like the works of Watts, they touched the hearts of people, and became popular.

When John Wesley was an old man, the colonies became independent. Wesley had opposed the Revolution, but admitted that God had allowed it to happen, so he established a church in the new nation, under the guidance of Francis Asbury.



Amazing Grace, #293
John Newton

Just before the Revolution, America experience the Great Awakening, a revival which stressed individual conversion. This made the songs of Watts popular. Another popular writer was John Newton (1725-1807). Newton was also English. As a young man, he engaged in the slave trade, but was converted after a shipwreck. He gave up the sea life, and was encouraged by the Wesleys. As a result, he was ordained in 1764. In 1779, he printed a hymnal, the *Olney Hymns*, which included several of his own songs, such as this one.



What happened when Africa came to America?

The first slaves had been brought to America in 1619. Slavery had been known throughout the world for centuries, but here it began to take on horrifying aspects. It became racial, and treated its subjects as chattel, as if they were not human.

It is difficult to imagine the world of those new arrivals. They had been kidnapped from their African homes, endured a cramped voyage, were deliberately separated from family and home groups, and then landed in a strange place, and were sold.

In a time when everything is going wrong, the true character of a person is shown. Confronted with such inhumane greed, the African turned to faith. Scholars have long argued over what kind of culture the slaves were able to bring from their homes to America. One thing that is clear is that they brought the practices of their homelands with them. The slaves took their traditions from home, added in the practices of their new homes, and came up with a distinctive form of music.

The owners, of course, attempted to impose their beliefs on the slaves. So they were taken to church services, where they learned the songs of Watts and Wesley, which were probably lined out. The Africans added their tradition that included improvisation, patterns of rhythm, a desire to participate, and expressiveness. They combined all these in a creative fusion.

Working in the fields, their songs told about their life. They affirmed to each other their humanity. And they looked to Jesus, who would bring freedom. The resilience and humanity of these people shows up in the innovative and inventive way they used all these materials. They Jewish exiles in Babylon asked, "How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" (Psalm 137:4). Under bondage and far from home, the slaves not only sang, but brought a style that promises vitality to all who will listen. Their cries of pain can speak to all of us today.

The first man to die in the Revolution was a slave, Crispus Attucks. As a result of this and other examples, many northern states realized that the freedom they fought for should include everyone. Pennsylvania was first, providing for gradual abolition in 1780. The New England states provided for immediate abolition in 1783.

In both north and south, the Methodist church attracted many Blacks. Some of this was because they firmly believed that every person was worth saving. Some was because of the nature of Methodist worship, which included clapping, dancing, and singing.

The Methodists also went to the slaves. Here, the message of solace and hope, which their owners tried to apply to the next world, was freely appropriated for this one. The Methodists were also one of the few churches which allowed Blacks to preach. The first Black man licensed to preach in America, Richard Allen was a Methodist. Francis Asbury was often accompanied by a Black man, Harry Hosier.

It became obvious, though, that freedom in the North did not mean equality. In the South, writers such as Douglass and Dickens tell of how religion had little effect on how the slaves were treated.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church began when Richard Allen was forcibly removed from a church while praying. An important stage of African-American culture and independence was reached when Allen printed a hymnal in 1801. Most of the songs were by Watts and Wesley. As was common, it had only the words. This hymnal went through four editions by 1818, when it had 314 hymns. At this time, it shared 244 hymns with the Methodist hymnal. Only 15 hymns from the first edition remained in it.

All of this shows a change in musical practice, and the 1841 conference of the AME church took notice. It passed a resolution against the use of folk/African music, and publications began to teach how to sing "properly." This was also a time when Black churches began to use choirs, and the struggles over the transition repeated the white experience of a century before. There was also a change from "lining out" to singing by note, which included the use of instruments.

In a world that discriminated against them, Blacks made their churches the center of their social life. This was the first institution which they controlled by themselves. The churches had schools, child care, charity, libraries, recreation, along with musical education. An important role for the church was the singing school, which started in the 1820's. To provide an outlet for this, the sacred concert started. These were common by 1827. The Black church grew at a great rate. In 1800 there were less than 12 in the country, in 1840 there were 16 in Philadelphia.

In the South, a profound change also occurred. In 1793, Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin, which increased the demand for cotton--and slaves. The slave trade was officially abolished in 1808, but it appears that the prohibition was widely flouted. Slavery was an ingrained system, as reflected in the laws of the states. The Black church in the South became an "invisible institution."

Go Tell it on the mountain, #176
We are climbing Jacob's ladder, #428
Traditional African-American Spirituals

The distinctive music that grew out of slavery was the spiritual. It was often improvised or adapted to local conditions. The spiritual is full of what Frederick Douglass called the "prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish". They reflected on the everyday existence in a world that did not admit the singer to humanity. Singing was a way to express the pain, and thus to begin to relieve it. As Douglass also said, "Slaves sing most when they are most unhappy." The slaves interpreted their daily life and added their thoughts to these songs.

The songs also carried messages. The favorite characters of the spirituals are those Biblical figures who struggled for freedom from oppression: Jacob and Daniel; Moses, whose experience in Egypt was paralleled to Pharaoh and the white master; Gabriel, and of course, Jesus. Sometimes these were about faith, sometimes patience. Some carried messages that not all could understand--especially the overseer and master.

Slave life was hard. There was dawn to dusk work, with only Sunday off. Songs became an important part of survival and communication in this kind of life. One could ask for water with a song, one could express feeling, or simply let the others know that they were working in some far corner. All of this helped to pass time in a monotonous job.

The spiritual is the distinctive form and the basis of Black music. It reflects many of the characteristics of their home culture, such as participation, improvisation, expression of feelings.



In 1800, a new phenomenon began in America, the Camp Meeting. The first was at the Gaspar River Presbyterian Church in Logan County, Kentucky, led by James McGready. Lasting from 3 days to a week, they were an outdoor revival service, held in a clearing. Around the clearing were places for cooking, tents, wagons, and horses. Most of the time was spent in prayer, preaching, and singing. Anyone was welcome, no matter what denomination, although the churches generally held their own Sunday meeting for the Lord's Supper. The meetings were interracial, although there is evidence that some were segregated.

At the camp meeting, the singing was as important as preaching. The camp meeting was what really opened Black music development. They sang all night. Not everyone liked it, as one John Watson wrote:

We have too, a growing evil, in the practice of singing...
merry airs, adapted from old songs...the coloured people
get together, and sing for hours together, short scraps of
disjointed affirmations, pledges, or prayers, lengthened
out with long repetition choruses.

The camp meeting spread a chain of revivals through the land. The largest camp meeting was in August 1801 at Cane Ridge, Bourbon County, Kentucky, where Barton Stone was the pastor of the Presbyterian church. As a result of opposition by some other pastors and the synod, he withdrew from the Presbyterians and became associated with a group of independent churches. In 1832, Stone and Alexander Campbell joined together to start what we know today as the Disciples of Christ.

This division over revival, which divided the Presbyterian church, was the beginning of the decline of the camp meetings. People were also becoming less interested in such "ecumenical" meetings. The frontier had moved west, and church buildings were available. The camp meeting moved indoors, becoming more of a week-long revival. The final stroke against them came as Sunday Schools became popular, which can be marked by the founding of the American Sunday School Union in 1824.

An impetus to musical composition came in 1831, when Congress changed the Copyright Act to include music. Spurred by the possibility of making an income, the writing of new hymns grew. At the same time, the Oxford Movement began in England, seeking to find meaning in the older rites of the church. This brought a new interest in older hymns to America; an interest which was aided by the same copyright change: there were no royalty payments required!

The Battle Hymn of the Republic, #74
Julia Ward Howe

The 1830's saw a rapid growth in agitation over slavery. On January 1, 1831, William Lloyd Garrison began to publish the *Public Liberator and Journal of the Times*, in which he promised that "I will not equivocate--I will not excuse--I will not retreat a single inch--AND I WILL BE HEARD." A number of antislavery societies were organized. There were growing numbers of slave revolts, such as Nat Turner's of 1831. As the agitation increased, so did the tension. In 1850, Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. In 1852 Harriet Beecher Stowe published *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which touched the nation like nothing else. In 1857, the Supreme Court decided the Dred Scott case. The nation attempted compromise after compromise as tempers flared. Then, in 1859, John Brown raided Harper's Ferry, hoping to arm slaves for a revolt. The attempt failed, and Brown was hanged. But as Ralph Waldo Emerson said, he made "the gallows as glorious as the cross." In the aftermath, it must have seemed like Judgment Day was at hand. The next year, Abraham Lincoln was elected President, and the nation was soon at war with itself. Out of this came a song, sung to a popular tune:

John Brown's body lies a mouldering in the grave
John Brown's body lies a mouldering in the grave
John Brown's body lies a mouldering in the grave
But his soul goes marching on

to which was added a chorus "Glory, Hallelujah" from the camp meetings. Julia Ward Howe, whose husband had helped John Brown, visited an army camp near Washington late in 1861. After that visit, she said she woke up one night and wrote her poem to fit the same tune. There were a number of other lyrics that were sung to the same tune. One that was popular among the Blacks was:

We are done with hoeing cotton,
we are done with hoeing corn
We are colored Yankee soldiers,
as sure as you are born,
When Massa hears us shouting,
he will think 'tis Gabriel's horn
As we go marching on.



Go Down Moses, United Methodist Hymnal #448
Traditional African-American Spiritual

We can see another example of the African-American gift for adaptation in this song. Half-way through the war, Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. On January 1, 1863, it would free the slaves in the rebelling states. As that midnight and the new year approached, those in a camp in Washington for slaves who escaped north during the war sang this song, "Go down Moses". As the evening celebrations continued, someone improvised another stanza:

Go down, Abraham,
Away down in Dixie's land;
Tell Jeff Davis
to let my people go.

It was the latest in a long series. Coming out of the camp-meeting experience, we find another popular addition to this song:

I'll tell you what I likes de best,
let my people go,
it is the shouting Methodist,
let my people go.



The church assumed a major role in African-American society after the war. The freedmen were now able to "go public" with their songs. In 1866, Fisk University opened. The next year, the student choir began to sing in concerts. In 1871 they went on a national tour. In 1872, they became famous, when, at the World Peace Jubilee, they saved the day by being able to adapt quickly. This group took the name Fisk Jubilee Singers, for the Jubilee of Israel, which they likened to the end of slavery. Within seven years they raised \$150,000, which built Jubilee Hall at Fisk.

An explosion of new churches also followed. In 1865, the Colored Primitive Baptist Church was organized. In 1870, the Colored (now Christian) Methodist Episcopal Church was founded. Then, a new technology brought new possibilities: in 1877, the first practical phonograph was built. It was improved dramatically over the next decades. The first documented recording by a Black artist was made in 1901. In 1902, the Fisk Jubilee Quartet made their first recording.

All The Way My Saviour Leads Me, #375
Fanny Crosby

As cities grew, the churches changed to meet the new needs. The Moody Bible Institute was founded in 1890, but evangelistic crusades dated to the 1870's. At these, the Gospel Song became a popular type of music. e previous forms. It is characterized by an emotional, simple, and evangelistic style, and by a refrain.

The best-known gospel writer was Fanny Crosby (1820-1915), who became blind when she was 6 weeks old. In her mid-40's, she began to write these hymn texts, usually to music that others wrote and played for her. They are intensely personal, often about the paths of life and being blind. Crosby often said that her blindness was a gift from God, for her first sight would be Jesus, who would lead her all the way. One of the last of her more than 8000 hymns was, "Saved by Grace", where she wrote "And I shall see Him face to face."



Nothing Between, #396
Charles A. Tindley

Charles Tindley (1851-1933), had been born in slavery. As often occurred, he was separated from parents (when he was five years old). When he was 17, he learned to read and write. With that knowledge, he completed seminary training by correspondence. To support himself, he became the janitor of Calvary Methodist Church in Philadelphia. In 1902, he became the pastor of that church. The congregation grew rapidly. He preached and wrote about living an holy life. His first hymn collection, *New Songs of Paradise*, was published in 1916. He said these were "popular" songs, for use at informal meetings, not the liturgical service.



Precious Lord, Take my Hand, #374
Thomas Dorsey

Thomas Dorsey (1899-1965) moved to Atlanta in 1910 and to Chicago in 1916. Although he was a familiar sight in churches, he was better known as a jazz musician.

After the 1929 Depression began, he devoted his full attention to religious music. His songs were popular at conventions, and he organized choirs and choral organizations, such as the Chicago Gospel Choral Union, Inc. In 1932, he started the Dorsey House, the first music publisher that printed the music of Black gospel composers.

Also in 1932, while on a trip, Dorsey received word that his wife and son had died in an accident. It was then that he wrote "Precious Lord take my hand." This song was first played at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Chicago. Since then, it has been translated into 50 languages, and was sung at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's funeral by Mahalia Jackson.

Dorsey enjoys another distinction in the history of music: he was the first to charge admission for a gospel concert, at DuSable High School in Chicago.



Lift Every Voice and Sing, United Methodist Hymnal #519
John Rosamond Johnson and James Weldon Johnson

The Johnson brothers, John Rosamond (1873-1954) and James Weldon (1871-1938), formed a well-known team around the turn of the century, which produced two operettas and contributed to several musicals, including "The Shoo-fly Regiment" and "The Red Moon". In addition to writing songs, they also edited 4 collections of Black music.

Their best known song, "Lift Every Voice and Sing", is also known as the "Black National Anthem". While it certainly has roots in the experience of slavery, in a world of increasingly depersonalization, it can speak to all of us. This is the genius of the African-American composer: the pain in which his songs are rooted can tell everyone who cares about others how to join together in the struggle for freedom.



Some books about music

- Blume, Friedrich. 1974. *Protestant Church Music*. New York: Norton. A vast, often technical work, with an extensive bibliography.
- Ellinwood, Leonard. 1970. *The History of American Church Music*. New York: DaCapo. A straightforward, non-technical, and wide-ranging work.
- Grout, Donald. 1973. *A History of Western Music*. New York: Norton. General introduction to musical history, tends to be technical, printed music examples given. New edition now available.
- Hawn, C. Michael. 1992. "A Survey of Trends in recent Protestant Hymnals: African-American Spirituals, Hymns, and Gospel Songs" *The Hymn* 43(1)21-28. Examines ten recent "mainline" hymnals, also has information about supplemental hymnals that focus on African-American music.
- Mapson, J. Wendell Jr. 1984. *The Ministry of Music in the Black Church*. Valley Forge: Judson. Intended for pastors with responsibility but little knowledge of music.
- Osbeck, Kenneth. 1990. *Amazing Grace*. Grand Rapids: Kregel. A series of devotions on hymns, giving background to the composers and works. By the same author: *101 Hymn Stories* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1982) and *101 More Hymn Stories* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1985).
- Reynold, William and Milburn Price. 1987. *A Survey of Christian Hymnody*. Carol Stream: Hope. Just what the title says. About half the book is a collection of hymns. By Southern Baptists, gives more attention to evangelistic aspects.
- Southern, Eileen. 1983. *The Music of Black Americans*. New York: Norton. Completely covers the subject from 1619.