

WORSHIP & REJOICE

CELEBRATING 175 YEARS OF CONGREGATIONAL SINGING WITH A NEW HYMNAL

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In February 2020, the FPC Session unanimously approved the adoption of a new hymnal to enrich our congregational singing in traditional worship for decades to come. This was the culmination of an extensive and thoughtful evaluation process that began in April 2019.

In January 2019, conversations began about the possibility of examining our aging 1955 Hymnbook currently used in our sanctuary. The three primary reasons for this consideration were:

1. The deteriorating physical condition of the current hymnal with replacements no longer available.
2. The number of significant hymns used in worship, such as “Great is Thy Faithfulness” and “Lift High the Cross,” but missing from the 1955 hymnal.
3. The desire to supplement the rich repertoire of hymns we currently sing with the best of hymns published in the last sixty-five years, as well as those that pre-date the 1955 hymnal but omitted from that resource.

Based on these realities, the Worship Committee voted on March 19, 2019, to form a Hymnal Taskforce with the responsibility of evaluating alternatives to our existing 1955 hymnbook. The Taskforce consisted of the following members:

- Ed Moore, then chair of the Worship Committee
- Jean Rogers Winchell, lifelong member of FPC and member of the Sanctuary Choir

- Darin George, new member of FPC, Choir member and Trinity University Professor
- Ashley Jackson, young adult, confirmation teacher and usher for Traditional worship
- Charlotte Hains, lifelong member of FPC and Director of Friday Singers
- Tom Dooling, Minister of Music
- Dr. Jae Ha, Associate Minister of Music and Organist

The Hymnal Taskforce began meeting in April 2019. Over the course of the next nine months, the taskforce embarked on an evaluation process that began looking broadly at the origin and composition of hymns, as well as our hymn usage over the last sixteen years here at FPC. From a list of eighteen possible hymnal options, the list was refined to five possible choices. These five options were examined carefully for five of the nine months, culminating in the selection of two finalists. These two finalists were then evaluated in even greater detail. In total, there were no less than twenty-four different elements of evaluation considered from April through December of 2019.

In December 2019, the Taskforce met with Rev. Dr. Bob Fuller, Senior Pastor, to present their final recommendation of the hymnal “Worship and Rejoice” created by Hope Publishing. As a result of that meeting, the Taskforce, with the endorsement of Dr. Fuller, asked to present its findings and recommendation to the Worship Committee for approval. The Worship Committee, chaired by Jane Watson, met on Tuesday, January 28, 2020 at



11 a.m. to hear the report, voting to endorse the recommendation of the Taskforce, which was enthusiastically approved by the Session at their February meeting.

As you know, a lot has happened in our world since the spring of 2020. With the onset of the Pandemic in March, 2020, we postponed the implementation of the new hymnal as a result of temporarily removing pew Bibles and hymnals from the sanctuary pew racks.

With the endorsement of a new plan by the Worship Committee in April of this year, we are now planning to move ahead with implementation to coincide with our on-going celebration of the 175th anniversary of the church.

Beginning in August, we will invite the congregation to make donations ‘in memory’ or ‘in honor’ of friends and family as a means of purchasing an adequate supply of the “Worship and Rejoice” hymnal for the church. Acquisition of the hymnals will then occur over the following months with a dedication of the new hymnals occurring sometime in mid to late October.

We look forward to many decades of continued hymn singing at FPC using the new “Worship and Rejoice” hymnal!