

Music Notes for May 5, 2024

The service music during the Easter season includes the Presentation Hymn (Alleluia, give thanks to the Risen Lord), the Sanctus by William Mathias (1934-1992) and the Fraction Anthem ("The disciples knew the Lord Jesus") by Mark Sedio (b. 1954). Mathias was born in Wales and was a musical prodigy who began playing the piano at age 3 and composing at age 5. He has an extraordinarily large musical output has written works for choir, organ, and orchestra, including symphonies and operas. His anthem "Let the people praise thee" was written for the wedding of Charles and Diana in 1981 and was televised to an audience of over 1 billion people. The Sanctus is from the "Communion Service Series III," published in 1976. Sedio is Director of Music at Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis and also serves on the music staff at Luther Seminary in Saint Paul.

The Psalms during Eastertide will be sung using settings that were composed by Peter Hallock, longtime organist and music director of St. Mark's Cathedral in Seattle, WA.

Today is the sixth Sunday of Easter. The prelude is a selection of four hymn interpretations by David Cherwien. Cherwien is the Cantor at Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Minneapolis and has more than 150 published organ and choral works. The hymn tunes featured in the prelude are Humbly I adore thee, Fairest Lord Jesus, Come let us feast, and People of God; the last piece in the set is a variation on today's opening hymn.

The opening hymn is "People of God," which is a text written in 2003 by Patricia Blaze Clark (1938-2009). She was born and raised in Pennsylvania in the Roman Catholic tradition and spent eleven years as a member of a Religious Congregation of Sisters. She became a member of the Episcopal Church and began writing hymn texts while in seminary and later attended a hymn-writing workshop at St. Olaf College. The hymn is sung to the tune "Earth and All Stars," which was written in 1968 by David N. Johnson (1922-1987) for the hymn of the same name. A personal note: David was on the faculty of Arizona State University and was one of my organ teachers during my college years in Arizona.

The anthem today, sung by our new children's choir, is "I believe, I do believe," by John Ylvisaker (1937-2017). Ylvisaker has been called the godfather of Lutheran folk music, a steampunk ethnomusicologist, a legend in community song-leading in the lineage of Pete Seeger and a trailblazer for 21st-century church musicians. He was born in North Dakota and spent much of his life in Minnesota.

The communion hymn is "Jesus calls us here to meet him," written by Graham Maule and John Bell in 1989 for the Iona Community in Scotland. It is sung today to the tune "Beach Spring," composed by Benjamin F. White and published in the "Sacred Harp" collection in 1844.

The closing hymn is "Source and Sovereign, Rock and Cloud," written in 1987 by Thomas H. Troeger (1945-2022). Troeger was ordained in the Presbyterian church in 1970 and in the Episcopal church in 1999, and was a long-time professor of Christian Communication at Yale

Divinity School. The hymn extols the many names that we know God by, names that are descriptive of God's omnipresence in our lives. The hymn is sung to the tune, Arfon. Arfon was originally a six-phrase Welsh folk tune in minor tonality entitled 'Tros y Garreg.'" Named for a district on the mainland of northern Wales, the tune was published in Edward Jones's "Relicks of the Welsh Bards" (1784). The version of the tune we are singing today is set in major tonality (G major rather than G minor).

Today's postlude is entitled "Dance," reflecting the refrain of our opening hymn today, "Come, let us join in the heavenly dance, praising in joyous celebration." The piece was composed by Ian Higginson (b. 1959), a British composer of many organ and choral works.