



# Treasury

of PSALMS and HYMNS

## Mission

At this stage of history, Christian congregational song is a vast, dazzling treasure trove of gold, silver and precious stones. We encounter a **Feast of Abundance and Delight**, a cataract of waters wholesome and sweet. Tens of thousands of astonishingly good tunes and texts, provide enough material for many volumes.

This is our heritage.

Therefore, congregational repertoire should have a high “wow” quotient. I want to recapture and recreate the awe I had in first exploring the *Oxford Book of Carols* (1928), *New Harmonia Sacra* (1980), *Cantus Christi* (2002), *Mennonite Hymnal* (1969) and *English Hymnal* (1933). “Unbelievable! I had no idea you could do that in a hymnal.”

How can this great wealth be presented in a manageable and useful volume? Every hymnal editor wrestles with this, and every preface declares, “Music must be singable and memorable, lyrics must be sound and well-written, and the two must match.” But we would go further: music must be stunning, lyrics must be striking, and they must illumine each other like a bolt of lightning. We must have choice fruits, new and old, a fullness of joy inexpressible, full of glory, presented in good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over.

Singing through *Treasury* should be like a cathedral tour: with beauty and delight so overwhelming, one risks “cathedral fatigue”. There must be nothing forgettable. Every selection must delight us.

## Methods

- **Psalm-heavy lyrics.** Every Psalm is represented at least twice and usually three times. But the hymn section is strongly Psalm-influenced as well, expressing a huge variety of emotions and topics. Length varies from short to very long. And they are not afraid to name names.

- **All the hard edges.** Paths well-trodden and paths obscure. Older forms of text and tunes beside new and recent compositions. Startling phrases which invite deeper consideration. Language exactly as “inclusive” as Scripture. Psalm texts showing the rich variety of Psalm treatments in the last half-millennium. Hymn texts you can’t believe you haven’t heard. Additional stanzas you didn’t know existed. Awe, excitement, anger and celebration, lament and peace, praise and exhortation, the future and the past, quiet and fierce, brisk and grave.

- **Hundreds of familiar tunes and settings.** Americans with a hymn-singing background will find sufficient familiar material, with no need to explore further.

- **Optimized for congregations.** Instruments and choirs can expand and enrich this material, but each setting was designed for the enthusiastic untrained singer.

- **Density.** The weight of the book and fullness of each page depict a table groaning under a rich feast.

- **One text per tune, one tune per text.** Text/tune associations are valuable, useful and good. We would preserve and increase such pairings.

- **SATB with guitar chords where possible.** The four-independent-part format is foundational to many musical traditions, concisely presents a wealth of musical information, and adapts to presentations simple and complex. Many instrumentalists use guitar chord notation, and it does not distract those who do not.

- **Multiple traditions.** Many songs have never before appeared outside their tradition of origin. While most strongly influenced by the English Reformed tradition, much is from Lutheran, Evangelical, Mennonite, Roman Catholic, Moravian, American folk hymn, Welsh, Scottish, Russian, Hungarian, African-American and Icelandic origin, among others. Anglican chant and British cathedral music appears beside sea shanties and gospel songs.

- **Recordings and digital sheets available for all selections.** Contact the editor for more information.

Despite exceptions and inconsistencies, this is our standard. We hope this hymnal will spread the vision and others will surpass our work. Please contact us through [treasuryofpsalmsandhymns.com](http://treasuryofpsalmsandhymns.com).

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