

# THE KEYS



Church of St. Peter the Apostle  
Anglican Catholic Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic States  
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<https://stpetersacc.org>

## Vicar's Volleyed Verbiage

## *Traditional Hymnody*

Hymnody has a fascinating history that we could go on and on about. To shorten it up, however, there are a few things to note. The first is that The Book of Psalms is the first and foremost “Hymn” book in the life of the Church. In fact, when hymns first came on the scene, they were looked upon a bit, or more than a bit, suspiciously. Why? First, because hymns are used in pagan temples (while Psalms were used in THE Temple) and, second, because the first hymns to be put forward were put forward by heretics. It appears to have been in response to this that the Orthodox Christians began to write hymns. Arius the “Heresiarch” (arch-heretic), for example, was a prolific hymn writer. Philostorgius in his *Epitome* writes,

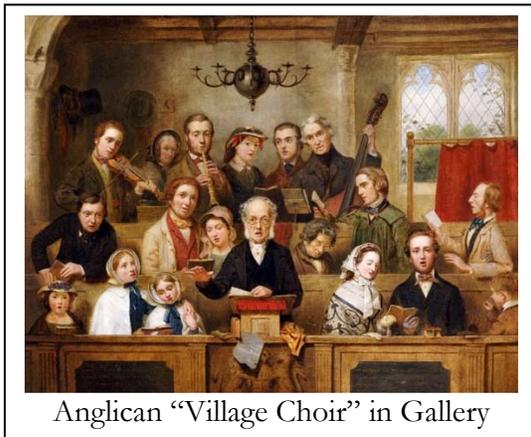
*Arius, after his secession from the church, composed several songs to be sung by sailors, and by millers, and by travelers along the high road, and others of the same kind, which he adapted to certain tunes . . . and thus by degrees seduced the minds of the unlearned by the attractiveness of his songs to the adoption of his own piety.*

Arius wasn't the only one and the heretical origin of hymns made it questionable whether the Church should use them or not and has caused some theologians to wonder the same over the centuries. Nevertheless, the Church did start writing hymns, partly in response to heresy. (The same is true of the formation of the canon of the Bible, which the Church formulated in response to the heretic Marcion's attempts to authorize certain books to support his false teachings while omitting others.) Thus, it can be understood that the Church wrote hymns to support good theology against bad theology and hymns in themselves are not bad - not anymore than an organized, authorized, set of the books of the Bible is innately bad.

At the start of the Reformation, the reformation churches again asked themselves, will we have hymns? Plenty of Church Fathers and Church Councils could be quoted as having been for the Psalms and the Psalms only, so some said. Martin Luther, nonetheless, wrote hymns, even to drinking tunes, known to the common folk from taverns. Among the Lutherans, there was an explosion of hymn writing in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, helping to popularize the Reformation in the local parish churches and in the personal books of devotion (Habermann's Lutheran prayer book has hymns for every morning and evening and even before a journey!). On the other hand, the Calvinists generally moved in the direction of Psalms only - and this according to metrical psalters, by which the Psalms were reorganized in a paraphrase form to fit modern, simple tunes, rather than Gregorian Chant (or simplified Lutheran/Anglican chant). (Although some of the early metrical psalters are not compiled exclusively from psalms). Anglicans generally stayed in the middle between Reformed and Lutheran, emphasizing the Psalms but requiring certain canticles during Morning and Evening prayers and at Holy Communion. There was a choral tradition at the Cathedrals that included composed anthems, and quite complex settings to the psalms and canticles. The local parish churches, in contrast, tended to stick to metrical psalters and simple singing of the canticles for Morning and Evening prayer. The Puritans went to war with the Anglicans concerning “exclusive psalmody” for about a century, insisting that music be simplified and stick to Psalms only, especially in place of the canticles (such as the Benedictus or Magnificat) at Morning and Evening prayer.

The Methodist movement in the United Kingdoms during the 1700s is when you see hymns produced, especially by Charles Wesley, to be placed into the hands of the laity and to be used in the parish churches on a regular basis in the way that we are used to today. This was highly controversial, partly because of the strong adherence to Puritan traditions in many parishes, where the incumbents had been quite low church, as well as among the “high and dry” churches, where dignified recitation and singing of the divine services conflicted with the “enthusiasm” (what we would call “charismatic” today) that was a definitive part of Methodism. This was to form

some of the “worship wars” of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. George Eliot in her *Scenes of Clerical Life* comically described music of this era,



... the singing was no mechanical affair of official routine; it had a drama. As the moment of psalmody approached, by some process to me as mysterious and untraceable as the opening of the flowers or the breaking-out of the stars, a slate appeared in front of the gallery, advertising in bold characters the psalm about to be sung, lest the sonorous announcement of the clerk should still leave the bucolic mind in doubt on that head. Then followed the migration of the clerk to the gallery, where, in company with a bassoon, two key-bugles, a carpenter understood to have an amazing power of singing ‘counter’, and two lesser musical stars, he formed the complement of a choir regarded in Shepperton as one of distinguished attraction, occasionally known to draw hearers from the next parish.

The innovation of hymn-books was as yet undreamed of; even the New Version was regarded with a sort of melancholy tolerance, as part of the common degeneracy in a time when prices had dwindled, and a cotton gown was no longer stout enough to last a lifetime; for the lyrical taste of the best heads in Shepperton had been formed on Sternhold and Hopkins. But the greatest triumphs of the Shepperton choir were reserved for the Sundays when the slate announced an ANTHEM, with a dignified abstinence from particularization, both words and music lying far beyond the reach of the most ambitious amateur in the congregation: an anthem in which the key-bugles always ran away at a great pace, while the bassoon every now and then boomed a flying shot after them.

The “New Version” does not refer to a hymn book but a freer translation of the Psalter. For example, in the “Old Version” of 1562, by the Thomas Sternhold mentioned by Eliot, Psalm 23 which we know so well is paraphrased as follows:

My shepherd is the living Lord, nothing therefore I need;  
In pastures fair with waters calm He set me for to feed.

This represents the soberest of Puritan psalmody available to the average parish. Something like Isaac Watts’ version of Psalm 23 is likely what is referred by Eliot as the “New Version” and this we know well from our 1940 Hymnal.

The King of Love my shepherd is,  
Whose goodness faileth never;  
I nothing lack if I am his,  
And he is mine for ever. (Hymn 345)

The awkward adjustments to hymns also held true in Virginia during and after the Second Great Awakening, where, as Fr. David Cox describes in *The Religious Life of Robert E. Lee* (2017):

One sign of change could literally be heard in services. Previously, congregations had sung only psalms and biblical canticles, set to tunes imported from England a century before. Newfangled hymns, at first deemed “Methodistical,” were as unsuitable for Episcopalians as crosses (even simple ones were damned as popish). Nonetheless, many Episcopalians started singing them in church and learning them at home. During Lee’s lifetime, hymn singing became a thoroughly accepted part of Episcopal worship. (22)

Now, with contemporary Christian music, we have entered a stage beyond the traditional hymns of the Wesleys, or those of Gospel singers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

What can be said of the contemporary Christian music? These are the subject of a new set of “worship wars” in many churches today. Many things can be said. As with anything artistic and anything that represents change, there are probably more words to be said about it than words that make up its lyrics. One thing I can say: Something that one finds disconcerting about some of it, at an increasing pace, is that *much of it* (and by no means *all of it*) is *spiritual rather than religious*. That is to say, the lyrics are not precisely about Jesus and his redemption on the Cross, but personal redemption (or personal transformation) and moving past (transcending) difficult times. The “God” sung of is often a non-descript, non-Trinitarian deity, or omniscient life-force. To be precise, “Our God is an awesome God” is not particularly the God of the Trinity, nor personally of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And yet, we must admit, much of Psalmody is not quite clearly Trinitarian (and this why we add the *Glory be to the Father*, etc., to the end of them!) In some of it, the Trinity can be supplied – by a stretch. (My best friend visited a contemporary-worship Missouri Synod Lutheran church and was shocked that the country song, “God blessed the broken road that led me straight to you” was being used as you went up for Holy Communion! For sure, God leads us to Jesus in the Eucharist through a broken road, and thus the Trinity can sort of be supplied in this popular country song, but *really?*?) On the other hand, I was asked upon arriving as interim at St. Elizabeth’s Chapel, Tuxedo, NY, by Bishop Langberg’s daughter, the Organist, if she could sing a contemporary Christian song as the prelude and then everything after that would proceed from the 1940 Hymnal. I was more than happy to oblige, and she would turn the organ on piano mode for a contemporary song, sing, and then turn it onto organ mode for the rest of the service. It was beautiful and worked out tastefully, week after week.

I can happily say, contemporary music is “positive” music and better than much of the other stuff on the radio, Monday thru Saturday. Sunday, the musical selection should probably emphasize the continuity of Christian worship throughout the ages – which is done well with the 1940 Hymnal. Does this mean that we will have a 1940 Hymnal until Christ comes again? That seems highly unlikely. The Reformed Episcopal Church has recently been able publish a new hymnal, and to incorporate much that was good from the 1940 and combine it with much that was good from their previous hymnals (since they have been around since 1873, having in that time published several hymnals) and they have even put in a few, new, traditional, pieces. That being said, for the time being, I am quite happy with the 1940 and with the ability to incorporate other anthems as and when edifying and appropriate. But it is also very good to be reminded that the 1940 Hymnal did not originally come “lock, stock and barrel” along with the Book of Common Prayer but has, providentially, appeared as the result of long and fascinating history of hymnody and psalmody in the Anglican tradition.

### News and Information

**Vestry** is scheduled for Wednesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 pm. There will be a Mass prior to this at 7 pm.

### **Rogation Services & Ascension Day**

Rogation Sunday, 8 and 10 am. Rogation blessing of the Rectory garden and new Parish House kitchen following. (No Sunday School as it is Mothers’ Day) *Please sign up to have Father over to bless your garden or fields.*

Rogation Monday, 7 pm Mass

Rogation Tuesday, 12 Noon Mass

Rogation Wednesday, 7 pm Mass

**Ascension Day**, 12 Noon Mass and 7 pm Mass

### **Pentecost Services**

**Whitsunday**, 8 and 10 am.

Monday in Whitsun Week, 7 pm Mass

Tuesday in Whitsun Week, 12 Noon Mass

Thursday in Whitsun Week, 12 Noon Mass

MAY, 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
[30] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE, SS  TRINITY SUNDAY	[31]	<b>LEGEND: HC - Holy Communion; FHE – Festal Holy Eucharist; HE - Holy Eucharist; SS – Sunday School; PG - Prayer Group; EP – Evening Prayer; MP – Morning Prayer; P&amp;HU – Prayers and Holy Unction</b>				[1]
[2] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE, SS  EASTER IV	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]  12 noon HC	[7]	[8]
[9] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE  ROGATION SUNDAY	[10]  7:00 p.m. HC ROGATION MONDAY	[11]  12 noon HC ROGATION TUESDAY	[12]  7:00 p.m. HC 7:30 p.m. Vestry ROGATION WEDNESDAY	[13]  12 noon HC 7:00 p.m. HC ASCENSION	[14]	[15]
[16] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE, SS  SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION	[17]	[18]	[19]	[20]  12 noon HC	[21]	[22]
[23] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. FHE, SS  WHITSUNDAY	[24]  7:00 p.m. HC MONDAY IN WHITSUN WEEK	[25]  12 noon HC TUESDAY IN WHITSUN WEEK	[26]	[27]  12 noon HC THURSDAY IN WHITSUN WEEK	[28]	[29]

IN THE LORD'S SERVICE

Please — If you cannot fulfill your assigned duty because of an urgent reason, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO SECURE YOUR OWN REPLACEMENT!

Week beginning Sunday →	May 2	May 9	May 16	May 23	May 30
<b>Altar Guild</b>	B. Higginbotham J. Butterfield	B. Higginbotham V. Williams	B. Higginbotham M. Slayton	B. Higginbotham J. Butterfield	B. Higginbotham V. Williams
<b>Coffee Hour</b>	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Ushers</b>	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Epistoler 8 a.m.</b>	A. Butterfield	A. Butterfield	G. Mauney	A. Butterfield	A. Butterfield
<b>Epistoler 10 a.m.</b>	B. Paisley	C. Von Claparede	P. Williams	T. Paisley	G. Terrell
<b>Server</b>	P. Williams	P. Williams	T. Paisley	P. Williams	C. Von Claparede
<b>Crucifer</b>	C. Von Claparede	W. Paisley	W. Paisley	W. Paisley	B. Paisley

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2021 Vestry: Allen Butterfield, Dan Drysdale, Phil Pappas, Marnie Slayton, Clemens Von Claparede, Phil Williams