

AN ORGANIST'S CHECKLIST FOR INSPIRING CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS SALT LAKE CITY CHAPTER
University of Utah -- Libby Gardner Hall
Super Saturday -- 6 January 2024
John Longhurst, Presenter

The people of God sing. The role of music in worship is biblical. After escaping from the Egyptians and crossing the Red Sea, the people of Israel sang a song to the Lord (Exod. 15). Singing was part of Israel's formal worship in both tabernacle and temple (1 Chron. 6:31—32, 16:42). The Psalms bear rich testimony that in joy and sorrow, in praise and lament, the faithful raise their voices in song to God. Hymn singing was practiced by Jesus and His disciples (Matt. 26:30). The Apostle Paul instructed the Colossians, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom: and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, Giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Col. 3: 16—17). The Reformed Church in America Commission on Worship (<https://www.faithward.org/the-theology-and-place-of-music-in-worship/>)

Inspirational music is an essential part of our church meetings. The hymns invite the Spirit of the Lord, create a feeling of reverence, unify us as members, and provide a way for us to offer praises to the Lord. Some of the greatest sermons are preached by the singing of hymns. Hymns move us to repentance and good works, build testimony and faith, comfort the weary, console the mourning, and inspire us to endure to the end.

First Presidency Preface to LDS Hymns, 1985.

It has been our aim to combine Jewish and general musical values. Such a Hymnal as this is not an end, but an advance on the road toward the achievement of a difficult goal. It is our ardent hope that it will educate our congregations in the beauties of our musical heritage, and lead them God-ward "on the wings of song."

Preface to 1957 *Union Hymnal* by the Committee on Synagog Music of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

POINTS TO PONDER

✓ TECHNICAL PREPARATION—"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" (1 Corinthians 14:8)

Be certain that you can play each hymn comfortably, confidently, and accurately **at an appropriate tempo**. Warning! This often requires some practice.

Work out and mark fingering and pedaling in troublesome spots as needed.

✓ CONSIDER THE TEXT WHEN DETERMINING PHRASING

Plan phrasing in advance

Musical and textual phrases do not always agree. Choose which to observe.

Phrasing may vary from verse to verse.

Be aware of the text as you lead/accompany the hymn singing. Mentally sing along.

✓ THE TEXT IS IMPORTANT IN PLANNING REGISTRATION

Consider the overall mood, theme, or subject of the text (solemn, celebratory, etc.).

Is there any change of mood/intensity from verse to verse that suggests a registrational change?

Is there anything within each verse that might prompt a change of registration? (Verse/chorus, unison to part singing, change of mood or meter.)

✓ WOULD TRANSPOSITION BE HELPFUL?

Who are the singers (men, women, mixed voices, youth, choir, older voices)?

Some organs have built-in transposing capability.

Hymns in the LDS Hymnal (with a few exceptions) can be transposed on the LDS Church Music website. See below.

You may need to write it out.

✓ OPTIONS FOR VARIANTS

Special introduction.

Free harmonization (see below).

Modulating interlude to transposed verse.

Soloing the hymn tune (soprano). Some organs have this capability built-in. Otherwise, R.H. will play the soprano. L.H. plays the alto and tenor.

Added coda.

The above will be most effective when not overused. If your denomination uses a conductor for congregational singing, be sure to coordinate with him/her.

USEFUL RESOURCES

PRINT YOUR OWN MANUSCRIPT PAPER

Three-stave organ manuscript paper is available to print without charge in either portrait orientation (5 systems per page) or landscape (4 systems per page) from freeblanksheetmusic.org/organ.

TRANSPOSING HYMNS IN THE LDS HYMNAL

Go to: churchofjesuschrist.org/music

On the left side of the screen click "Find a Hymn."

Click "Alphabetically by Title or First Line."

Click the name of desired hymn.

Scroll down beneath the printed hymn and click "Switch Player."

Under "Key" (above the hymn title) use the up or down arrow to select desired key.

Click "Print."

ALTERNATE HYMN ACCOMPANIMENTS (FREE HARMONIZATIONS)

Free Harmonizations of Hymn Tunes by Fifty American Composers, Edited by D. DeWitt Wasson. Hinshaw Music, 1984.

Free Harmonizations of Hymn Tunes, Vol. II, Edited by D. DeWitt Wasson. Hinshaw Music, 1986.

Free Organ Accompaniments to One Hundred Well-known Hymn Tunes, by T. Tertius Noble. J. Fischer, 1946.

Twenty-five Alternate Hymn Harmonizations for Organ, by Clay Christiansen. MorningStar Music, 2015. Of the 25 hymns presented, 22 are found in the LDS Hymnal. Some include an introduction or modulating interlude in addition to the reharmonized hymn. Available either as a printed volume or as a download. Also, hymns can be purchased and downloaded individually if desired. Contents may be viewed at <https://www.morningstarmusic.com/twenty-five-alternate-hymn-harmonizations-for-organ.html>.

Lead, Kindly Light

Prayerfully ♩ = 54-72

1. Lead, kind-ly Light, a - mid th'en - cir - cling gloom; Lead thou me on!
 2. I was not ev - er thus, nor pray'd that thou Shouldst lead me on.
 3. So long thy pow'r hath blest me, sure it still Will lead me on

The night is dark, and I am far from home; Lead thou me on!
 I loved to choose and see my path; but now, Lead thou me on!
 O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and tor-rent, till The night is gone.

Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
 I loved the gar - ish day, and, spite of fears,
 And with the morn those an - gel fac - es smile,

The dis - tant scene— one step e - nough for me.
 Pride ruled my will. Re - mem - ber not past years.
 Which I have loved long since, and lost a - while!

God of Our Fathers, Whose Almighty Hand

Energetically ♩ = 92-112

(Fanfare to be played before each verse)

1. God of our fa - thers, whose al - might - y
2. Thy love di - vine hath led us in the
3. From war's a - larms, from dead - ly pes - ti -

hand Leads forth in beau - ty all the star - ry band
 past; In this free land by thee our lot is cast.
 lence, Be thy strong arm our ev - er - sure de - fense.

Of shin - ing worlds in splen - dor through the skies,
 Be thou our Rul - er, Guard - ian, Guide, and Stay,
 Thy true re - li - gion in our hearts in - crease.

Our grate - ful songs be - fore thy throne a - rise.
 Thy word our law, thy paths our cho - sen way.
 Thy boun - teous good - ness nour - ish us in peace.

Joy to the World

Intro

Musical notation for the Intro section, featuring a treble and bass staff with a 4/4 time signature and various chords and melodic lines.

Verse 1

Musical notation for Verse 1, showing a treble and bass staff with a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature.

Modulation between Verses

Musical notation for the Modulation between Verses section, including a treble and bass staff with a 4/4 time signature and lyrics: "an-gels sing! Re-joice, Re-joice".

Mantels

Musical notation for the Mantels section, featuring a treble and bass staff with a 4/4 time signature and a "Pedals" section below.

Musical notation for the Pedals section, showing a treble and bass staff with a 4/4 time signature and various musical notations.

Intro

verse 1

Coda

Angels We Have Heard on High