

Music Notes for January 28, 2024

Today is the fourth Sunday after Epiphany.

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 fourth Sunday after Epiphany is set to the tune “Picardy,” which appears as hymn 324 in the Hymnal 1982, set to the text, “Let all mortal flesh keep silence.”

The prelude and postlude today are compositions by J. William Greene, Organist-Choirmaster at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, in Lynchburg, VA. Greene holds the Doctor of Musical Arts degree and Performers Certificate from the Eastman School of Music. He also studied harpsichord with the early music expert Gustav Leonhardt at the Sweelinck Conservatorium Amsterdam. He has more than 100 choral and organ compositions appearing in the catalogs of many of today’s top publishers.

The opening hymn is the German chorale, “Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier.” The translation is based on the work of Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878), who was well-known for her English translations of German hymns. Even though these translations are often slightly modified today, they continue to be used because they are extremely well-polished while remaining true to the original intent. The sequence hymn, “Silence, frenzied, unclean spirit,” was written in 1984 as a direct reflection of today’s Gospel text. The author, Thomas Troeger, as a professor at Yale Divinity School who was ordained in the Presbyterian Church in 1970. He was also ordained as an Episcopal priest in 1999 and remained affiliated with both Christian traditions.

Today’s anthem is “Covenant of Thy Steadfast Love,” by Robert Powell. It’s a short, lyrical anthem based on a text from II Chronicles 6:14, 20, in Powell’s masterful style. Born in 1932 in Mississippi, Powell has been an active composer since 1968 with over 300 compositions to his credit. He was the music director at Christ Episcopal Church in Greenville, SC, for 35 years.