



## Morrison Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

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August 2, 2009  
9<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
Rick Loppnow

### **Six Centuries of Glorifying God in Music**

A Hymn-Sing based on the favorite hymns of Morrison Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church as selected on July 26, 2009

On July 26 those who attended worship were invited to write down on a sheet of paper their two favorite hymns. Fifty six different hymns received votes. The top 13 hymns will be used today as the basis of our worship.

The hymns selected as the favorite of our members will be sung in the order in which they were written. This assortment of hymns crosses at least six centuries of Christian Worship. They come from many different countries and from various backgrounds. One constant through the various types of hymns, written at many varied times and places, is that they all focus us upon our God and his Word. Times may change, musical styles will change, yet through it all God's love for us in Jesus gives each of us a reason to lift our voices in praise to glorify the one who loved us first.

***A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*** CW 200      written by Martin Luther in 1527-29

*A Mighty Fortress*, which finished tied for twelfth place, was written by Martin Luther.

Scholars are uncertain whether Luther wrote this hymn in 1527, 1528, or 1529. There is no doubt that Luther found great comfort in this hymn. When he would become discouraged he would often invite his friends to sing it for courage and strength. He also apparently sang it regularly while he was sheltered in at the Coburg Castle.

The hymn is based on Psalm 46. Listen to selected verses of the psalm and then consider them again as we sing the hymn.

#### **Psalm 46**

God is our refuge and strength,  
    an ever-present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way  
    and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,  
though its waters roar and foam  
    and the mountains quake with their surging.  
The LORD Almighty is with us;  
    the God of Jacob is our fortress.

**Beautiful Savior** CW 369

written in 1677?

*Beautiful Savior* finished tied for ninth in the congregation voting. The author is unknown

This hymn has been called a “Crusaders’ Hymn from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, sung by the Crusaders upon the Way to Jerusalem” but there is no evidence to support this claim. The earliest printed source of the hymn comes from a German Catholic hymnal published in 1677. Portions of the hymn were found in earlier manuscripts as well.

The imagery in verse 3 that Jesus shines brighter and being purer than anything in nature brings to mind the account of Jesus’ transfiguration. We read the account from Mark.

**Mark 9:2-4**

After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

**Amazing Grace** CW 379

written by John Newton in 1779

*Amazing Grace* received the most votes in the congregation voting.

As a younger man John Newton was a seaman involved in the slave trade. He lived the life of a man of the seas without much concern for God. That changed after a near shipwreck. Newton began to read about the life of Christ. Later he became an Anglican minister. He began to use simple hymns instead of psalms in worship. When enough hymns could not be found he wrote his own, including *Amazing Grace*.

Newton deeply appreciated God’s grace in view of his early life. Shortly before his death at the age of 82, he is quoted as saying with a loud voice during a sermon, “My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things: That I am a great sinner and that Christ is a great Savior!”

**Ephesians 2:8,9**

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

**Just As I Am, without One Plea** CW 397

written by Catherine Elliot in 1834

*Just As I Am* finished in eleventh place.

Catherine Elliot was bed ridden when she wrote this hymn. She struggled with feelings of uselessness because she could not serve God in the way she wanted. A doctor once told her, “You must come to Christ as you are.” Apparently these words led her to write this popular hymn. A family friend describes how she overcame her despair at feelings of uselessness by focusing, not on her emotions, but on her Savior, his power, and his promises.

**I John 4:10**

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

***Abide With Me* CW 588**

written by Henry Francis Lyte in 1847

*Abide With Me* finished tied for twelfth. The author is Henry Francis Lyte.

This hymn is often placed in the "Evening" section of hymnals. However, it is essentially a plea for the Lord's help and a prayer for the close of life itself. Tradition has that Lyte walked out to the cliffs one evening and watched the sunset. He was reminded of Luke 24:29, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." Combining this inspiration with the sense of his own impending death, he wrote *Abide With Me*. Lyte died in 1847.

***What A Friend We Have In Jesus* CW 411** written by Joseph Scriven in 1855

*What A Friend We Have In Jesus* finished in fourth place in congregation voting.

Joseph Scriven wrote this hymn about 1855 while he was living near Port Hope, Ontario. He wrote it as a poem to comfort his mother in her anxiety. She was living in Ireland. Within a few years it appeared anonymously in different collections of hymns. It was not until the year of his death, 1886, that Scriven was revealed as the author. A friend was visiting him in his illness and came upon a manuscript of the hymn. After being asked about it, Scriven revealed that he had written it for his mother in her distress and had not intended anyone else to see it.

**Proverbs 18:24**

A man of many companions may come to ruin,  
but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

***Savior Again to Thy Dear Name* CW 321** written by John Ellerton in 1866

*Savior Again to Thy Dear Name* finished in seventh place in congregation voting.

John Ellerton was serving a congregation in Brighton, England when he wrote this hymn. It was originally composed as the closing hymn of the annual festival of a Choral Association of that year. He wrote the hymn on the back of his previous Sunday's sermon. The final verse was sung at his funeral.

**2 Thessalonians 3:15**

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way.

***How Great Thou Art* CW 256**

written by Carl. Boberg in 1885

*How Great Thou Art* finished in fifth place in congregation voting.

This hymn was originally written as a poem by Carl Boberg, a Swedish pastor, in 1885. The romanticized tradition is that Boberg was inspired to write the poem after a visit to an estate on the southeast coast of Sweden. He was suddenly caught in a thunderstorm with awe-inspiring moments of lightning and thunder, followed by a clear, brilliant sun. Soon afterward he heard the sweet songs of the birds in nearby trees. The experience prompted him to write the poem. It was soon forgotten. Several years later he was surprised to hear a congregation sing his poem to an old Swedish melody.

**Psalm 145:2,3**

Every day I will praise you  
and extol your name for ever and ever.  
Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;  
his greatness no one can fathom.

***Glorious In Majesty* CW 496**

written by Jeff Cothran in 1972

*Glorious in Majesty* finished in sixth place.

Jeff Cothran wrote this hymn in 1972. He paired it with a Jewish melody, *Shibboleth Basadeh*, from the 1940s. Cothran wrote the setting that we use. Verse one of the hymn reminds us who Jesus is. Verse two tells us what he did. Verse 3 guides us in living in Christian love in response to Jesus' love for us. All this is done in short, concise poetry that comes alive when paired with the melody.

**Philippians 2:13**

For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

***On Eagle's Wings* CW 440**

written by Michael Joncas in 1978

*On Eagles Wings* finished in third place.

Michael Joncas wrote this hymn in 1978. It was first published in *Glory and Praise* a year later. Joncas wrote the composition after he called upon a friend who, during his visit, received a call that his father had suffered a fatal heart attack. He then sang it for the first time, with guitar accompaniment, at the visitation service.

**Psalm 91**

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High  
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.  
I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress,  
my God, in whom I trust."

***Go, My Children, With My Blessing* CW 332** written by Jaroslav Vajda in 1983

*Go, My Children, With My Blessing* finished tied for ninth place.

In 1983, Concordia Publishing House asked Jaroslav Vajda to write a text to make use of the tune that accompanies this hymn. To set this "benediction" apart from other versifications, Vajda placed the words of the blessing into the mouth of the Triune God, who is dismissing the congregation after worship while reviewing the events that had transpired during the service.

***The Lamb* CWS 714**

written by Gerald Coleman in 1987

*The Lamb* finished in eighth place in congregational voting.

Gerald Coleman wrote this hymn in 1987. The hymn moves from Isaac's question, "Father, where's the sacrifice?" to the answer that Jesus is the sacrifice that takes away the sins of all

people. The hymn is placed in the “Lent” season of the supplement, yet the final verse contains a triumphant proclamation of Jesus’ resurrection and the desire that all come to know the Lamb.

**Psalm 91**

In a loud voice they sang:

"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,  
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength  
and honor and glory and praise!"

***In Christ Alone* CWS 742** written by Keith Getty and Stuart Townend in 2002

*In Christ Alone* finished in second place.

Written in 2002, *In Christ Alone* was a collaborative effort between Stuart Townend and fellow songwriter Keith Getty. “The song came about in an unusual way,” Townend explains. “Keith and I met in the autumn of 2000 at a worship event, and we resolved to try to work together on some songs. A few weeks later Keith sent some melody ideas, and the first one on the CD was a magnificent, haunting melody that I loved, and immediately started writing down some lyrical ideas on what I felt should be a timeless theme commensurate with the melody. So the theme of the life, death, resurrection of Christ, and the implications of that for us just began to tumble out, and when we got together later on to fine tune it, we felt we had encapsulated what we wanted to say.” Townend and Getty both admit they are motivated by the idea of capturing biblical truth in songs and hymns that will not only cause people to express their worship in church, but will build them up in their Christian lives.

**Acts 4:12**

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.