

the chorister

RESOURCES FOR MUSIC MINISTRY

April/May 2017

Volume 68 | Issue 6

Choristers Guild Institute VIII 2016 in Wingate, NC



PLUS:

4 FUNCTIONS OF
A CHURCH CHOIR

by Brian Hehn

CHORAL WARM-UPS YOUR
SINGERS WILL LOVE

by Patty Nelson

HYMN STUDY

by Betsy Henderson





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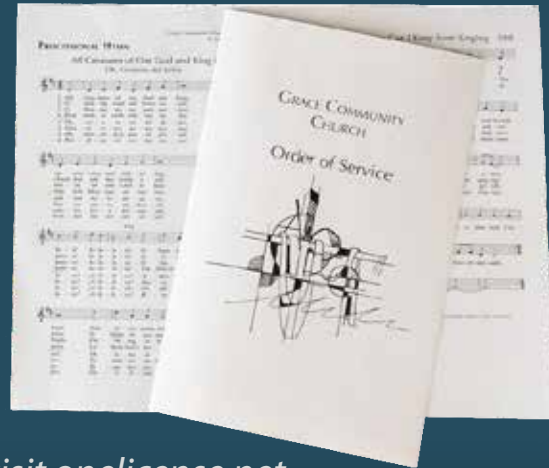
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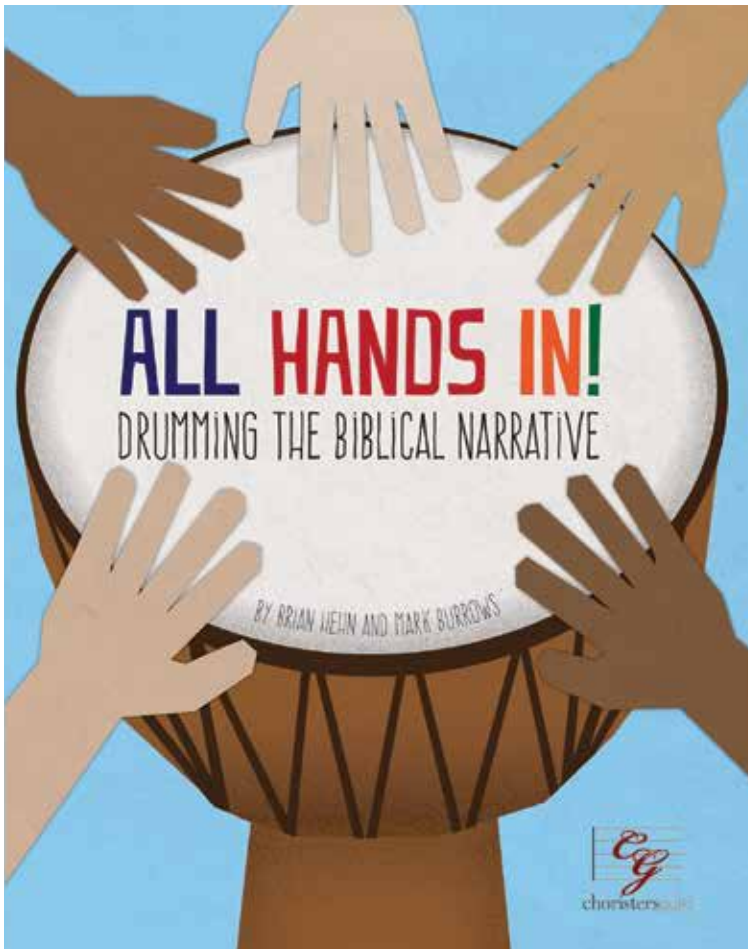
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From the Editor

Why do we so often celebrate birthdays and anniversaries as big milestone events when they end in 0 or 5?

Glenn and I celebrated one such anniversary last year, and we both have celebrated milestone birthdays this year. Why do we wait for the BIG events before we celebrate? A friend recently lost his wife of 23 years. I bet he wishes they had celebrated BIG every single one of those years. I remember a close family member passing away at age 89. Sadly we were planning a big party for number 90. Are not even the smallest milestones cause for celebration?

In my faith tradition, Sunday is our chosen day to gather in worship. Sunday was selected because of Jesus' resurrection on the first day of the week. We teach our children that every week is a celebration of that most sacred event; we can experience a little bit of Easter each Sunday. Sadly, many Christians neglect weekly corporate worship, waiting for the milestone, the big event – Easter Sunday. How exciting to see the big crowds with ushers bringing in extra chairs each Easter! Then comes the Sunday after...just another Sunday. The challenge is to keep the celebration ongoing for worshippers and worship planners alike. We can't make people come, but we can make it our priority to plan each week as if it is the big event. We can treat every rehearsal as urgently important. Every week is a celebration, and the Guest of Honor is there every time.

In this issue of the Chorister:

- We celebrate the Choristers Guild Institute with a special article by a CGI graduate, Whitney Page.
- The anthem feature will help you prepare to celebrate Mother's Day in only a few short weeks.
- We celebrate Four Functions of a Church Choir by Brian Hehn.
- Fun choral warm-ups from Patty Nelson will keep you and your choir kids celebrating each week.
- Betsy Henderson helps us to continue celebrating hymnody.
- We celebrate the contributors who help keep the mission of Choristers Guild alive.
- Finally, we celebrate the friendship and leadership of our friend and Executive Director, Jim Rindelaub, as he leaves Choristers Guild for other pursuits. I will miss Jim tremendously - as will all of us in the greater Choristers Guild family. Thanks for your dedicated service, dear friend!

In case you haven't figured it out, I believe in celebrations!

Keep singing
the song!
-Susan



From the Sacred Choral Editor

My first experience with Choristers Guild was a summer director's enrichment conference held at St. Olaf College (Northfield, MN). At the time, I was the director of music for an ELCA congregation in Iowa and had received a postcard advertising the conference. I thought, *Why not? I haven't had any in-depth courses on children's choirs...it will probably be fun.*

That was the understatement of the summer.

It was fun, yes. But here was my biggest takeaway: after spending two days learning from Vicki Hancock Wright and networking with the incredible children's choir directors of the Twin Cities, I realized I was leading children like I would lead adults. I wasn't living up to my potential as a children's choir director, and I certainly wasn't helping the children realize their potential as musicians. I came away with refocused energy – with a wealth of knowledge – with a plan – and with an amazing sense of community.

(Also worth noting that I met my future boss at this conference, when I purchased an armload of invaluable CG resources! Hi, Jim!)

Two summers later, I would return to the CG director's enrichment conference at St. Olaf with clinician Terry Taylor. Perhaps you've sung one of Terry's anthems – CGA1474 Sing We Nowell, CGA1135 Bethlehem Night, or CGA1326 I'm Gonna Sing *with* Over My Head. Maybe your church uses Growing in Grace, the choir curriculum Terry develops with his team. Perhaps you were even sitting beside me at St. Olaf that summer. (Hi, Cory!) An expert on developing children's voices, a talented composer, and an all-around fantastic human being, Terry inspired and challenged us to become even better at our craft. "Because it's worth it," I remember him saying. "You are worth it. The children are worth it."

This *Chorister* issue celebrates the Choristers Guild community and the wealth of learning that happens at the Choristers Guild Institute. (The CGI Helen Kemp lecturer for 2017 just happens to be Terry Taylor. Hi, Terry!) I hope you find inspiration throughout these pages to reach higher... to learn more... to try new things. Why did the founders of Choristers Guild choose to put *inspiration and support for directors* at the heart of our mission? Because they believed you are worth it. All of us at CG firmly believe that.

It all starts with one step. Take the leap and register for CGI. Grab the initiative and attend your local CG chapter meeting. Get involved and join the discussion on CG's FB page. After all, we all become better when we learn from one other.

#worthit
-Katie



From the Executive Director

THANK YOU FOR YOUR MINISTRY AND YOUR SUPPORT!

Dear Choristers Guild friends. The journey I have been on with you the past 13 years has truly been marvelous, eventful, exciting, challenging, fulfilling and very meaningful. The work you do to nurture the spiritual and musical growth of children and youth is so important to our young people, to the church and to the future of worship. As a lifelong church musician myself, serving as your executive director has truly been my greatest honor. I will be completing this work in mid-April in order to assume the executive director responsibilities for the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians.

Many things have taken on a bit of a different look at Choristers Guild since my arrival January 1, 2004, including my hairline (surely nothing to do with Choristers Guild)! Note the pictures for your amusement.

Over the years Choristers Guild has been blessed with as fine a board of directors as you could ever hope for and a wonderfully gifted staff. Many important staff members have gone on to important positions of leadership in the church and music worlds. Those staff members currently dedicating their time and talents to the Choristers Guild mission are such a blessing to all of us. Our church and school choral publications, handbell publications and this journal are guided and produced by a wonderful editorial staff made up of Katie Houts, Kathy Lowrie, Mary Lynn Lightfoot and Susan Eernisse. Our educational offerings coordinated by Karol Kimmell, Chris Nemecek and Ellen Yost are always mountain top experiences. Our office staff of Mary Anna Salo, Liann Harris, Kent Jin, Sarah Allsup, Joanie Williams and Lan He make sure hundreds of thousands of music copies, resources, contracts and permissions annually are where they need to be when they need to be there. It has been a privilege to partner with these gifted people!

Thank you so much for all of your support and most especially for all you are doing in your churches. Please always continue being a Choristers Guild member, purchasing Choristers Guild music and resources, attending webinars and the Institute and contributing to our mission. I will enjoy watching you and the great things you do from the perspective of being another Choristers Guild member. Always know you serve an extremely important role in the church and the church is deeply grateful for all you do.

With gratitude for your
ministry and your support.
-Jim Rindelaub



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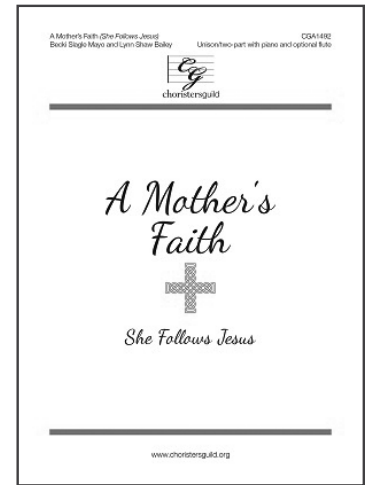
FROM THE CHORISTERS GUILD CATALOG

A MOTHER'S FAITH

by *Becki Slagle Mayo and Lynn Shaw Bailey* | CGA1492 |

Unison/two part with piano and optional flute

USES & TIPS BY KATIE HOUTS AND SUSAN EERNISSE



ANTHEM DESCRIPTION

Mother's Day falls during an excellent time of year for children's choirs in the church. It's May, so you've had a few months of rehearsals under your belts. The spring energy gives choir rehearsals a reboot after Lent. As your choir season wraps up, Mother's Day might even signal your end-of-the-year celebration. On the surface, Mother's Day seems like an easy Sunday for which to program music; this holiday, though, requires pastoral sensitivity. Family units are diverse, and our choristers experience a wide array of mothering influences. Thankfully, our music is adapting to reflect this reality.

The anthem celebrates all who have been a mothering presence in our lives. Lynn Shaw Bailey's poignant text honors the beautiful, strong qualities of motherhood: tenderness, humbleness, servanthood, boldness, laughter, steady hands, and more. Hearing children list these unique abilities is powerful! The melody has an endearing quality, inviting listeners to simply receive this gift of song.

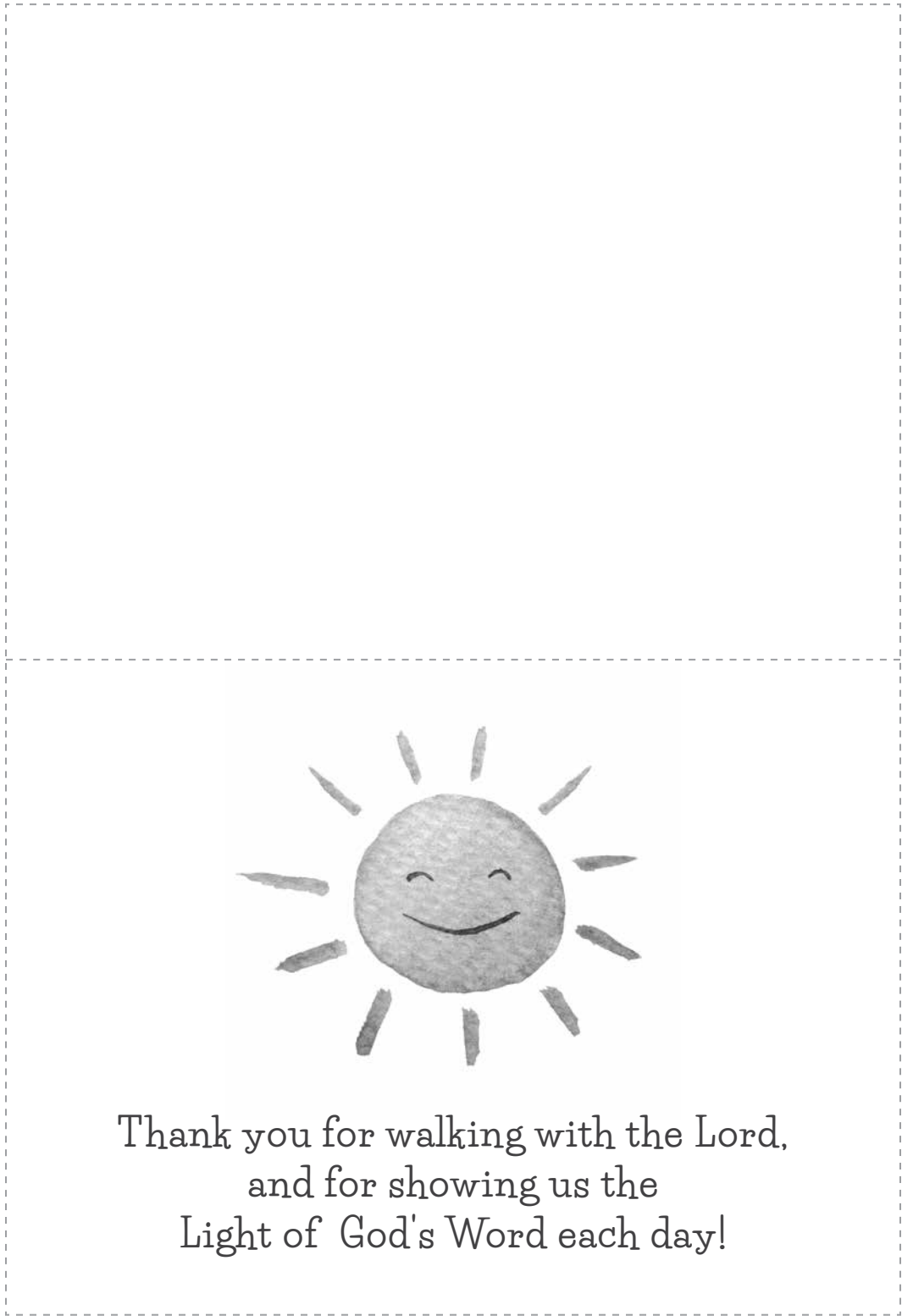
TEACHING TIPS

Your choir may reflect a variety of issues regarding parents. In my own choirs I know of children who have lost parents by death, children in foster care who may have experienced parental abuse or neglect, adopted children, children of blended families, and more. Take this opportunity to invite your Children's Minister or Senior Pastor (someone who knows the families of your church well) to visit choir and sensitively affirm all children in their diverse family settings. Give the visiting minister a copy of the anthem and a recording to listen to before their visit. The minister can actually be the one to introduce the anthem to your singers as they discuss the meaning of the text as it relates to the group.

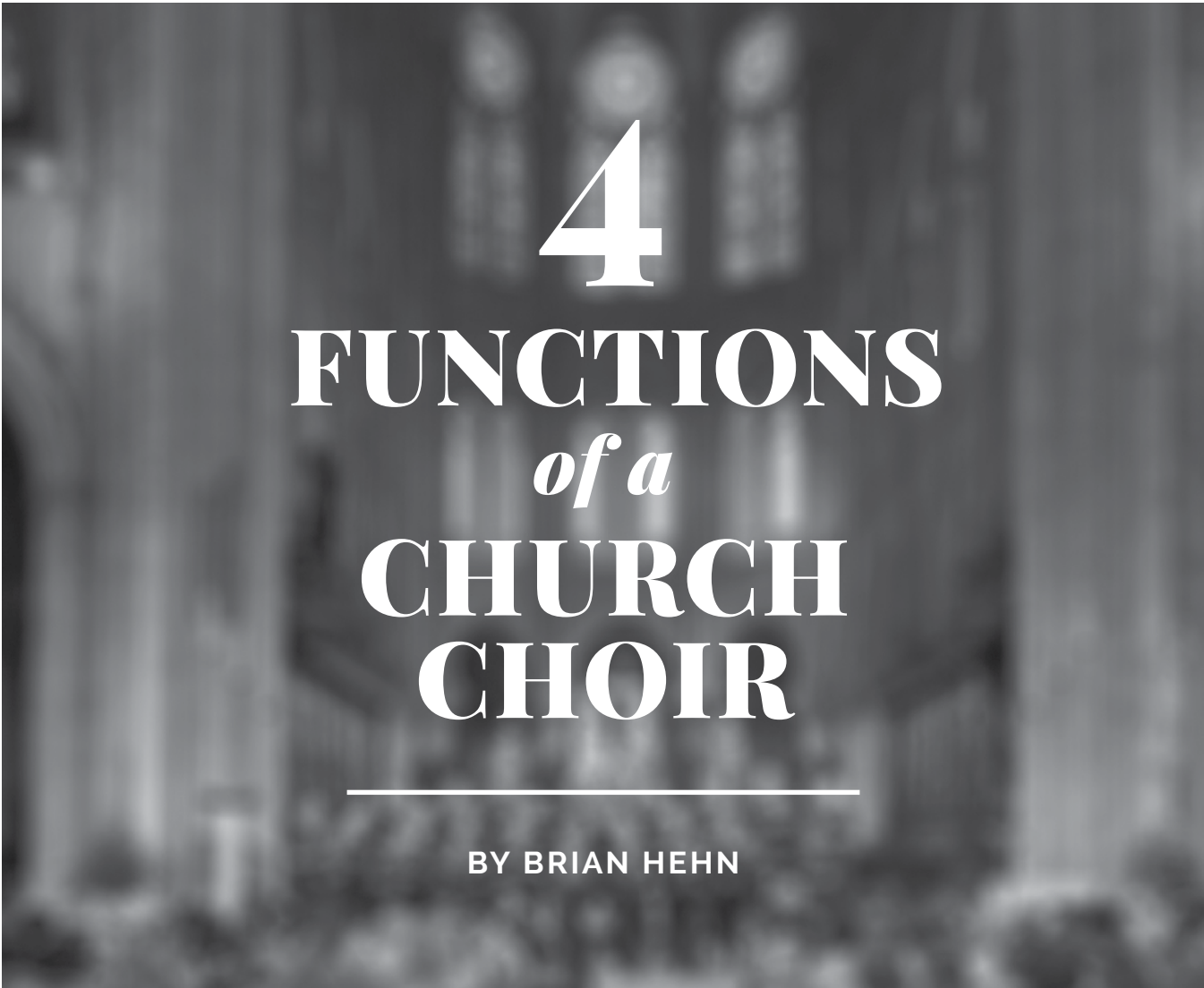
This is a good opportunity to combine your older and younger children. Teach all the children the melody throughout the anthem, but teach the older children the optional Part II beginning at page 9. This will allow those younger singers to experience harmony, and provide a bit more challenge for the older singers. If the TRUST AND OBEY tune is in your hymnal, take the opportunity to introduce your singers to the entire hymn tune, and perhaps practice some hymn skills at the same time: using the INDEX OF TUNES, naming the hymn writer (words), composer (music), and more.

Make copies of page 8 and have children write notes of thanks to "mother figures" in your congregation who have been strong influences in their lives or who serve faithfully in the work of the church and community.

NOTE: You could also use the reproducible notecard any time throughout the year to affirm other groups or individuals in your congregation.



FOLD HERE



4 FUNCTIONS *of a* CHURCH CHOIR

BY BRIAN HEHN

Since starting at my current church, the choir has rallied behind four “functions” of a church choir and has been central in helping Arapaho UMC become what song-enliveners affectionately call a “singing congregation.” As the director of a church choir I use four functions to explain why the church choir exists. Those priorities help determine the programmatic choices that our music ministry makes. The functions are in a specific priority order, but I also believe each function is equally important as they must be present to have a vital music ministry. The four functions are to lead and enliven the congregation’s song, to sing music that the congregation cannot, to serve as a small-group within the church for faith formation, and to sing beautiful and challenging music to glorify God and to edify the congregation.

1 The church choir leads and enlivens the congregation's song

This may come as a surprise to some readers that the first and most important function of the church choir is to lead the congregation's song. It is important, however, that this be the top priority. Let's not forget that without a congregation, there could not be a church choir! The singing group would instead be a community choir. But why is it important that the congregation's song be supported instead of just focusing on the church choir's musical success? Choral musicians inherently know the answer. We become what we sing. When we take words and put them to music, it becomes part of who we are. Therefore, it becomes imperative that we put as much of the Word into the bodies of the congregation as possible. If the congregation can sing it but we don't let them, we miss an opportunity to transform people's lives in the most direct way possible. By giving the congregation new singing skills and confidence, we empower them for the rest of their lives to better embody God's Word through music.

Therefore, taking our cue from the great church musician John Ferguson, it is important to view the congregation as the "big choir," and the church choir as the "little choir," or as I like to think of it, my chamber group. I often utilize my choir as "section leaders," positioning them around the congregation strategically to support the parts that I'm teaching for a congregational hymn or song. I have the choir stand in front of the congregation to lead them in rounds and canons. They become active leaders in building up the congregation's song. By doing this, the congregation is prepared for discipleship through the soul-embracing power of song.

2 The church choir sings music that the congregation cannot

Let's be real. There's lots of great music that needs to be sung that just cannot reasonably be done by a congregation. Whether it's too complex to be done by untrained musicians, or just too difficult to be done without extensive rehearsal, there's a lot of music that cannot or should not be done by a congregation. That's why this function is number two on the list. There are some texts set to challenging music that congregations need to hear, whether it's because it is comforting in times of crises, praising in times of joy, or inspiring in times of apathy. By spending the time and effort to rehearse each week, the choir provides a great service to the congregation by opening up the amount of literature the congregation can be exposed to. Used appropriately, this has significant theological and musical implications, broadening the congregation's experience of the divine.

3 The church choir serves as a small-group within the church for faith formation

I imagine that we all have stories about our choral groups taking care of each other or holding someone up in a time of need. When we sing together, a bond is created that unites us unlike any other activity. In a church setting, this function can be intentionally formed and nurtured. Because we meet together once a week to do work for the Glory of God and benefit of neighbor, taking care of each other is no longer an option, it's a responsibility. As the leader of this small-group, a church choir director's job is no longer limited to musical direction, but also spiritual direction. This doesn't mean you're responsible for giving a sermon each week or listening to people's confessions, but it does mean that you are charged with ensuring your group enacts the Word you sing week in and week out.

A great example of this is the familiar latin text “ubi caritas,” something that most church choirs have sung at one time or another:

Where charity and love are, God is there. Christ's love has gathered us into one. Let us rejoice and be pleased in Him. Let us fear, and let us love the living God. And may we love each other with a sincere heart.

Because we sing this text often as a biblical witness to the congregation, I expect my singers to treat each other with “charity and love.” I expect them to act like “Christ’s love has gathered us into one.” What I find is that my expectations are almost always met because the majority of my singers have been singing their faith for decades and have already been formed by the church’s song. I also always hold myself to the same standard, striving to be an example of showing love and charity while seeking musical excellence. By expecting myself and my choir to act out what we sing, the choir naturally takes care of each other. I rarely have to ask for food to be brought or people to be prayed for because before I can bring it up someone from the group has already asked for it to be done by their fellow choir members. It’s a witness that is refreshing to see each and every year I direct.

4 The church choir sings beautiful and challenging music to praise God and edify the congregation

The music that we create should be beautiful and challenging. This is where the majority of our rehearsal time is taken up, because singing challenging music beautifully is difficult to do and takes lots of practice. It is important that when we sing we sing beautifully, because it touches people’s souls. The reason that we work so hard to create beautiful music together is so that we can glorify God and help people experience a holy moment. On the opposite end of the spectrum, it is important that our singing is not outrageously bad because it can be distracting and therefore prevent people from having a holy moment. I find that one of the best motivations for my choir when rehearsal is getting into the nitty-gritty, is to say something like, “This is a moment where we can touch someone and help them have a moment with God.” Reminding the choir that by changing these little musical details can make the difference in someone’s spiritual life goes a long way to power through tough rehearsal moments. It is important, however, that the first three priorities in this article are not forgotten when digging deeper and deeper into the rehearsal process to try and achieve our most beautiful sounds. A church choir’s job is not just to sing beautifully, but rather it is to minister to the congregation and to each other in a variety of ways, helping to change the world into a more loving and peaceful place.

By taking these four functions and letting them guide your program’s decision making, you ensure that the choir serves as a conduit of faith for both your congregation and choir members. By telling your choristers that this is what and why they do what they do, it gives them a framework to express the importance of the church choir and be an advocate for music ministry. Most importantly, I hope that these four functions can enliven your congregation’s singing through the faithful discipleship of your church choir members.



Brian Hehn is the Director of The Center for Congregational Song, which is a new resource and education center by The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada that will launch in October 2017. He received his Bachelor of Music Education from Wingate University, his Master of Sacred Music from Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, and is certified in children’s church music (K-12) by Choristers Guild. Brian is active as a drumming clinician, worship leader, and song enlivener across the U.S. and Canada for many different denominations as well as ecumenical gathers. He has articles published on sacred music and congregational song in multiple journals and co-authored the book **All Hands In: Drumming the Biblical Narrative**, published by Choristers Guild. While working for The Hymn Society, he is also Associate Music Minister at Prince of Peace Catholic Community of Plano, Texas, and adjunct professor of church music at Wingate University in Wingate, North Carolina. Brian lives in Dallas, Texas, with his wife, Eve, and son, Jakob.

When Morning Gilds the Skies

A Hymn Study for Young Choristers

BY BETSY HENDERSON

Hymn Writer: (anonymous) from 1774
Katholisches Gesangbuch, German hymnal;
Translated into English in 1854 by Edward
Caswell and in 1899 by Robert Bridges

Composer: Joseph Barnby (music), 1868

Hymn Tune: LAUDES DOMINI

Metric Structure: 666.666 (number of syllables per phrase)



FACT FINDER:

This text titled "*Beim fruhen Morgenlicht*", first appeared in a German hymn book and later in a Roman Catholic hymnal in 1828. It is reported that this widely sung hymn appears in approximately six hundred and twenty-two hymnals world-wide.

CLAIM TO FAME:

Edward Caswell, a Roman Catholic priest, was the son of an Anglican clergyman. As an over-zealous translator, he created twenty-eight additional verses (fourteen doubles) for the hymn. Resulting in varied standard verses in numerous editions, Robert Bridges also contributed his work as a translator.

Setting the words to music became the project of Joseph Barnby, who was an English organist and choir-master. He was knighted in 1892 by Queen Victoria for musical achievement.

GAME PLAN:

The phrase, "May Jesus Christ be praised", is the strong recurring theme, tying the variants together. The structure is divided into two halves with each half ending with this resounding praise theme.

Activity:

- Read aloud all the stanzas to find specific times suggested for giving praise.
(when morning gilds the skies, at work and at prayer, when night becomes day, etc.)
- List these on the board or on chart paper.

WORD PLAY:

Used as an introit, call to worship or opening hymn, the inspirational dynamic of this text is a powerful message of exaltation.

Activity:

- Share the definition of unfamiliar words from the hymn to enhance the message, adding other words as needed from the edition of choice:

- *bliss* – complete happiness (*in heaven's eternal **bliss***)
- *canticle* – a liturgical song (*this **canticle** divine*)
- *chant* – to celebrate in song (*this sweet **chant** we hear*)
- *concord* – a state of agreement or harmony (*in this your **concord** find*)
- *repair* – to come together (*to Jesus I **repair***)
- *strain* – a passage of musical expression (*the loveliest **strain** is this*)

- Compare the rhythm of the phrase, "May Jesus Christ be praised", as it appears twice in each stanza: (*first time in measures 5-6*) quarter/ quarter, quarter, dotted quarter, eighth /dotted half (*second time in measures 11-13*) quarter/ half, half / half, half/ dotted half

(*first time*) 'May/ Je - sus Christ be /praised'
 (*rhythm*) ta/ ta ta ta-a ti /too-oo **or** toom

(*second time*) 'May/ Je - sus /Christ be /praised'
 (*rhythm*) ta / too too / too too /too-oo **or** toom

- Tap and say the text words for both phrases above in rhythm, then clap and say both phrases in rhythm language.
- Clap and sing both phrases in rhythm.

BONUS:

Determine how many beats make up the first phrase in measures 5-6 (8) and the second in measures 11-13 (12) with pick-up beats.

TREASURE HUNT:

In preparation for singing this hymn, take time to locate these important musical clues.

Activity:

- Count the number of measures in one verse of the hymn. (13)
- Notice that each phrase starts with an anacrusis (*on the fourth beat of a measure instead of the downbeat*). List the words in the first stanza that start phrases on the fourth beat. (*When, my, May, a-like, to, May*)
- Determine how many phrases end with a dotted half note in order to give full value in singing. (5)
- Find the measure and word containing a melodic note that changes pitch. (*measure two on the word 'skies'*)

BONUS:

Find the measure and word on a note that is an octave higher than the first pitch of the hymn.
(measure three on the 'ing' of awaking)

MELODIC MAPPING:

Recognizing likenesses and differences in the melody will help ensure proper tuning and vocal expression of the line.

Activity:

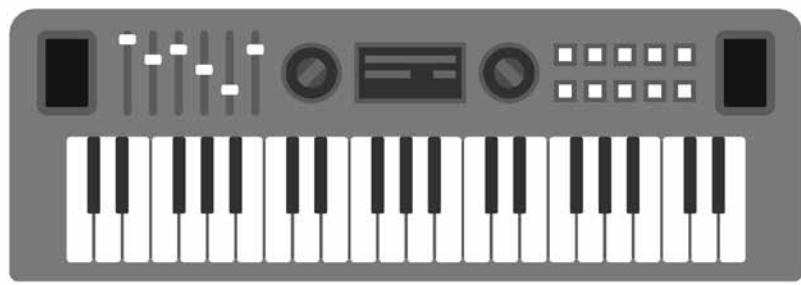
- Find and sing measures that are melodically identical. *(7-8 and 9-10 with pick-up beats)*
- Determine the melodic direction of measures 1-4 *(ascending)*, 5-6 *(descending)* and 11-13 *(ascending)* by singing these phrases using hand contouring.

BONUS:

- Sing the alto part on the final phrase *(measures 11 – 13 with pick-up beat)* after determining the solfege pitches of both melody and alto parts in the Key of C Major.

<i>(melody)</i>	<i>May / Je - sus /Christ be /praised</i>
<i>(solfege)</i>	<i>sol / sol do' / do' re' / do'</i>
<i>(absolutes)</i>	<i>G / G C' / C' D' / C'</i>
<i>(alto)</i>	<i>May / Je - sus /Christ be /praised</i>
<i>(solfege)</i>	<i>fa / mi-fa sol / fa fa / mi</i>
<i>(absolutes)</i>	<i>F / E-F G / F F / E</i>

- Have volunteers play the absolute pitches of these measures for both parts separately in rhythm, then together on a keyboard or barred instrument.
- Sing all verses of the hymn, dividing into two parts for the last phrase.
- Have volunteers play pitched instruments on these melody and harmony parts as the hymn is sung.



WORTH REPEATING:

Isolating a pattern and repeating its particular rhythm creates a rhythmic ostinato to perform with the singing.

Activity:

- Practice saying the first repeated phrase in measures 5-6 with the pick-up beat in rhythm as the ostinato:

"May Je - sus Christ Be Praised"

- Select an ensemble to perform this ostinato during the singing of a stanza of the hymn by speaking and tapping in rhythm throughout.

BONUS:

- Add body percussion to the ostinato phrase as spoken and repeated:

"May Je - sus Christ Be Praised"
(ex.) stamp pat pat clap clap snap

Incorporate unpitched percussion instruments into the phrase:

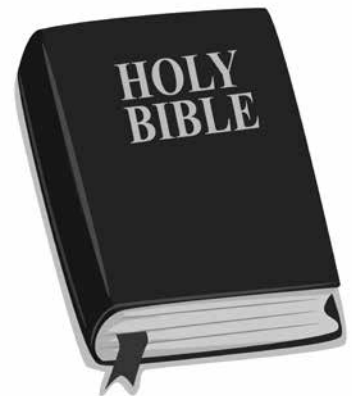
"May Je - sus Christ be praised"
(ex.) drum tambourine claves claves finger cymbals

THE BIBLE TELLS US SO:

The theme behind the writing of this hymn is the often quoted scripture from Psalm 113:3. *"From the rising of the sun to its going down, the Lord's name is to be praised."* (NKJV)

Activity:

- For a time of personal reflection and devotion, read this verse silently and give praise to God for the wonders and blessings He has given you.
- For a group experience, use the following Activity as a model speech/vocal piece in worship.



Betsy Henderson is currently the Children's Music Coordinator at First United Methodist Church in Garland, Texas, and is the former Fine Arts Coordinator for Garland ISD. Betsy has served as elementary state chairman for both Texas Music Educators Association and Texas Choral Directors Association, receiving TCDA's Choral Excellence Award in 2006. She was on the authorship team for two international music textbook series, *Share the Music* and *Spotlight on Music* for Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Company as well as the sole author of teacher resources published by Hal Leonard Corporation. She is a co-author of *Praise Takes Flight* (CGBK68), a resource book for children's choir directors, published by Choristers Guild.

WHEN MORNING GILDS THE SKIES

WORSHIP LEADING ACTIVITY

Teaching Instructions



RESOURCES:

"May Jesus Christ Be Praised" hymn, stanzas one and four

Scripture reference: Psalm 113:1 – 3 (NKJV)

FORMATION:

Arrange the performers in two rows, divided into two equal groups, either front to back or down the center.

MOVEMENT: *(assigned as desired)*

Praise (d) = rapidly clap three times at shoulder level softly

Jesus Christ = touch middle finger to the palm of alternate hands

Lord = touch a right hand 'L' shape to left shoulder, then lower to right side of waist

Name = tap two fingers of the left hand on two fingers of the right hand twice, palms facing

PERCUSSION: (optional)

Praise = hand drum

Jesus Christ = finger cymbals

Lord = tambourine

May Jesus Christ Be Praised = triangle roll or wind chime

For further enrichment and meaning – plan a multigenerational hymn project! Choristers Guild has a brand new festival arrangement of *When Morning Gilds the Skies* for intergenerational choirs by Mark Patterson.

CGA1519 | *When Morning Gilds the Skies* | Mark Patterson | SATB and unison choir with piano and optional brass quartet, timpani, and congregation | \$2.35

CGRP46 | Reproducible Instrumental Parts | \$15.95

CHORISTERS' REPRODUCIBLE PAGE

WHEN MORNING GILDS THE SKIES

WORSHIP LEADING ACTIVITY



INTRODUCTION: *(play the last phrase of the hymn for pitch and tempo)*

SINGERS: *(accompanied or a cappella)*

Solo 1: WHEN MORNING GILDS THE SKIES,

Solo 2: MY HEART AWAKENING CRIES,

All: MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED.

SPEAKERS:

Group 1: PRAISE THE LORD!

Group 2: PRAISE O SERVANTS OF THE LORD!

All: PRAISE THE NAME OF THE LORD!

SINGERS: *(following a bell chord for pitch)*

Ensemble 1: ALIKE AT WORK AND PRAYER,

Ensemble 2: TO JESUS I REPAIR.

All: MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED.

SPEAKERS:

Group 1: BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD

Group 2: FROM THIS TIME FORTH AND FOREVERMORE.

SINGERS: *(following bell chord)*

Group 2: BE THIS WHILE LIFE IS MINE,

Group 1: MY CANTICLE DIVINE.

All: MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED.

SPEAKERS:

Solo 3: FROM THE RISING OF THE SUN TO THE GOING DOWN,

Solo 4: THE LORD'S NAME IS TO BE PRAISED.

SINGERS: *(following bell chord)*

All: BE THIS TH' ETERNAL SONG, THROUGH ALL THE AGES LONG,

All: MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED!

Congregation: Joins in the singing of the hymn with accompaniment

Choral Warm-ups Your Singers Will Love

BY DR. PATTY K. NELSON



Choral warm-ups are essential to a good choir rehearsal. However, children often find choral warm ups boring, or unrelated to the current anthem selections. Without careful selection, the warm-ups can set a low energy tone, rather than building energy and enthusiasm. Warm-ups with a children's choir or youth choir can also serve as rehearsal breaks or energizers. As a young choir member, I generally hated warm ups. I never really saw the point. As a trained educator, I now see the value of warm-ups, but seek to make them fun and practical – the tone setter for the rehearsal to follow.

I conduct a community children's choir which has students in grades four through eight. We meet at 5:00 in the afternoon, so the students have been in school all day. They arrive for rehearsal physically tired and mentally drained. I need to make sure that I prepare them for an energized and fun rehearsal. When working with students if they are not having fun, they will soon not come to this extracurricular choir. The following are my favorite warm up activities which are practical fun, and effective. I find there are three basic areas my group needs to warm up: body, vocal tone, and pronunciation/articulation.

BODY/WARM-UPS

Countdown

I must give credit to a former student, Courtney Cook Willingham, Rome, GA for this body warm-up.

- Start by raising one hand in the air and shaking it while counting to eight, you then do the same with the other hand, then one foot then the other.
- Repeat this immediately, but count to seven for each limb.
- Continue to repeat the activity, reducing the number by one, each time.
- I have found the students love this, causes a lot of giggling and brings the energy of the group up.

(Caution: try to keep them from shouting. There is a tendency as the exercise moves along, the volume increases.)

Slide Whistle Movements

Another good body warm up involves a slide whistle.

- Play the slide whistle.
- Have choir members follow the melodic shape of the sound with their bodies.

When I introduce this activity, children usually only use their knees to move up and down. I remind them they have arms and feet, and usually that gets my point across. They move up and down often getting on their tip toes and even lying down on the floor. My students love this and it is a great energy booster.

Roly-Poly Shoulders

Shoulder rolls are another good warm up. Have the students roll both shoulders forward and backward and then try to roll them in opposite directions. Follow these with head rolls. These should start by dropping the head to the chest then GENTLY rolling from side to side and then all the way around. I love this because it stretches out the neck and feels great. Since the vocal mechanism involves the neck, it is important for the muscles of the neck to be relaxed.

Following shoulder rolls I work on proper alignment. I have the students raise their shoulders to their ears, pull back as far as possible, and then simply drop shoulders down – not slouching. We then shake our hands to be sure we are relaxed. We usually do this three or four times.



VOCAL TONE WARM-UPS

Sirens

Siren sounds are a great way to warm up the voice, and they are fun to do. There are a number of ways to do this. I usually have a group use their hands when doing this to give them a kinesthetic way to show what their voice is doing. I also use my slide whistle having the group echo what the slide whistle does. You can also move your hand, a scarf, a ribbon, or flashlight to demonstrate movements for the singers to imitate vocally. For extra fun, allow group members to take turns leading this warm-up.

Rollercoasters

Rollercoasters are just another way to do sirens that kids love. You can draw them on the white board or on chart paper. You can also create these with chenille stems. For a larger visual, use pool noodle pieces connected with PVC plumbing elbows. (I got this tip from Susan Eernisse, editor of *The Chorister*). Allow your ensemble members to create shapes to sing. This gives them ownership in the learning process. Each member of the ensemble can create just one section of the rollercoaster and then they can be arranged/rearranged in endless ways, creating many variations of rollercoasters to sing.

Tuning Fork

Most volunteer choirs have uncertain singers whether your ensemble is full of children, adults, or teens. I use a tuning fork to help with this during warm ups. You can generally get a small one for under \$10. Mine is a standard A440 tuning fork. I activate it by knocking it on a book and then give it resonance by putting the ball on the end on the same book. I ask my choir to "oo" this note. They continue doing this for about 2 minutes taking a breath as needed. I then use my hand to move the pitch up and down always coming back to our A440. I also have my group stand in a circle around me. This allows them to hear each other better and work on their tone and their vowel unification.

As an aside, there are several ways to get the tone in the ear of your ensemble. You can also activate the tuning fork and then hold it close to the ear of each member asking them to hold the tone in their head until everyone has heard it. They then have to all come in on the right tone. My group's favorite way is for them to each take their pointer finger and push in the cartilage of their ear. I then activate the tuning fork and put the ball on the elbow of each person's arm while they are pushing in their ear cartilage. They can hear the tone in their ear. It's really cool and then we do the same thing where they have to hold the tone in their head until everyone has heard it.

PRONUNCIATION/ARTICULATION

Sol Fa Mi Re Do

Pronunciation includes both vowels and consonants. Unified vowels help to create a beautiful choral tone. (NOTE: Living in the south, and being endowed with a beautiful Ft. Worth, Texas, accent, please know I am not making fun of anyone. I personally know the struggle to produce those unified vowels.) Doing the standard *sol-fa-mi-re-do* warm-up on various vowels is fine but boring, especially if your group has no idea why you are doing it. I like to take things out of our repertoire and make sure my group knows where it came from as we do it. An example is from my group's final piece for each concert which is *Dona Nobis Pacem*. These Latin vowels are good exercises and require much effort to create a beautiful sound. I use the *sol-fa-mi-re-do* warm up with vowels from this song. The first one is *Oh Ah Oh Ah Oh* concentrating on a unified vowel shape and sound. I then do *Oh EE Oh EE Oh*, and finally *Ah Eh Ah Eh Ah*. When we later rehearse the piece, I remind the choir of the warm-up. This can be done with any song and provides a practical connection to the anthem literature you will be rehearsing.

Props and Visuals

Good vowels need lots of space in the mouth and throat. I need to give credit to my friend Stacy Porter, Keller, Texas, for these two ideas. She often warms up her junior high choir by having them do the above exercise on an Ah pretending they have a light bulb in their mouths. She usually brings a light bulb to choir to show them. Another of her ideas is a tennis ball. She has sliced it open part of the way and put a face on it. She then has them do the exercise matching the mouth shape of the tennis ball. You can also have a classroom set of these and have the students shaped the mouth for themselves.

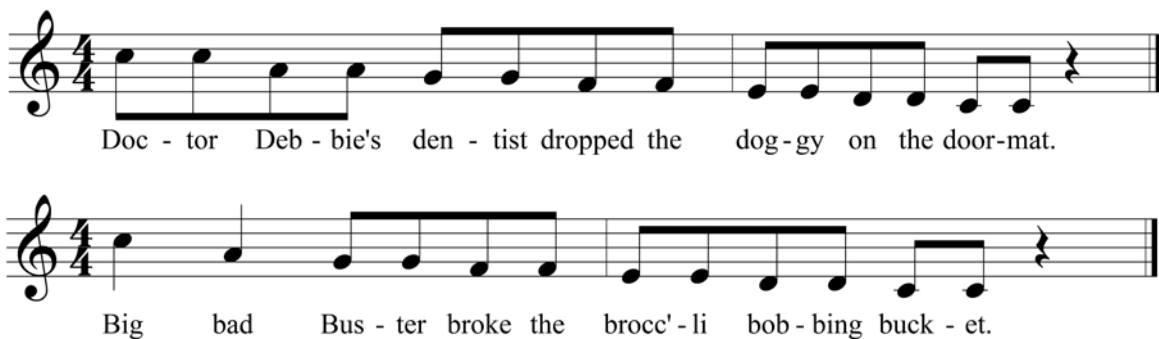
Shooting Hoops

My last vowel idea comes from Dr. Stefanie Cash, Berry College, Rome, GA. She uses the illusion of basketball movements. She has her students pantomime bouncing the ball on Ah, Eh, EE, Oh, and then throw the imaginary ball at the basket on OOO. She uses one pitch for the first four vowels and then has the students move their voices up and down to follow the arc of the ball for OO. You could put a small basketball hoop at the front of your rehearsal space to give them a direction to toss. Use the hoop throughout the rehearsal to remind your singers to arc phrases, or as a visual to project sound.

Tongue Twisters

Consonants can be trouble. Tongue twisters are fun and can help with articulating consonants correctly. I have several favorites, but the best ones are the ones the children helped create. We decided which consonants needed the most work in our songs, and the group worked together to suggest words to form tongue twisters which then became warm-ups.

Here are some examples from my choir using a descending melodic pattern:



Doc - tor Deb - bie's den - tist dropped the dog - gy on the door - mat.

Big bad Bus - ter broke the brocc' - li bob - bing buck - et.

This is certainly not an exhaustive list of warm-ups, just some of my favorites. Remember, your warm-ups set the tone for your entire rehearsal. They also provide time to work on problem areas in your repertoire by isolating issues. If you want your rehearsal to be energized, productive, and fun, your warm up time must be the same.



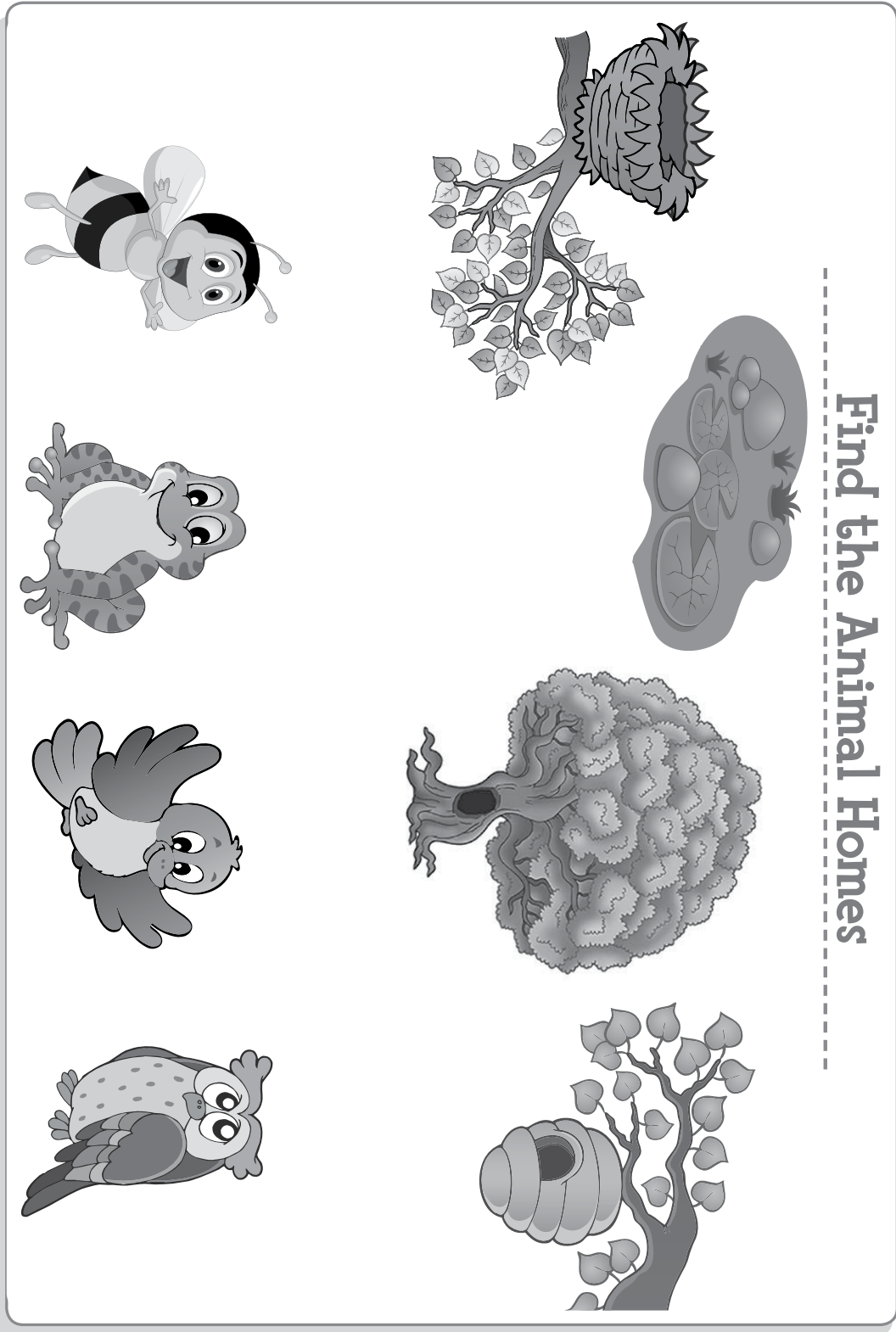
Patty K. Nelson is the Director of Music Education and Assistant Professor of Music at Shorter University. Patty is Orff certified, has completed Kodaly Level I, and holds a BA in Piano from Trinity University, a MM in Church Music from Southwestern Theological Seminary, and an Ed.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from Baylor University. She currently works weekly with a homeschool general music class and directs the Rome Children's Choir. Patty is the organist at New Armuchee Baptist Church.

KIDPAGE

Preschool



Find the Animal Homes



Find the Animal Homes KIDPage (Session 9)

Be Strong in the Lord Spring—Preschool © 2016 Celebrating Grace, Inc. All rights reserved.

Find the Animal Homes

PLANNING AHEAD

- Make a copy of Find the Animal Homes KIDPage for each child.
- Gather pencils or crayons.

GUIDING CHILDREN

- Distribute KIDPages.
- Teach the following song. As you sing, have children point to the appropriate animal. At the end of each stanza, have them trace a line with their finger to the appropriate home.



- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Lit - tle bird has lost his way. | } Lis - ten and you'll hear him say, |
| 2. Lit - tle owl has lost his way. | |
| 3. Lit - tle bee has lost his way. | |
| 4. Lit - tle frog has lost his way. | |



"Show me the way, show me the way, Show me the way to find my home."

Words and Music by Carol H. Dickerson. © 2016 Celebrating Grace Music, a division of Celebrating Grace, Inc. All rights reserved.

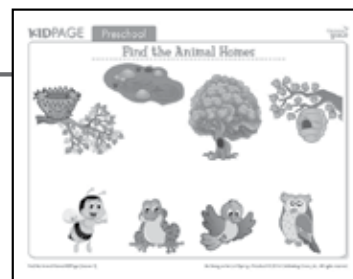
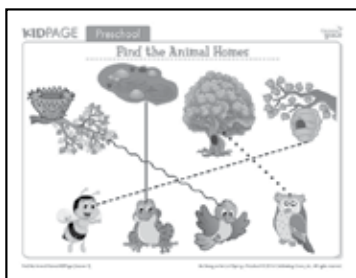
- Distribute pencils and crayons.
- Have children draw a line from each animal to the appropriate home.

EXTENSION

- Have children take turns singing one stanza of the song.

Find the Animal Homes

Answers:



KIDPAGE

Younger



Line or Space Note?



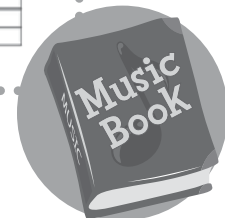
Color each music example that contains a space note, and help the boy find his way through the puzzle to find his music book at the bottom of the page.

Line Notes:



Space Notes:





The **INSTITUTE CORNER**

**Choristers Guild Institute IX
July 16-22, 2017**

Worship at the Institute

*Children
are artistic,
creative,
musical, and
worshipful
beings.*



*Effective children's choir
leaders recognize a unique
calling to lead children
toward more meaningful
and effective participation in
worship through music.*

We gather

Sunday evening, at our opening worship, the Institute students and faculty gather in the Rotunda at Wingate University to sing and pray together for the first time. The space is lovely and our singing encircles the room. We come from a great diversity of denominations, yet this worship service brings us together for the first of many holy moments, unique because of the experiences and talents that each of us brings.

Gather ~ Word ~ Prayer for the Community ~ Sending

We continue to gather for worship each morning and evening of the week. Our daily services (20 minutes in length) are planned and led by the participants, following the four-fold worship plan of *Gather, Word, Prayer for the Community, and Sending*. Pre-selected scripture and worship themes are relevant to children. Creativity abounds! Everyone leaves with worship-planning and worship-leading experience and a bucket-full of ideas to use with their own children's choirs. Ideas for involving children in worship and providing more meaningful worship experiences for them are also presented in worship seminars, special topics and core classes throughout the week.

We are called

Each year participant evaluations reflect appreciation for the meaningful worship experiences at CGI. Folks expect to get good training and ideas for rehearsals, but are surprised at how much they value and learn from our worship. They get to see the talents of each other as readers, song leaders, instrumentalists, prayer writers, and worship planners. And, for those of us who are typically involved in leading and preparing worship groups at home, the CGI week provides moments of reflection and joy, unencumbered by the worry of "what's the tempo?", "are my singers watching me?" or "what's next?" Come, learn and worship with us!

REGISTRATION for CGI 2017 is open NOW for new & returning students and alumni:

www.choristersguild.org-Events-Institute

LIKE our page on FACEBOOK for more info & photos: [Choristers Guild Institute at Wingate University](https://www.facebook.com/ChoristersGuildInstitute).

THE CHORISTERS GUILD INSTITUTE:

Beyond Certification & Graduation – The Alumni Experience

In January of 2010, I attended the Choristers Guild Mid Winter conference sponsored by the CG Atlanta Chapter. The clinician for the elementary choirs was Dr. Madeline Bridges of Belmont University in Nashville. She began one of her sessions by telling us about the newly formed CG Institute, and I thought... this is for me. As soon as I got home I registered for the upcoming summer's session in Louisville, KY.

In July of 2010, I began my certification process, and Dr. Bridges was our pedagogy instructor. What I noticed immediately was the depth and scope of each class versus what you typically experience in a workshop. Additionally, each class had been carefully planned to meet the needs of children's church choir directors.

By the end of the week, I knew that my upcoming choir year was going to be noticeably different. I learned new teaching techniques and creative ways to make our rehearsals more productive and fun. CGI also offered seminars in advocacy, organization, inclusion of children in worship, in addition to daily classes in pedagogy, conducting, and choral methods. Furthermore each participant was given a faculty mentor who assisted during the week, but was also available to advise throughout the year. CGI co-director Karol Kimmell was and is my mentor, and I still frequently contact her for advice. The others in my mentor group provided an immediate support group for the week and the years to come.

I completed my certification in 2012 and was thrilled to learn that CGI allowed and encouraged alumni to return. Alumni who have completed the 3-year certification are welcome to return and choose our own classes, which allows us tremendous flexibility within the week. Although there is much continuity, there are new offerings and clinicians every year. We can also return to the various pedagogy and choral methods classes that we would like to repeat. While the basic content remains the same, clinicians often add new material and ideas. Additionally, participants' questions often take us in new directions, giving clinicians additional teaching opportunities. Admittedly the learning curve is not as steep as when I began, but I still feel that my week at CGI is an outstanding continuing education opportunity--well worth my time. The value is just incredible given the size of the faculty and the wealth of their experience.

Is CGI certification hard work? Yes, but it is worth it and the participants are well supported by the faculty and other participants. Is CGI fun? Yes! It is a wonderful week of learning and fellowship. Meal time conversations give us a chance to share and our living quarters provide lots of opportunities for after hour get-togethers! I think my participation speaks for itself: I attended three years for certification and have gone back three years as an alumnus, following the institute as it has moved to Wingate University near Charlotte, NC.

Thank you to Choristers Guild for establishing and supporting the Institute! I hope you will consider joining us for us an amazing week this July.



Whitney Page has worked with the Children's Music Ministry of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Birmingham, AL, for 21 years. She began as a volunteer accompanist and now directs 3 vocal and 3 handbell choirs for children in 4K preschool through 12th grade. She sings in and frequently conducts St. Stephen's adult choir and also directs the adult handbell choir. Whitney also leads chapel and teaches music for St. Stephen's Preschool.



2012 graduation in Louisville - graduating YEAR III's and faculty, including Helen Kemp, Michael Hawn, Sue Ellen Page, Rebecca Thompson



Planning worship: Nancy Ruth, Whitney, Jeannine, & Sally in Louisville



*Whitney with her Mentor Group in Louisville, KY 2012
Jeaninne Newcomb, Nancy Ruth Wainwright, Emily Floyd, Whitney Page, Sally Duke, Karol Kimmell*



Whitney at Wingate attending as an alumna with her 'new' Mentor friends. Whitney Page, Gerald Hughes, Kirsten Foyles, Patrick Murphy, Chris Rogers & Nan Wooten

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BY VINCENT RYAN



The Advent Lutheran Church Orchestra rehearses diligently for Christmas Eve worship. Photo: Karen Evans



The Advent Lutheran Church Orchestra is prepared for worship on Christmas Eve. Photo: Kevin Self

Where will you put them all?

Though not a typical refrain we're used to hearing at Christmastime, this phrase was repeated to me often last December. For several years we have invited our young musicians to participate in the orchestra for Christmas Eve worship. Space is tight in our sanctuary, especially where the musicians sing and play. Most recently we also invited parents to play in a side-by-side experience. The response was quite strong; forty-one musicians played carols throughout worship in a space which normally seats 12.

Students range in experience from beginners to approximately six years on their instruments. The opportunity that is created with a wide range of talent and instrumentation is arranging the music so 1) even the youngest musicians can participate and 2) winds and strings can play together. For example, beginning strings – those with three

months' experience – are limited to 3 or 4 notes. Used in strategic places, these parts music *can and do*-work. Older students typically play the hymns in two parts. With careful attention to the keys, the full orchestra can play at once even if it means stretching the clarinetists to learn a new sharp note, or reminding violinists to play B-flat!

It's all in the planning. In mid-October students are polled for their interest, and their parents are contacted. At that time, they are given three rehearsal dates in December and asked to commit to two. Parents appreciate the flexibility, and we have a built-in snow day if we have to cancel a rehearsal.

By November 1, I receive information (such as instrument and experience) about the students who want to play. Music is specifically arranged and delivered so they can begin practicing.

Students are notified that they should come to the first rehearsal knowing all notes and rhythms. In the meantime, they are encouraged to seek me privately to address any questions. Rehearsal time is used to teach ensemble, dynamics, and articulations. We experiment a lot in these areas. Saturday morning rehearsal is extra-special since we serve donuts and hot chocolate.

Advent Lutheran Church is an active congregation with many children and youth, and we are

sensitive to include them as much as possible in leading worship. Throughout the year they are lectors, acolytes, crucifers, communion assistants, musicians and worship assistants. Christmas Eve provides additional opportunities for children as they assume the roles of sheep and angels at the manger. (See the photo on page 36 of this issue.) To be sure, there is a lot of energy packed into that hour, and the result is an exciting, vibrant celebration of the nativity.



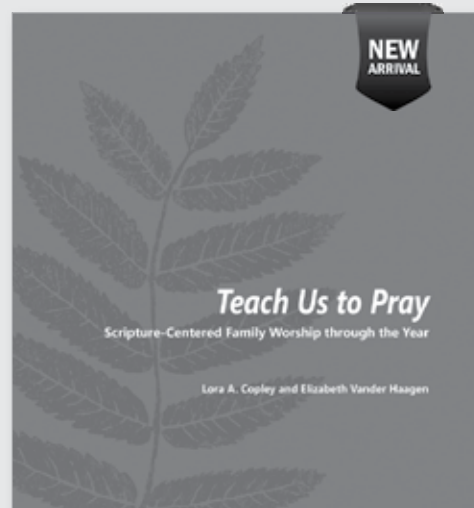
Vincent M. Ryan, since 1997, has been the Minister of Music at Advent Lutheran Church, Harleysville, PA.

CALVIN INSTITUTE OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

Teach Us to Pray is a daily prayer book that guides families in both listening to and speaking to God through songs, scripture readings, guided action and quiet contemplation, organized to follow the life of Jesus through each season of the Christian calendar.

Teach Us to Pray reminds us that prayer involves both discipline and delight. Copley and Vander Haagen have poured their hard-earned wisdom as pastors and parents into these pages, inviting us to pray as a way of re-narrating our lives into the story of Scripture, as modeled in the Christian calendar. They have found a way to do so with grace, simplicity, attention to a wide range of human emotions, and passages from every book of the Bible. My family and I will be reaching for this cherished book every day for many years to come.

—Peter Choi, City Church San Francisco



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Calendar of Events

March 19th, 2017

San Diego County Chapter Spring Choir Festival with Concordia University Orchestra and Men's Choir
St. Thomas More Catholic Church, Oceanside
Clinicians: Juan Carlos Acosta and Marin Jacobson
Contact klundeen24@hotmail.com or visit www.choristersguildsandiego.org for more information.

April 8, 2017

Twin Cities Chapter Enhancing Choral Performance Through Movement
A Workshop for Choral Directors, Teachers, and Singers in Grades 7-12
Lutheran Church of the Resurrection
3115 Victoria Street, Roseville, MN 55113
Clinician: Therees Hibbard, Saint Olaf College
Visit <http://choristersguild.wixsite.com/tccg> for more information.

July 10-14, 2017

Atlanta Chapter Annual Mabel Boyter Summer Camp
Reinhardt University
Waleska, GA
Contact jlangley@goodshepherdpc.org for more information or visit www.cgatlanta.org.

July 24th-28th, 2017

San Diego County Chapter 12th annual Summer Music Camp
Clairemont Lutheran Church
San Diego, CA
Clinician: Melva Morrison
Contact klundeen24@hotmail.com or visit www.choristersguildsandiego.org for more information.

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As a Choristers Guild member, you can list your church's event on this Calendar of Events page? Email your listing to Susan at seernisse@mailcg.org three months prior to your event. Listings are admitted on a first-come, first-serve basis.

TO LIST YOUR CHAPTER EVENT

Send your listing to membership@mailcg.org with complete information. Include dates, location, clinicians, and contact information. For additional advertising, contact advertising@mailcg.org.

Aug. 12, 2017

Atlanta Chapter August Workshop
Shallowford Presbyterian Church
Atlanta, GA
Contact meggranum@gmail.com for more information or visit www.cgatlanta.org.

Jan 12-13, 2018

Atlanta Chapter 2018 Mid-Winter Workshop
Atlanta, GA
Featuring Anton Armstrong
Contact betsy@roswellpres.org for more information or visit www.cgatlanta.org.

Jan 12-13, 2018

Dallas Chapter 2018 Church Music Workshop
Dallas, TX
Visit www.dallaschaptercg.org for more information.



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Tammara Shipes, Warner Robins

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Church, Lenexa

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Southern Hills United
Methodist, Lexington

LOUISIANA

Munholland UMC, Metarie

MARYLAND

JoAnne Ibex, Severna Park

MICHIGAN

Diane Gladstone, Frankenmuth

MISSOURI

Central Presbyterian
Church, Clayton

MISSISSIPPI

St. James' Episcopal Church,
Madison

St. Mary's Basilica, Natchez

NORTH CAROLINA

Betty Morris, Cashiers

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Robert Johnson, Rindge

NEW JERSEY

Krystelle Pring, Jersey City
Dutch Neck Presbyterian Church,
West Windsor

OHIO

Marie Cox, Avon
Victoria Ramga, Dayton
First Congregational
Church, Akron
Saint Ambrose Church, Brunswick

PENNSYLVANIA

Lois Sadley, Saint Marys
Westminster Presbyterian Church,
Lancaster

TENNESSEE

Dakota Hill, Dyersburg
Adam Holley, Jonesborough
Glory Larm, Chattanooga

TEXAS

Isabella Ellis, Dallas
Wendi Gustafson, Seguin
Laurie Purcell, Humble
Richard Walsh, Grapevine
Trietsch United Methodist Church,
Flower Mound
Cathedral Santuario De
Guadalupe, Dallas
Prosper United Methodist
Church, Prosper
Atascocita United Methodist
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Church, Herndon

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Suang Lien Presbyterian
Church, Taipei



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Gold-plated with enameled center. Select pin or tack-style back. Add any combination of up to 15 jewels (2 max at top). Shown here w/pearls (sold separately).

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Silver-plated Pin or Tack

Brushed satin silver-plated finish with recessed oxidized center. Select pin or tack-style back. Add any combination of up to 14 jewels (1 max at top).

Pin (CGSP) \$8.95 **Tack (CGST)** \$8.95



Guild Cross (CGJ6)

Only available to CG members and their choirs! Antique silver finish on a bronze base. Choristers Guild emblem engraved on back. 2-5/8" x 1-5/8". Includes 24" rope-style chain.



Treble Clef Cross (CGJ9)

This delicate design features a treble clef with the Cross. 1-1/2", silver-plated brass, with rounded edges. 20" fine curb chain included.



Pewter Cross (CGJ8)

Design reminiscent of a Chorister holding music. Oxidized pewter finish. 2 1/4". 24" stainless steel chain is included.



Recognition of Choir Service Certificate

Certificate for recognition of choir service. Size 8-1/2" x 11", suitable for framing.

(CGS24) \$0.50



Choir Service Award Certificate

(CGS25) \$0.50



Certificate of Appreciation

The perfect way to say thank you to the many adults who volunteer their time and talents.

(CGS23) \$0.50



Outstanding Attendance Certificate

Classic attendance certificate has spaces for name, organization, year, date and director. Size 8-1/2" x 11", suitable for framing.

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Well Rung Handbell Certificate

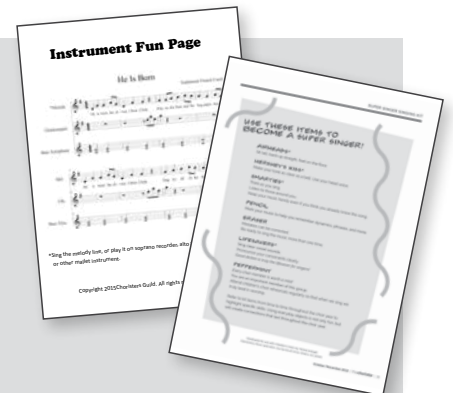
Our fun, new handbell award certificate is ideal for all age ringers. Size 8-1/2" x 11", suitable for framing.

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Have you written a great teaching activity, Orff lesson, or choral warm-up that you would like to share? Simply send your original items* to seernisse@mailcg.org and we will consider them for use in a future issue of *The Chorister*.

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Order Form: Recognitions and Crosses

You may place orders for new pins (without jewels), guards, crosses, and recognitions at choristersguild.org or by phone, fax, or email. Custom recognition orders (jewel additions) must be placed by mail only, using the **form provided**.

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Gold-plated Tack (CGGT)	\$9.95	_____	Treble Clef Cross (CGJ9)	\$17.95	_____
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Silver-plated Bell Guard (CGBES)	\$12.95	_____	Certificate of Appreciation (CGS23)	\$0.50	_____
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Cubic Zirconia (CGCZ)	\$5.00	_____
Diamond (CGDI)	\$14.50	_____

all prices are per stone

CUSTOM ORDER PROCESS:

- 1) Contact Choristers Guild at 800-246-7478 or service@mailcg.org and request jewelry order envelopes (1 per pin).
 These are available at no charge from our office.
- 2) Place each custom order pin in a separate jewelry order envelope. Write on the envelope:
 - Nature of the custom additions desired, for example: "Add 1 Pearl (PE) and Gold-plated Bell Guard (BE)", "Add 2 Rubies (2 RU) at the top middle", or "Attach Silver-plated Note Guard (NOS)".
 - Name of the Chorister
 - Church Name (include City and State)
 - Director Name
- 3) Wrap all the pin envelopes in bubble wrap or padded mailer. Enclose order form and mail to Choristers Guild.
- 4) Feel free to give us a call at 800-246-7478 if you have any questions! We are happy to help you through the process.

**Do not send payment with your order. We will invoice you or charge your credit card if preferred.
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Children's Choir Devotionals

BY GREG GOSSELIN

*The tableau assembles to worship the newborn King. Just few of the many children on Christmas Eve at Advent Lutheran Church, Harleysville, PA. (See full article, Orchestrating Success! on page 30.)
Photo credit: Kevin Self.*



WEEK OF APRIL 2

SCRIPTURE:

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die, and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" *John 11:25-26 NIV*

DEVOTIONAL:

This is a great promise from God. DO you believe it? Jesus said if we believe in him we live even though we die. As believers we know that God has prepared a place in heaven for us – a perfect place with no crying, sickness, or sorrow, where we will forever be in his presence. Just think how amazing heaven will be! If God made the earth in 6 days and rested on the 7th, what has God been doing every day since? Jesus said he was going to prepare for us a place in heaven. If the earth is this great in only 6 days, imagine how incredible heaven will be!

PRAYER:

Father, we are blessed to know that we will live forever with you in a place you have prepared for us. We are comforted to know that when we close our eyes here on earth that we will open them in heaven to see your face. Thank you for the wonderful gift of spending eternity with you. Amen.

COORDINATING ANTHEM:

CGA1029 | *Ain'-a That Good News?*
| Mark Patterson | Unison/two-part with piano



Greg Gosselin is the Minister to Children at Eastern Hills Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. He is married to Karen Chowning Gosselin. They have three children - Bobby, Kathryn, and Stephen. Greg leads conferences on classroom discipline, effectively reaching people for church, leading children to a saving knowledge of Jesus, planning family fun activities, and leading Sunday School and mission activities. Greg enjoys just about all outdoor activities and is an avid backpacker. In his spare time he volunteers as Goosie the Clown at a local children's hospital.

WEEK OF APRIL 9

SCRIPTURE:

A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" *Matthew 21: 8-9 NIV*

DEVOTIONAL:

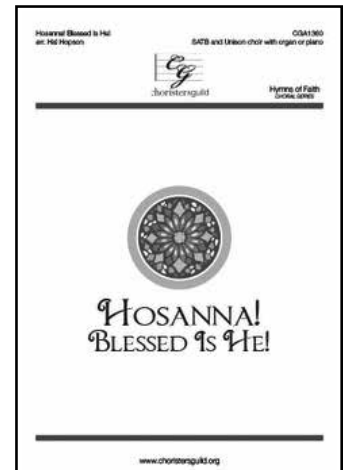
Do you know what *Hosanna* means? It is a word that has changed its meaning over the years. In the Old Testament it meant *Save us Lord!* God answered their prayers and saved His people many times. It later came to mean *Our Salvation* has come. Today we use it to exclaim great love, honor, respect and praise to God. Can you think of something that makes Jesus worthy of your cries of *Hosanna*?

PRAYER:

Dear Lord, we cry *Hosanna, Son of David!* Blessed are you, Jesus, for providing salvation and saving us from our sins. We praise you for your great love for us. Hosanna in the highest heaven! Amen.

COORDINATING ANTHEM:

CGA1360 | *Hosanna! Blessed Is He!*
| Hal H. Hopson | SATB and Unison
choir with organ or piano



WEEK OF APRIL 16

SCRIPTURE:

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said.

Matthew 28:5-6a NIV (Extended reading Matthew 28:1-10)

DEVOTIONAL:

The resurrection of Jesus – the greatest moment in history! How amazing that people who were witnesses to the amazing life of Jesus and his resurrection had to be told not be afraid. The Bible says, "Do not be afraid" over 103 times. God promised to never leave us nor forsake us, to be with us always, yet we still fear. What do you fear? Can you trust God to deliver you from all of your fears?

PRAYER:

Father, you tell us to cast all of our cares on you because you care for us. Teach us to trust you with every aspect of our lives. In our hearts we know that you are in control of all things. Help us not be afraid and trust you even when we don't understand what is going on. Amen.

COORDINATING ANTHEM:

CGA1115 | *An Easter Song of Praise*
| A. Steven Taranto | Unison/Two-
part and piano



WEEK OF APRIL 23

SCRIPTURE:

Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." *John 20:29 NIV (Extended reading John 20:24-29)*

DEVOTIONAL:

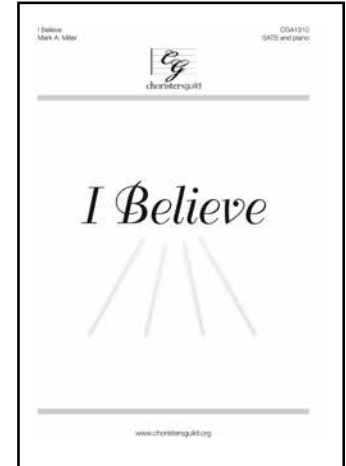
We are often quick to judge Thomas for his doubts. He saw all that Jesus did. Aren't we the same way? We are witnesses to all of Christ's miracles and God's provisions through reading the Word of God. We even witness miracles today. Is there something that you know God can handle, but doubt that it could really happen. It's easy to trust God with small things, but what about the big things in our lives? Can God take care of those? (NOTE: It is believed that Thomas not only believed, but became a great evangelist, spreading the Gospel as far away as India.)

PRAYER:

Father, we are often overwhelmed by the worries and cares of this world. Sometimes we even wonder where you are. We wonder if you can rescue us. Yet, we know you can. Please help us to have faith to trust you even when we feel there is no hope. Thank you for loving us. Amen.

COORDINATING ANTHEM:

CGA1310 | *I Believe* | Mark A. Miller | SATB with piano



WEEK OF APRIL 30

SCRIPTURE:

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus...They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him. *Luke 24:13-16 NIV (Extended reading Luke 24:13-35)*

DEVOTIONAL:

It is interesting that the two travelers who knew Jesus well did not recognize him walking right beside them. How often are we walking with God and totally miss him? Our doubts and fears, even our sins, stand in the way of us truly knowing and experiencing God. Not spending time in worship both individually and in fellowship with others will keep us from walking faithfully with God. Jesus came to those believers while they were walking. As we walk every day, Jesus is with us, too – waiting patiently for us to recognize him.

PRAYER:

Father, thank you for loving us and wanting to spend time with us. Thank you for walking with us through good times and bad times. Please help us to know, to serve, to worship you better. Help us to show our love to you better each and every day. Amen.

COORDINATING ANTHEM:

CGA701 | *I Want Jesus to Walk With Me* | Hal H. Hopson | Two-part with piano



WEEK OF MAY 21

SCRIPTURE:

Come and hear, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me.

Psalm 66: 16 NIV (Extended reading Psalm 66:16-20)

DEVOTIONAL:

Have you ever had such great news that you could not wait to tell all who would listen? The writer of this psalm felt just that way. He wanted to tell everyone the great things God had done for him. Christians in Africa have a saying that has become quite popular. "God is good all the time!" Response: "And all the time God is good!" God has blessed each of us immeasurably. There is no doubt that some of us are facing great sorrow, grief or sickness, but God has not left us abandoned. God listens and does not withhold his great love from us.

PRAYER:

Father, you are good. You have blessed us more than we could ever imagine. We pray for that you will reach out to all who suffer. Help us to tell others that you hear their prayers, and that you love is for everyone. Amen.

COORDINATING ANTHEM:

CGA1228 | *All Things Work Together for Good* | Lynn Shaw Bailey | Unison with piano and optional flute or other C treble instrument



WEEK OF MAY 28

SCRIPTURE:

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. | *Peter 5:8 NIV*

DEVOTIONAL:

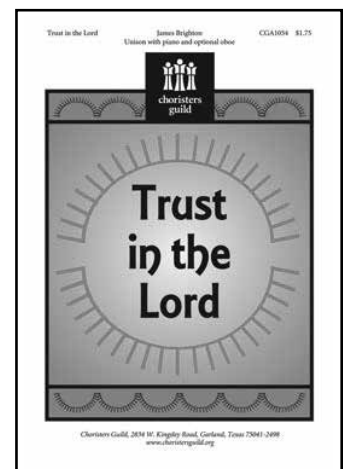
Isn't it amazing that the God of the universe who spoke the world into existence, cares for each one of us? God is not some aloof celestial being that is unconcerned for our daily cares. God created us so that we could worship him and have a relationship with him. He is interested in our comings and goings. He cares when we are busy, and when we rest. Take time today to tell God all about your day because he cares for you.

PRAYER:

God, Thank you that you love us and care for us. Thank you that you hear our prayers. Amen.

COORDINATING ANTHEM:

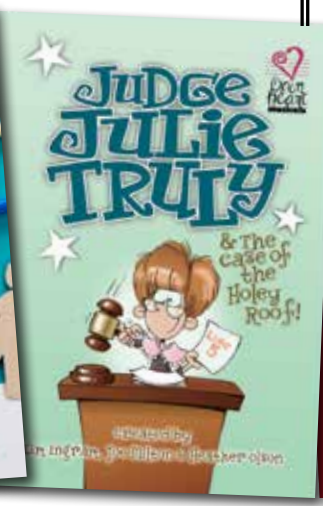
CGA1054 | *Trust in the Lord* | James Brighton | Unison with piano and optional oboe



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by Stan Pethel

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Karol Kimmell Amanda Smith Mark Burrows Mark Patterson Heather Potter Terry Taylor Emily Floyd Chris Nemece Andrea Baxter
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