

Worship Service

BY ROBERT B. KRUSCHWITZ

This hymn festival is about the joy and grace of singing our lives before God. With wonderful hymns from Scripture and the great tradition of Christian worship, as well as songs written for this issue of *Christian Reflection*, we celebrate the wonderful story of God's love.

The first verse of "Behold the Glories of the Lamb" frames the service. Composed in about 1688 when Mr. Watts was fourteen, it is the first hymn written in English for public worship. The four stanzas of Mark Hill's new hymn, *Fill This Holy Place with Music*, introduce each part of the service. They may be sung at the appropriate times by a soloist, ensemble, or choir to the vibrant tune RUSTINGTON (see pp. 46-47 in this volume).

Solo (a cappella)

"Behold the Glories of the Lamb"

Behold the glories of the Lamb
amidst his father's throne.
Prepare new honors for his name,
and songs before unknown.

Isaac Watts (c. 1688)

Tune: NEW BRITAIN

Call to Worship: Psalm 96:1-5

Leader: O sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.

**People: Sing to the LORD, bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.**

Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples.

**For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
he is to be revered above all gods.**

For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.

Chiming of the Hour and Silent Meditation

Naught exists without voice:
God hears always in all created things
his echo and his praise.

Angelus Silesius (1624-1677)

Unison Invocation

Creator of heaven and earth,
we lift our hearts to you
that we might adore your beauty and goodness.
Our Rock and Redeemer,
we open our hearts to you
that we might reveal the pain and disorder in our lives.
Giver of all good gifts,
we surrender our hearts to you
that you might bring forth in us the fruit of good works.
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God,
we sing our lives to you
that you might raise us, with all creation,
into your eternal song. Amen.

**FILL THIS HOLY PLACE WITH MUSIC**

*Fill this holy place with music, songs of joy and hymns of praise.
Giving glory, thanks, and honor, joined as one, our anthems raise.
Telling of your might and power, singing of your love and grace,
with the hosts of saints and angels, may your music fill this place.*

Scripture Reading: Psalm 27:1, 4-6

The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?

One thing I asked of the LORD,
that will I seek after:
to live in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the LORD,
and to inquire in his temple.

For he will hide me in his shelter
in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
he will set me high on a rock.

Now my head is lifted up
above my enemies all around me,
and I will offer in his tent
sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

Hymn: "All Creatures of Our God and King" (verses 1, 2, and 7)

All creatures of our God and King,
lift up your voice and with us sing
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thou burning sun with golden beam,
thou silver moon with softer gleam!
O praise him, O praise him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thou rushing wind that art so strong,
ye clouds that sail in Heaven along,
O praise him! Alleluia!
Thou rising morn, in praise rejoice,
ye lights of evening, find a voice!
Refrain

Let all things their Creator bless,
and worship him in humbleness,
O praise him! Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
and praise the Spirit, Three in One!
Refrain

St. Francis of Assisi (c. 1225), translated by William H. Draper (1919)
Tune: LASST UNS ERFREUEN

Hymn: "Hear Our Hearts, O Lord"

Kyle Matthews (2005)
Tune: HEAR OUR HEARTS, O LORD (pp. 54-55 in this volume)



STILL OUR RESTLESS HEARTS WITH MUSIC

*Still our restless hearts with music, calm our fears and soothe our pain.
Though we toil with heavy burdens, may we join the glad refrain.
When our song gives way to silence, may your music peace impart.
Grant us hope and strength and courage. Let your music fill each heart.*

Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 31:30-32:6

Then Moses recited the words of this song...in the hearing of the whole assembly of Israel:

Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak;
let the earth hear the words of my mouth.

May my teaching drop like the rain,
my speech condense like the dew;
like gentle rain on grass,
like showers on new growth.

For I will proclaim the name of the LORD;
ascribe greatness to our God!

The Rock, his work is perfect,
and all his ways are just.
A faithful God, without deceit,
just and upright is he;

yet his degenerate children have dealt falsely with him,
a perverse and crooked generation.

Do you thus repay the LORD,
O foolish and senseless people?
Is not he your father, who created you,
who made you and established you?

Season of Prayer

Almighty God, we come before you, like the people of Israel, having betrayed your love in our thoughts, words, and deeds. We pray silently now, confessing our personal sins and repenting of our rebellion. (*Silent prayers.*)

The institutions where we work, our families, and our community are broken because collectively we have betrayed your love in our thoughts, words, and deeds. We pray silently now, confessing these corporate acts of unfaithfulness and asking that you will restore our broken lives together. (*Silent prayers.*)

Our world is broken because we have betrayed your love in our thoughts, words, and deeds. Each of us selects one part of the world, one troubled nation, one distorted economy, and now intercedes on its behalf. (*Silent prayers.*)

You alone can heal us in spirit, mind, and body. We pray silently now, asking for your healing presence with individuals we know who are struggling with temptation, enduring disease, or facing death. (*Silent prayers.*)

God, because you are the Rock of our salvation, forever faithful in Jesus Christ, and our comfort in the Holy Spirit, we join in the song of the prophet Simeon:

**Lord, you now have set your servant free
to go in peace as you have promised;
for these eyes of mine have seen the Savior,
whom you have prepared for all the world to see:
a Light to enlighten the nations,
and the glory of your people Israel.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.¹**

Hymn: "How Can I Keep From Singing?"

My life flows on in endless song,
above earth's lamentation.
I hear the clear, though far off hymn
that hails a new creation.
*No storm can shake my inmost calm
while to that Rock I'm clinging.
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth,
how can I keep from singing?*

Through all the tumult and the strife,
I hear that music ringing.
It finds an echo in my soul.
How can I keep from singing?
Refrain

What though my joys and comforts die?
 I know my Savior liveth.
 What though the darkness gather round?
 Songs in the night he giveth.

Refrain

The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,
 a fountain ever springing!
 All things are mine since I am his!
 How can I keep from singing?

Refrain

Anonymous 19th Century American
 Tune: ENDLESS SONG

Silent Meditation

Keep praising God with hymns, and meditating continually, and so lighten the burden of the temptations that attack you. A traveler carrying a heavy burden stops from time to time to take deep breaths, and so makes the journey easier and the burden light.

Sayings of the Desert Fathers (fourth century)²



PERMEATE OUR LIVES WITH MUSIC

*Permeate our lives with music, with your song each moment fill.
 Far beyond the benediction, may your music linger still.
 May our hearts and hands and voices, everything we do and say,
 sing your praise through work and service. Let your music fill each day.*

Scripture Reading: Philippians 2:3-11

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

who, though he was in the form of God,
 did not regard equality with God
 as something to be exploited,

but emptied himself,
 taking the form of a slave,
 being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,

so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Hymn: "I Cannot Tell"

I cannot tell why he whom angels worship,
should set his love upon the sons of men,
or why, as Shepherd, he should seek the wanderers,
to bring them back, they know not how or when.
But this I know, that he was born of Mary
when Bethlehem's manger was his only home,
and that he lived at Nazareth and labored,
and so the Savior, Savior of the world is come.

I cannot tell how silently he suffered,
as with his peace he graced this place of tears,
or how his heart upon the cross was broken,
the crown of pain to three and thirty years.
But this I know, he heals the brokenhearted,
and stays our sin, and calms our lurking fear,
and lifts the burden from the heavy laden,
for yet the Savior, Savior of the world is here.

I cannot tell how he will win the nations,
how he will claim his earthly heritage,
how satisfy the needs and aspirations
of east and west, of sinner and of sage.
But this I know, all flesh shall see his glory,
and he shall reap the harvest he has sown,
and some glad day his sun shall shine in splendor
when he the Savior, Savior of the world is known.

I cannot tell how all the lands shall worship,
 when, at his bidding, every storm is stilled,
 or who can say how great the jubilation
 when all the hearts of men with love are filled.
 But this I know, the skies will thrill with rapture,
 and myriad, myriad human voices sing,
 and earth to heaven, and heaven to earth, will answer:
 at last the Savior, Savior of the world is king!

William Y. Fullerton (1929)
 Tune: LONDONDERRY

Hymn: "We Sing"

Mary Louise Bringle (2005)
 Tune: WE SING! (pp. 50-51 in this volume)



LET THE EARTH RESOUND WITH MUSIC

*Let the earth resound with music, highest mountain, deepest sea,
 till all people, all creation, live and sing in harmony.
 We will never cease to praise you, shout with voices clear and strong,
 till all nations bow before you, till the whole world sings your song.*

Scripture Reading: Revelation 15:2-4

And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb:

"Great and amazing are your deeds,
 Lord God the Almighty!
 Just and true are your ways,
 King of the nations!
 Lord, who will not fear
 and glorify your name?
 For you alone are holy.
 All nations will come
 and worship before you,
 for your judgments have been revealed."

Hymn: "Let All the World"

Let all the world in every corner sing:
 my God and King!
The heavens are not too high,
his praise may thither fly;
the earth is not too low,
his praises there may grow.
Let all the world in every corner sing:
 my God and King!

Let all the world in every corner sing:
 my God and King!
The church with psalms must shout,
no door can keep them out;
but, above all, the heart
must bear the longest part.
Let all the world in every corner sing:
 my God and King!

George Herbert (1633)
Tune: ALL THE WORLD

Silent Reflection

Created anew in him and made perfect in a more plentiful grace,
 we shall see in that eternal rest that it is he who is God,
 he with whom we shall be filled....
That day will be our eternal Sunday....
There we shall be in peace and we shall see.
 We shall see and we shall love.
 We shall love and we shall worship.

Augustine of Hippo (354-430)

Solo reprise (a cappella)

Behold the glories of the Lamb
amidst his father's throne.
Prepare new honors for his name,
and songs before unknown.

Benediction

Almighty and ever living God,
finish then thy new creation,
pure and spotless let it be;
let us see thy great salvation,
perfectly restored in thee:
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee
lost in wonder, love, and praise.³

NOTES

1 In the unison response, which is the daily evening prayer from *The Book of Common Prayer* (1979), the first part is adapted from the song of Simeon in Luke 2:29-32. The elderly prophet recognized the completeness of God's saving activity in Jesus Christ, and all who lay their pain and confess their sin before God have a share in Simeon's joyful song.

2 Benedicta Ward, trans., *The Desert Fathers: Sayings of the Early Christian Monks* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 65.

3 Based on Charles Wesley, "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" (1747), verse 4.



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