

## Music Notes for February 11, 2024

Today is the last Sunday after Epiphany, on which we celebrate the feast of the Transfiguration. In addition, during the month of February, some of the music selections at each service will be reflective of Black History Month.

The service music during the Epiphany season includes the Presentation Hymn, each week a different stanza of the hymn "Christ, be our light" (listen [here](#)), the Sanctus by Joel Martinson (listen [here](#)), and the Fraction Anthem (my composition, listen [here](#)).

The Psalms during Epiphany will be sung using the Hymntune Psalter. Each week the Psalm Antiphon is set to a tune of a different familiar hymn and the choir sings the verses from the St. Helena Psalter to a coordinating psalm tone. The Antiphon for the last Sunday after Epiphany is set to the tune "Leoni," which appears as hymn 401 in the Hymnal 1982, set to the text, "The God of Abraham Praise. The tune was written by Myer Lyon (better known by his stage name, Michael Leoni) who was a chorister at the Great Synagogue, Duke's Place, London, and a public singer either at Drury Lane or Covent Garden. Subsequently he became the first qualified chazan (cantor) of the English and German Synagogue in Kingston, Jamaica.

Today's prelude, "Maestoso," is a stirring piece which was originally an improvisation by Aaron David Miller, music director at House of Hope Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis, MN. Miller is a well-known master improviser. Last summer he led a hymn festival as part of the North Shore Regional Convention of the American Guild of Organists at St. Luke's in Evanston.

The anthem is one of the great pieces of choral literature, "Christ, whose glory fills the skies," by Thomas Frederick Handel Candlyn (he had to be a musician with a name like that!). Candlyn (1892-1964) was born in England but spent much of his career as the Organist and Choirmaster of St. Thomas Episcopal Church on Fifth Avenue in New York City. The anthem today is one of the true gems of the short choral anthem repertoire.

The postlude, "Strengthened With All Might," was written in July 2023 by the young English organist and composer, Ben Matson. It is based on a text from the first chapter of Colossians, "...that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power." Attesting to the power of technology in today's world, Ben is an active YouTuber, and he posts many videos demonstrating organs from the many parish churches of Wiltshire. In addition, this composition was written as part of a competition run by another organ YouTube channel, "Beauty in Sound."

The communion hymn, "Hallelujah, we sing your praises," is a traditional South African tune. It reflects the wide variety in the tradition represented by Black churches today.