

SING PSALMS

Arden W. Mead



The Psalms for Worship for
EVERY SUNDAY OF THE CHURCH YEAR

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The Psalms for Worship

INTRODUCTION

In the churches where I grew up, the Psalms as such were almost never used; they certainly were never sung. On Sundays the few lines of an Introit might be spoken by the pastor, while a Gradual between the lessons received the same treatment. The few times we were invited to participate, it was always, “Let us read responsively Psalm so-and-so on page such-and-such,” followed by instructions about who reads the parts before the colon in each verse and who reads the parts after. Psalms were spoken soberly, if at all.

In my early years as a pastor, coming out of that background, I tried my hand at rhyming some of those Introits and Graduals (eventually all of them) and setting them to familiar hymn tunes, trying to follow in the venerable footsteps of folks like Isaac Watts. But those were not real Psalms, I was told; they were paraphrases. It didn’t seem to matter that people in the church were actually singing them, I was told, belting out familiar melodies instead of just listening to spoken words; those still weren’t “real” Psalms.

Then, with the advent of new hymnals came a new emphasis on singing the Psalms. Melodies for chanting were provided—melodies nobody had ever heard before, to be sure, but ones that could be learned. And learn them we did. At least we tried. And found ourselves droning our way through “real” Psalms, a cantor or choir singing one line, the congregation responding, back and forth, over and over, with any kind of emphasis on the words virtually lost in making sure you noticed where the little marks were in the text so that the music went up and down at the right times.

Then, by way of variety, we were introduced to a “responsory line” for each Psalm, a line to be repeated at regular intervals during the chanting of the Psalm, usually set to a melody created specifically for that line, a melody we usually had not heard before and might not sing again for another three years. Again, it seemed that folks were spending more time concentrating on getting the notes right than paying attention to the words.

It was about then that I began experimenting with what eventually became the Sing Psalms. They are made up of two parts:

1) The “real” words of the “real” Psalms—spoken, not chanted, so that by inflection and emphasis their meaning might be conveyed. (The meaning of the words is important, I am convinced.)

2) Embedded in a musical frame—a Responsory, if you will—sung by the congregation to familiar hymn tunes. And that’s the trick, a trick I learned from Martin Luther: since the congregation already knows the music, they can concentrate on the words.

What really makes these Psalms work is the organist. At the end of the organ introduction (to set the melody for the congregation) if spoken words come first *OR* at the end of the first set of lines sung by the congregation—the organist holds the last chord softly while the leader speaks the next prose verses. Then the organist leads the next line(s) of the hymn at accompaniment volume, holding that final chord softly for the next spoken lines...and so on through the Psalm.

But spoken words and sung responses are not supposed to be combined, someone objects. Maybe not, but it works! To the extent that the people are participating by singing melodies they know, the Psalms are being sung while the words are being given the emphasis they deserve, the “softly held chord” even serving to underline them in a way. The combination moves smoothly and sets the Psalm apart in worship. This is not something we endure, but something we do.

The collection of hymn tunes was purposely kept small. It is hoped that the tunes are already familiar, and that repeated use will give them even more meaning. You may notice a certain “on purpose” seasonal repetition. Most of the Psalms for the Epiphany season, for example, use the melody Dix, “As With Gladness.” The most common Lenten tune is Gethsemane, while Fred til Bod, “Peace to Soothe,” is the dominant Easter season melody. Please notice that all three of those tunes have the same syllable scheme (6 lines of 7 syllables each), making them interchangeable. The melody Toplady, “Rock of Ages,” also fits that 77 77 77 pattern.

The key to using the Psalms in this book is found in the following indices. To use them, first identify the lectionary which you use. The indices allow for the use of the Revised Common lectionary, the (supposedly) defunct LBW lectionary and the Lutheran Worship lectionary. For each series (A, B or C), read down the first column of your lectionary’s index to find the Sunday of the Church Year. Then, read across the column to identify the Psalm, and its melody.

IMPORTANT! The Psalms are arranged in numerical order. When you identify the Psalm you need, find it in the Psalm section of the book, **MAKING SURE YOU FIND THE PSALM WITH THE CORRECT VERSES AND MELODY.** Note: The music is located at the end of this material.

Text files in .rtf format of all the Psalms in this resource are included in the digital download, organized by Psalm number and then a number after a dash for each version of the Psalm, if there are multiple versions of it. Text file names are the bottom of the page for each Psalm for reference.

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INDEX FOR THE RCL LECTIONARY-A

Note: In some lectionaries the verse numbering may differ slightly from the NRSV numbering used here.

1 Advent	Psalm 122	Vom Himmel hoch
2 Advent	Psalm 72:1-4, 18-19	Picardy
3 Advent	Psalm 146	Picardy
	Luke 1:47-55	Vom Himmel hoch
4 Advent	Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19	Ihr Kinderlein kommet
Christmas Eve	Psalm 96	Dix
Christmas Dawn	Psalm 97	Antioch
Christmas Day	Psalm 98	Dix
1 Christmas	Psalm 148	Dix
2 Christmas	Psalm 147:12-20	Antioch
Epiphany	Psalm 72	Dix
1 Epiphany: Baptism	Psalm 29	Nicaea
2 Epiphany	Psalm 40:1-11	Dix
3 Epiphany	Psalm 27:1-9	Dix
4 Epiphany	Psalm 15	Dix
5 Epiphany	Psalm 112	Old Hundredth
6 Epiphany (Pr.1)	Psalm 119:1-8	Dix
7 Epiphany (Pr.2)	Psalm 119:33-40	Dix
8 Epiphany (Pr.3)	Psalm 131	Eventide
Transfiguration	Psalm 2	Wie schön leuchtet
	Psalm 99	Dix

Ash Wednesday	Psalm 51:1-15	Gethsemane
1 Lent	Psalm 32	Gethsemane
2 Lent	Psalm 121	Was frag ich nach der Welt
3 Lent	Psalm 95	Was frag ich nach der Welt
4 Lent	Psalm 23	Gethsemane
5 Lent	Psalm 130	Woodworth
Palm Sunday	Psalm 31:1-5, 9-16	Erhalt uns, Herr
	Psalm 118:19-24	Melita
Maundy Thursday	Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19	Erhalt uns, Herr
Good Friday	Psalm 22	Herzliebster Jesu
Easter	Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24	Fred til Bod
Easter p.m.	Psalm 114	St. Peter
2 Easter	Psalm 16	Fred til Bod
3 Easter	Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19	Erhalt uns, Herr
4 Easter	Psalm 23	Fred til Bod
5 Easter	Psalm 31:1-5, 9-16	Erhalt uns, Herr
6 Easter	Psalm 66:7-18	Fred til Bod
Ascension	Psalm 47	Fred til Bod
	Psalm 93	Hanover
7 Easter	Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35	Hanover
Pentecost	Psalm 104:24-34	Diademata
Trinity	Psalm 8	St. Anne

For the post-Pentecost season, Psalms marked with an asterisk (*) accompany readings from the series of sequential Old Testament readings (Abraham, Jacob, Moses, etc.) followed by most Protestant denominations and ELCIC.

Proper 3	Psalm 131	Eventide
Proper 4	Psalm 46*	St. Anne
Proper 5	Psalm 31:1-11*	Erhalt unser, Herr
Proper 6	Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19*	Erhalt uns, Herr
Proper 7	Psalms 86:1-10, 16-17*	Rhosymedre
Proper 8	Psalm 13*	Herzliebster Jesu
Proper 9	Psalm 45:10-17*	St. Thomas
Proper 10	Psalm 119:105-112*	Dix
Proper 11	Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24*	Fred til Bod
Proper 12	Psalm 105:1-11, 45b*	Nun danket alle Gott
Proper 13	Psalm 17:1-9*	Tempus adest floridum
Proper 14	Psalm 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b*	Nun danket alle Gott
Proper 15	Psalm 133*	Old Hundredth
Proper 16	Psalm 124*	Erhalt uns, Herr
Proper 17	Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45c*	Nun danket alle Gott
Proper 18	Psalm 149*	Old Hundredth
Proper 19	Psalm 114*	St. Peter
Proper 20	Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45*	Nun danket alle Gott
Proper 21	Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16*	Nun danket all
Proper 22	Psalm 19*	Gethsemane
Proper 23	Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23*	Old Hundredth

Proper 24	Psalm 99*	Dix
Proper 25	Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17*	Kirken den et gammelt
Proper 26	Psalm 107:1-7, 33-37*	Old Hundredth
Proper 27	Psalm 78:1-7*	Nun danket all
Wisd. Sol. 6:17-20*		
Wie lieblich ist die Maien		
Proper 28	Psalm 123*	Melita
Christ the King	Psalm 100*	Lobe den Herren

Post-Pentecost season Psalms not marked with an asterisk accompany the series of Old Testament readings related to the Gospel reading for the day-the series recommended, for example, by the ELCA.

Proper 3	Psalm 131	Eventide
Proper 4	Psalm 31:1-5, 19-24	Old Hundredth
Proper 5	Psalm 50	Diademata
Proper 6	Psalm 100	Old Hundredth
Proper 7	Psalm 69:1-20	Melita
Proper 8	Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18	Lobe den Herren
Proper 9	Psalm 145	Fred til Bod
Proper 10	Psalm 65	Kremser
Proper 11	Psalm 86:11-17	Rhosymedre
Proper 12	Psalm 119:129-136	Dix
Proper 13	Psalm 145	Fred til Bod
Proper 14	Psalm 85:8-13	Fred til Bod
Proper 15	Psalm 67	Fred til Bod
Proper 16	Psalm 138	Melita

PSALM 25:1-10

MELODY MELITA 88 88 88

**To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.
I trust you, God, to make me whole.**

Let me not be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me; let none who look to you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

**Show me, O Lord, the way to go;
Teach me your righteous paths to know.**

Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation. I always trust in you.

**In steadfast love remember me.
Your paths of goodness let me see.**

Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions. According to your steadfast love remember me for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.

**To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.
I trust you, God, to make me whole.**

Because the Lord is righteous and good, he teaches sinners the path they should follow. He leads the humble in the right way and teaches them his will.

**Show me, O Lord, the way to go;
Teach me your righteous paths to know.**

All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness to those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

**In steadfast love remember me.
Your paths of goodness let me see.**

PSALM 27:1-7

MELODYDIX 77 77 77

**God my Savior and my Light
Keeps me safe from dreadful fright.**

When evildoers assail me, uttering slanders against me, my adversaries and foes, they shall sTurn ble and fall. Though a host encamp against me, my heart shall not fear. Though war arise against me, yet will I be confident.

**God my Savior and my Light
May I serve him day and night.**

One thing I have asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.

**God my Savior and my Light
Watches with protecting might.**

He will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble. He will conceal me under the cover of his tent. He will set me high upon a rock.

**God my Savior and my Light
Keeps me safe within his sight.**

And now my head shall be lifted up above all my enemies round about me; and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy. I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

**God my Savior and my Light
Answers me from heaven's height.**

PSALM 27:1-7

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**God my Savior and my Light
Answers me from heaven's height.**

Hear me, LORD, when I call to you! Be merciful and answer me! Do not hide your face from me.

**Let me see your face aright,
God my Savior and my Light!**

PSALM 28

MELODY GETHSEMANE 77 77 77

**Hear my voice, O Lord, I pray;
Turn not from my needs away.**

If you are silent to me, I shall be like those who go down to the pit.

**Unto you, my Rock, I cry
With my hands uplifted high.**

Do not drag me away with the wicked, with those who do evil, whose words are friendly, but whose hearts are filled will hate.

**Lord, my Shepherd, bless your sheep;
E'er draw near to watch and keep.**

Repay them according to the work of their hands, according to the evil of their deeds.

**Hear my voice, O Lord, I pray;
Turn not from my needs away.**

They do not regard what the Lord has done, or what his hands have made.

**Unto you, my Rock, I cry
With my hands uplifted high.**

So he will break them down, and build them up no more.

**Lord, my Shepherd, bless your sheep;
E'er draw near to watch and keep.**

Blessed be the LORD, for he has heard my cry for help.

**Hear my voice, O Lord, I pray;
Turn not from my needs away.**

The Lord is my strength and my shield; I trust in him. He has helped me, and so I am glad, and with my song I give thanks to him.

**Unto you, my Rock, I cry
With my hands uplifted high.**

The LORD is the strength of his people, a safe refuge for his anointed.

**Lord, my Shepherd, bless your sheep;
E'er draw near to watch and keep.**

PSALM 28:1-3, 6-9

MELODY GETHSEMANE 77 77 77

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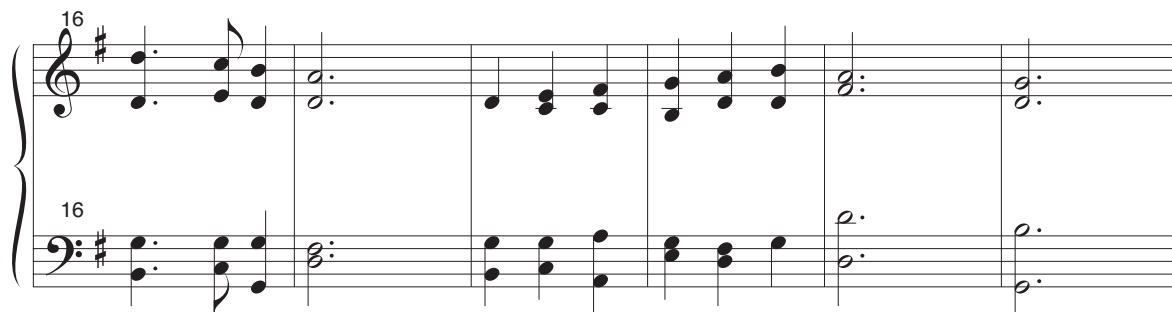
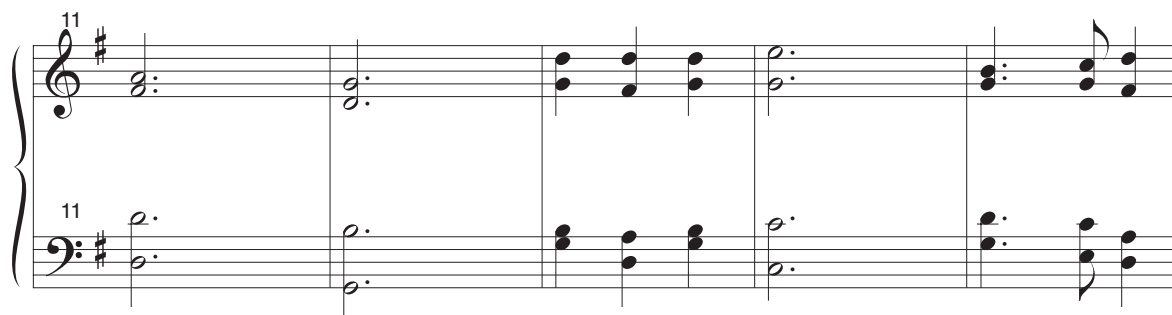
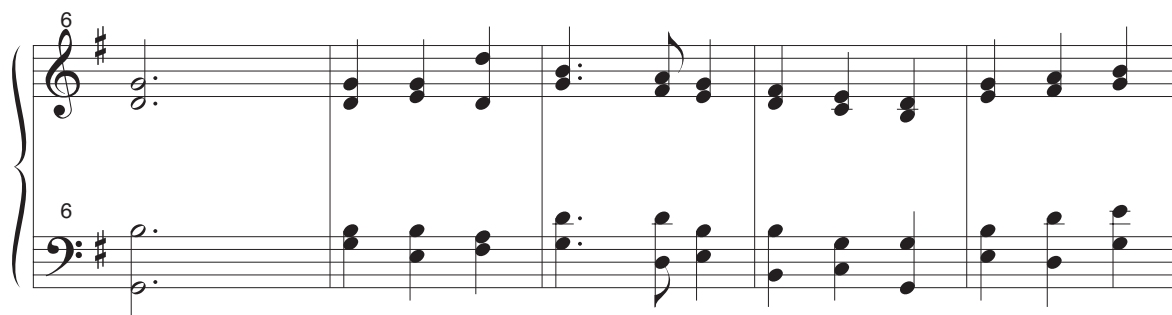
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MUSIC

MELODY.....LOBE DEN HERREN 14 14 4 7 8



MUSIC

MELODY..... MELITA 88 88 88



MUSIC

MELODY..... MENDELSSOHN 77 77 D AND REFRAIN

