Funeral & Memorial Service Guidelines

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” John 14:27

We at First Congregational Church extend our sympathy to you for your loss and we pray that God’s love and grace surround you during this time. The death of a loved one breaks our hearts, and we discover that not only do we need to grieve and cry, but also to plan the service and the reception, while dealing with legal issues and other additional details. We know you may feel overwhelmed, particularly in regards to the many decisions that must be made in planning a funeral or memorial service. Whether gathered in the sanctuary, a funeral home, or at the graveside, we seek to support one another, celebrate the love of the deceased, give thanks for their life, and commend them to God.

Worship in such a time offers consolation to the bereaved by acknowledging their pain and sorrow and providing the Christian community and others with an opportunity to support the bereaved with their presence. Its purpose is to affirm once more the powerful, steadfast love of God from which people cannot be separated, even by death.

Our Senior Minister conducts all funeral services held at First Congregational Church. Any requests for another pastor or lay person to officiate or assist in the service must be approved by the Senior Minister.

If you wish to hold a funeral at First Congregational Church, please contact the church office and our Senior Minister to arrange the date. It is also possible to hold a reception after the service, which can be scheduled with the church office.

The Senior Minister will meet with you to plan the service. Our Minister of Music coordinates all music for our services. Additional musicians or vocalists must be discussed with our Minister of Music. Please see the attached document containing a sample worship order and suggested scriptures and hymns. For church members, the church office will provide a simple bulletin for the service.

The Memorial Garden on our church grounds is available and affords members, families, and friends:

- The privilege of the interment of remains
- The opportunity to memorialize a loved one
- The perfect setting for quiet meditation and prayer
First Congregational Church members and their immediate family may be interred at no cost and/or a memorial brick purchased for $150. The cost of interment for non-members is $500, plus $150 for the memorial brick. Cremation must be arranged with a funeral home or crematorium. Planning for the interment should be made through the Senior Minister.

Please note, pictures and other mementos can be displayed in the Narthex, Tower Room, or other reception area.

Reception space is available at the church. The church can provide the set-up of tables and chairs. Kitchen space is available for staging purposes for caterers. You may bring in a caterer of your choice. Some nearby options are:

- Pasta Plus (22 South Central Ave. 63105; 314-727-1001; pastaplus.net)
- The Posh Nosh Deli (8115 Maryland Ave. 63105; 314-862-1890; poshnoshdeli.com)
- Protzel’s Deli (7608 Wydown Blvd. 63105; 314-721-4445; protzelsdeli.com)
- Herbie’s (8100 Maryland Ave. 63105; 314-769-9595; herbies.com)

### Building Fees:

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### Staff Fees:

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Fees may be combined into one check to be written to First Congregational Church of St. Louis, except for the Senior Minister and Minister of Music, which are written to them directly. Names and information will be provided.
Sample Service Order

A Service of Witness
To the Resurrection

Celebrating the Life of
(name of person)

Prelude
Welcome
Call to Worship
Hymn
Old Testament Readings
New Testament Readings
(Family Memories – optional)
Homily
Silent Celebration
Pastoral Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer
Hymn
Benediction
Postlude
Suggested Scripture Lessons
These passages are from the New Revised Standard Version

Psalm 23
The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths his name’s sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff— they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

Psalm 46
God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.
There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns.
The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.
Come, behold the works of the Lord; see what desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. “Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.” The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Psalm 90
Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. You turn us back to dust, and say, “Turn back, you mortals.” For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night.
You sweep them away; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning; in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.
For we are consumed by your anger; by your wrath we are overwhelmed. You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your countenance.
For all our days pass away under your wrath; our years come to an end like a sigh. The days of our life are seventy years, or perhaps eighty, if we are strong; even then their span is only toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away.
Who considers the power of your anger? Your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you. So teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart.
Turn, O Lord! How long? Have compassion on your servants! Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad as many days as you have afflicted us, and as many years as we have seen evil. Let your work be manifest to your servants, and your glorious power to their children. Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and prosper for us the work of our hands— O prosper the work of our hands!
Psalm 91
You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.” For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence; he will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler. You will not fear the terror of the night, or the arrow that flies by day, or the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or the destruction that wastes at noonday.
A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only look with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. Because you have made the Lord your refuge, the Most High your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone. You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot. Those who love me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know my name. When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honor them. With long life I will satisfy them, and show them my salvation.

Psalm 100
Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing. Know that the Lord is God. It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name. For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

Psalm 121
I lift up my eyes to the hills— from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore.

Psalm 130
Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications! If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered. I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning.

O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem. It is he who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.

Isaiah 40:28-31
Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Isaiah 55:1-13
Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you. Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.
New Testament:

Matthew 11:28-30
“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Mark 10:13-16
People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.” And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

John 14.1-6, 27
“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

2 Corinthians 4:16-18
So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

2 Corinthians 5:1-10
For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling— if indeed, when we have taken it off we will not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord— for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call and with the sound of God’s trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

1 Peter 1:3-9
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Revelation 21:1-4; 22:25
Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.” I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.

Revelation 22:3-5
Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.
Suggested Hymns

This list is not exhaustive. It is meant to provide a suggested group of hymns that are appropriate for a funeral/memorial service.

Praise to the Living God

Ps. 84:1–2

Curtis Beach, 1966; alt.

1 Praise to the living God, the God of love and light, Whose
2 Praise to the living God, from whom all things derive, Whose
3 Praise to the living God, who knows our joy and pain, Who
4 Praise to the living God, around, within, above, Be-

word brought forth the myriad suns and set the worlds in flight;
Spir-it formed up on this sphere the first faint seeds of life;
shares with us our common life, the sacred and profane.
yond the grasp of human mind, but whom we know as love.

Whose in-finite design, which we but dimly see, Per-
Who caused them to evolve, unwitting, toward God's goal, Till
God toils where'er we toil, in home and mart and mill; And
In these tumultuous days, so full of hope and strife, May

vades all nature, making all a cosmic unity,
human-kind stood on the earth, as living, thinking souls.
deep within the human heart God leads us forward still.
we bear witness to the Way, O Source and Goal of life.

Curtis Beach, born into a family of several generations of ministers, was educated at Harvard University, the Boston University School of Theology, and the University of Southern California. A minister in the United Church of Christ, Beach authored The Gospel of Mark: Its Making and Meaning.

Tune: DIademata S.M.D.
George J. Elvey, 1868
We Live by Faith and Not by Sight

Henry Alford, 1844; alt.

Unison

1. We live by faith and not by sight;
2. We may not touch Christ’s hands and side,
3. Help then, O Christ, our unbelief;
4. That, when our life faith is done,

no gracious words we hear From Christ who spoke as
nor follow where Christ trod; But in confessing
and may our faith abound To call on you when
in realms of clearer light We may behold you

none e’er spoke, who still we know is near.
we rejoice: our Savior and our God!
you are near and seek where you are found:
as you are, with full and endless sight.

As dean of Canterbury, Henry Alford exemplified ecumenism by working closely with non-Anglican groups. He promoted New Testament scholarship with his famous commentary on the Greek New Testament, one of fifty books he published during his lifetime.

Tune: DUNLAP’S CREEK C.M.
Samuel McFarland, c. 1816
Harm. Richard Proulx, 1986

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In the Bulb There Is a Flower

Natalie Sleeth, 1985

1 In the bulb there is a flower, in the seed, an apple tree;
in co-coons, a hid-den prom-is: but-ter-flies will soon be free!
in the cold and snow of win-ter there's a spring that waits to be,
un-re-vealed un-till its sea-son, some-thing God a-lone can see.

2 There's a song in ev-ery si-lence, seek-ing word and mel-o-dy;
there's a dawn for ev-ery dark-ness, bring-ing hope to you and me.
From the past will come the fu-ture; what it holds, a mys-ter-y.
un-re-vealed un-till its sea-son, some-thing God a-lone can see.

3 In our end is our be-gin-ning; in our time, in-fin-i-ty;
in our doubt there is be-liev-ing; in our life, e-ter-ni-ty.
In our death, a res-ur-rec-tion; at the last, a vic-to-ry.
un-re-vealed un-till its sea-son, some-thing God a-lone can see.

Tune: PROMISE 8.7.8.7.D.
Natalie Sleeth, 1985

Natalie Sleeth composed her "Hymn of Promise" first as a choral anthem and then adapted it to this version for congregational singing. It was dedicated to her husband, Ronald Sleeth, who died shortly after she completed it.

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The Strife Is O’er

1 Cor. 15:53-57

Latin, c. 1695

Transl. Francis Pott, 1861; alt.

Refrain (before st. 1 and after st. 4)

Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia!

1 The strife is o’er, the battle done, the victo-
2 The powers of death have done their worst, but Christ their
3 The three sad days are quickly sped, Christ rises
4 Christ, by your wounds on Calvary from death’s dread

ry of life is won; The song of triumph
legions has dispersed: Let shouts of holy
glorious from the dead: All glory to our
sting your servants free, That we may live e-

has begun. Al-le-lu-ia!
joy outburst. Al-le-lu-ia!
risen Head! Al-le-lu-ia!
ter-nal-ly. Al-le-lu-ia! to Refrain

A seventeenth-century Jesuit collection published in Cologne, Germany, is the earliest known source of this Latin hymn. The hymn is firmly associated with this musical setting from a Magnificat by the Italian composer Palestrina.

Tune: VICTORY 8.8.8. with alleluias
Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, 1591
Arr. William H. Monk, 1861
Alleluia! Alleluia! Hearts to Heaven

Christopher Wordsworth, 1872; alt.
Matt. 28:5-8; Rom. 5:21; 6:4-11; 1 Cor. 15:20-22

Sing to God a hymn of glad-ness, sing to God a hymn of praise.
Glorious life, and life immortal on this holy Easter morn;
Rain and dew, and gleams of glory from the brightness of your face;
Alleluia to the Savior who came death’s bonds to destroy;

Jesus on the cross as Savior for the world’s salvation bled;
Christ has triumphed, and we conquer by God’s liberating deed;
That we, with our hearts in heaven, here on earth may fruitful be,
Alleluia to the Spirit, Fount of love and sanctity;

But the crucified Redeemer now is risen from the dead!
Now the Christ with us abiding to eternal life shall lead.
And by angel hands be gathered, and be yours eternally.
Alleluia! Alleluia! To the Three, Majesty.

Christopher Wordsworth, gifted nephew of poet William
Wordsworth, served the Church of England successively as canon
at Westminster, parish priest in Berkshire, and, finally, bishop of
Lincoln. This Easter hymn is one of his most enduring.

Tune: WEISSE FLAGGEN 8.7.8.7.D.
Tochter Sion, Cologne, 1741
Alternate tune: HYFRYDOL
My Shepherd Is the Living God

Ps. 23; John 10:11, 27-30
Composie from Thomas Sternhold, 1549, and Isaac Watts, 1719; alt.

C G C G7 C F G F C

1 My shepherd is the liv - ing God, I there-fore noth-ing need;
2 When I walk through the shades of death, your pres-ence is my stay;
3 The sure pro - vi-sions of my God at-tend me all my days;

Am G C F G Am G7 C G C

In pas-tures fair, near pleas-ant streams you set-tle me to feed.
A word of your sup-port -ing breath drives all my fears a-way.
O may your house be my a - bode, and all my work be praise.

C F C C Dm G C Am Dm Am FM7

You bring my wan-der-ing spir - it back when I for-sake your ways,
Your hand, in sight of all my foes, does still my ta - ble spread;
There would I find a set-tled rest, while oth -ers come and go—

Em C Am Dm Am Em C G7 C

And lead me for your mer-cy's sake in paths of truth and grace.
My cup with bless -ings o-ver-flows, your oil a-noints my head.
No more a strang -er or a guest, but like a child at home.

Isaac Watts, London's leading Congregational minister, wrote more than 600 hymns. His paraphrase of Psalm 23 has been altered here by combining a few phrases from Thomas Sternhold, a sixteenth-century English hymnwriter who also wrote metrical psalm texts.

Tune: CONSOLATION C.M.D.
Southern Harmony, 1835
Harm. Erik Routley, 1976
Alternate tune: CRIMOND (Each stanza above becomes two stanzas.)
We Live by Faith and Not by Sight

Henry Alford, 1844; alt.

John 20:24-29

Unison

1 We live by faith and not by sight;
2 We may not touch Christ’s hands and side,
3 Help then, O Christ, our unbelief;
4 That, when our life of faith is done,

no gracious words we hear From Christ who spoke as
nor follow where Christ trod; But in confessing
and may our faith abound To call on you when
in realms of clear light We may behold you

none e’er spoke, who still we know is near.
we rejoice: our Saviour and our God!
you are near and seek where you are found:
as you are, with full and endless sight.

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Samuel McFarland, c. 1816
Harm. Richard Proulx, 1986

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Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer

1 Guide me, O my great Redeemer, pilgrim through this barren land; I am weak, but you are mighty; hold me with your powerful hand. Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more, feed me till I want no more.

2 Open now the crystal fountain, where the healing waters flow. Let the fire and cloudy pillar fears subside. Death of death, and hell's destruction, lead me all my journey through. Strong deliverer, strong deliverer, ever be my strength and shield. I will ever sing to you, I will ever sing to you.

3 When I reach the River Jordan, bid my anxious

John Hughes, a railroad official by trade, composed this tune for the 1907 anniversary of Capel Rhondda, Pontypridd, Wales. Cwm Rhondda refers to the "low valley" area surrounding the urban district of Rhondda in southern Wales.
Holy, Holy, Holy

Rev. 4:11; Isa. 6:1-8

Descant

1 Holy, holy, holy, God the Almighty!
2 Holy, holy, holy! Saints adore you truly,
3 Holy, holy, holy! Though we know but dimly,
4 Holy, holy, holy, God the Almighty!

Early in the morning we praise your majesty,
Cast down their golden crowns around the glassy sea,
Though the eyes of mankind your glory may not see,
All your works shall praise your name in earth and sky and sea.

Holy, holy, holy!
Cherubim and seraphim bow before you only,
You alone are holy, you alone are worthy,
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!

God in three persons, blessed Trinity.
From the beginning, God eternally,
Perfect in power, in love and purity,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

This hymn by Reginald Heber was published in a book of hymns for Banbury Parish Church in England. Nicaea, one of nearly 900 tunes by John B. Dykes, was named for the famous council that defined the doctrine of the Trinity.


John B. Dykes, 1863

Descant: David M. K. Williams, 1948
How Blessed Are They Who Trust in Christ

John 3:13–16; Jude 1:20–21

Fred Pratt Green, 1972

1 How blessed are they who trust in Christ when we and
   those we love must part; We yield them up, for
   go they must, but do not lose them from our heart.

2 In ripened age, their harvest reaped, or gone from
   us in youth or prime, In Christ they have e-
   ter nal life, released from all the bonds of time.

3 In Christ, who tasted death for us, we rise a-
   bove our natural grief, and witness to a
   stricken world the strength and splendor of belief.

This text was one of four chosen from 457 entries for publication
by The Hymn Society of America in 1980. Works of this eminent
British writer have been published in The New Yorker and in
anthologies.

Tune: MARYTON L.M.
H. Percy Smith, 1874

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I Was There to Hear Your Borning Cry

John Wytsaker, 1985, all

1 I was there to hear your born- ing cry, I'll be there when you are old.
   there to cheer you on; I rejoiced the day you were raised to praise the old, no longer young.
   I'll be there to guide you re-elected the day you

2 When you found the won- der of the Word, I was there, when you are old.
   living God, to whom you now belong.
   through the night, complete what I've begun.
   I rejoiced the day you

3 In the midst of the ages of your life, not too were baptized, to see your life unfold.
   I was there when you were but a child, with a
   Should you find someone to share your time in and you

4 I was there to hear your born- ing cry, I'll be there when you are old.
   faith to suit you well; I'll be there in case you
   join your hearts as one, I'll be there to make your
   I've been with just one more surprise.
Nearer, My God, to You

Gen. 28:10–22; Matt. 16:24

Sarah Flower Adams, 1841
Adapt. Thomas H. Troeger

1 Near-er, my God, to you, near-er to you. I’ll bear the cross as Christ calls me to do and pray each day a-new:
2 When I am wan-der-ing as Ja-cob did, and in the deep-est night the path is hid, my dreams will bring me, too,
3 Let Ja-cob’s lad-der fill the sky a-bove, and an-gels car-ry down the faith and love to keep this goal in view:
4 Then, wak-ing from the night to morn-ing air by Beth-el’s stone, I’ll know you heard my prayer, and how my yearn-ing grew:

1–4 Near-er my God, to you, near-er my God, to you, near-er to you.

Sarah Flower Adams, daughter of a well-known English editor, was a successful actress in London. During her short life she wrote prose and poetry for religious publications, a five-act drama, and a children’s catechism.

Tune: BETHANY 6.4.6.4.6.6.6.4.
Lowell Mason, 1856
Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

Isa. 26:4; John 19:34

Augustus M. Toplady, 1776; alt.

1 Rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide; my shelter be!
2 Not the labors of my hands can fulfill your law's demands;
3 Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to your cross I cling;
4 While I draw this fleeting breath, when my eyes shall close in death,

Let the water and the blood, from your wounded side which flowed,
Could my zeal no respite know, could my tears forever flow,
Naked, come to you for dress; helpless, look to you for grace;
When I soar to worlds unknown, meet you at your judgment throne,

Be of sin the double cure, cleanse me from its guilt and power.
All for sin could not atone; you must save, and you alone.
Stained, I to the fountain fly; wash me, Savior, or I die!
Rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide; my shelter be!

Augustus Toplady first published this poem as part of an extensive article in which he likened the English national debt to the burden of sin. The present form is a hybrid of the original and revisions in 1815 by Thomas Cotterill.

Tune: TOPLADY 7.7.7.7.7.
Thomas Hastings, 1830
Alternate tune: REDHEAD NO. 76
Shall We Gather at the River

Robert Lowry, 1864; alt.

Rev. 22:1–5

1 Shall we gather at the river, where bright angel feet have trod,
2 On the margin of the river, washing up its silver spray,
3 As we reach the shining river, lay we every burden down;
4 Soon we’ll reach the shining river, soon our pilgrim-age will cease;

with its crystal tide for-ever flowing by the throne of God?
we will walk and worship ev-er, all the happy golden day.
grace our spir-its will de-liv-er, and pro-vide a robe and crown.
soon our happy hearts will quiver with the melody of peace.

Refrain

Yes, we’ll gather at the river, the beau-ti-ful, the beau-ti-ful river,

Gather with the saints at the river that flows by the throne of God.

Written during a time when an epidemic was claiming many lives in New York, Robert Lowry’s hymn raised the question “Shall we meet again?” Lowry was pastor at Hanson Place Baptist Church in Brooklyn from 1861 to 1869, and collaborated on numerous hymn collections with William H. Doane.

Tune: HANSON PLACE 8.7.8.7. with refrain

Robert Lowry, 1864
Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound

St. 1–4, John Newton, 1779; alt.
St. 5, A Collection of Sacred Ballads, 1790

1 Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that
2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
3 Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I
4 My God has promised good to me, whose
5 When we've been there ten thousand years, bright

saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but
grace my fears relieved; How precious did that
have already come; 'Tis grace has brought me
word my hope secures; God will my shield and
shining as the sun, We've no less days to

now am found, was blind but now I see.
grace appear the hour I first believed!
safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
portion be as long as life endures.
sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.

John Newton's autobiographical hymn reflects his conversion from his earlier existence as a slave trader. While serving as curate in the English village of Olney, Newton met William Cowper, and together they published Olney Hymns, which included this hymn.

Tune: AMAZING GRACE C.M.
(NEW BRITAIN)
Columbia Harmony, Cincinnati, 1829
Arr. Edwin O. Excell, 1900
Be Now My Vision

Ancient Irish text, c. 8th century; transl. Mary E. Byrne, 1905
Versified by Eleanor H. Hall, 1912; adapt.

Unison

1 Be now my vision, O God of my heart;
2 Be now my wisdom, and be my true word;
3 Rich es I need not, nor life's empty praise,
4 Sov eraign of heaven, my victory won,

Nothing surpasses the love you impart—
ev er within me, my soul is assured;
you, my inheri tance, now and always;
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!

You my best thought, by day or by night,
Mo ther and Fa ther, you are both to me,
You and you only are first in my heart,
Heart of my own heart, what ever be fall,

Waking or sleeping, your presence my light.
Now and for ever your child I will be.
great God, my treasure, may we ne ver part.
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Dating from the eighth century or earlier, this Irish hymn was translated into prose by Mary Byrne. It was then versified by Eleanor Hall, author of several books on Irish literature and history. David Evans arranged the Irish melody for this text in 1927.

Tune: SLANE 10.10.9.10.
Traditional Irish melody
Harms. David Evans, 1927

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For All the Saints

Heb. 12:1

William W. How, 1864; alt.

1 For all the saints who from their labors rest, who to the
2 You were their rock, their refuge, and their might: you, Christ, the
3 Still may your people, faith-fu1, true, and bold, live as the
4 Ringed by this cloud of witnesses divine, we fee-bly
5 And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long, steals on the

world their steadfast faith confessed, your name, O Jesus,

hope that put their fears to flight; 'mid gloom and doubt, you

saints who nobly fought of old, and share with them a

struggle, they in glory shine; yet in your love our

ear the distant triumph song, then hearts are brave a-


be forever blessed.

were their one true light.

glorious crown of gold. Alleluia! Alleluia!

faithful lives entwine.

gain, and faith grows strong.


This traditional All Saints Day hymn originally consisted of eleven stanzas written for the Sarum Hymnal (1869) and set to a tune by that name, Sine Nomine. It has grown in popularity since it was later paired with the enduring Sine Nomine in The English Hymnal (1906).

Music Copyright ©. Oxford University Press. From The English Hymnal 1906.

Tune: SINE NOMINE 10.10.10.4.
Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906.
For the Beauty of the Earth
St. 1-3, Folliott S. Pierpoint, 1864; alt.
St. 4, Miriam Therese Winter, 1993

1 For the beauty of the earth, for the splendor of the skies,
2 For the wonder of each hour of the day and of the night,
3 For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child,
4 For the good that love inspires, for a world where none exclude,

For the love which from our birth over and around us lies,
Hill and vale, and tree and flower, sun and moon, and stars of light,
Friends on earth, and friends above, for all gentle thoughts and mild,
For a faith that never tires, and for every heart renewed,

Refrain

God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

Folliott S. Pierpoint, author of numerous hymns, penned these verses near his native city of Bath, England, on a late spring day when flowers were in full bloom and all the earth seemed to rejoice.

Tune: DIX 7.7.7.7. with refrain
Conrad Kocher, 1838
Adapt. William H. Monk, 1861
God of Our Life

Hugh T. Kerr, 1916; alt.

1 God of our life, through all the circling years, we trust in you.

2 God of the past, our times are in your hand; with us abide.

3 God of the coming years, through paths unknown we follow you;

In all the past, through all our hopes and fears, your care shines through.

Lead us by faith to hope's true promised land; be now our guide.

When we are strong, O leave us not alone, our refuge true.

With each new day, when morning lifts the veil,

Bless us in times of darkness and of light,

Be now for us in life our daily bread,

We own your mercies, God, which never fail.

Then faith's fair vision changes into sight.

Our heart's true home when all our years have sped.

Hugh Kerr was educated in Canada and the United States and was a pioneer in religious broadcasting. He wrote this hymn for the fiftieth anniversary of Shadyside Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, where he had a long tenure as pastor.

Tune: SANDON 10.4.10.4.10.10.

Charles Henry Purday, 1869

For another harmonization, see 466
How Firm a Foundation

Isa. 43:2-5, 2 Tim. 2:19; Heb. 13:5
“K” in John Rippon’s Selection of Hymns, 1787; alt.

1. How firm a foundation for you has been laid,
2. “Fear not, I am with you, oh, be not dismayed,
3. “When through the deep waters I call you to go,
4. “When through every trial your pathway shall lie,
5. “The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,

by God in the Word, in the sacrifice paid!
for I am your God, I will still give you aid;
the rivers of woe shall not overflow you flow;
my grace all-sufficient shall be your supply;
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;

What more can God say than to you has been said,
I’ll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand
For I will be with you, your troubles to bless,
the flame shall not hurt you; for I have designed
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,

to you, who for refuge to Jesus have fled?
upheld by my gracious, omnipotent hand.”
dedelivering you from your deepest distress.”
your soul to make pure just as gold is refined.”
I’ll never, no never, no never forsake!”

In 1787, John Rippon, English Baptist clergyman, identified the author of this hymn as “K”; no one has yet verified a complete name. The pentatonic melody has been known by several names since it first appeared in Funk’s Genuine Church Music (1832).

Tune: FOUNDATION 11.11.11.11.
Early United States melody from Funk’s Genuine Church Music, 1832
Alternate tune: ADESTE FIDELES
I Greet You, Sure Redeemer

1 I greet you, sure Redeemer, with my heart,
   glad for the saving love that you impart,
   Who pain did undergo for my poor sake;
   I pray you from our hearts all cares to take.

2 You are the source of mercy and of grace,
   reigning omnipotent in every place;
   So rule in us and our whole being sway.
   Shine on us with the light of your pure day.

3 You are the life, by which alone we live,
   and all our substance and our strength receive.
   Sustain us by your faith and by your power,
   and give us strength in every trying hour.

4 You have the true and perfect gentleness,
   no harshness have you and no bitterness;
   Grant us the grace that flows in you so free
   that we may dwell in perfect unity.

5 Our hope is all in you and you alone;
   we trust the promise that your word makes known.
   O dear Redeemer, make us calm and sure,
   that in your strength we evermore endure.
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You

Ps. 145:10; Isa. 49:13

Henry van Dyke, 1907; alt.

1 Joyful, joyful, we adore you, God of glory, God of love;
2 All your works with joy surround you, earth and heaven reflect your rays,
3 You are giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blessed,
4 Mortals, join the mighty chorus which the morning stars began;

Hearts unfold like flowers before you, opening to the sun above.
Stars and angels sing around you, center of unbroken praise.
Well-spring of the joy of living, ocean depth of happy rest!
Boundless love is reigning o'er us, reconciling race and clan.

Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive the storms of doubt away;
Field and forest, vale and mountain, flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Loving Spirit, Father, Mother, all who love belong to you;
Ever singing, move we forward, faithful in the midst of strife,

Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.
Chanting bird and flowing fountain, teach us what our praise should be.
Teach us how to love each other, by that love our joy re-new.
Joyful music leads us onward in the triumph song of life.

Henry van Dyke was a noted church leader, U.S. ambassador, Navy chaplain, and prolific writer. Many people associate this hymn with Beethoven's ninth symphony, but few are aware of the original poem by the German classicist F. Schiller (1759-1805) that inspired Beethoven.

Tune: HYMN TO JOY 8.7.8.7.D.
Ludwig van Beethoven, 1824
Adapt. and harm. Edward Hodges, 1846
My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less

1 My hope is built on noth-ing less than Je-sus’ love and
righ-teous-ness; I dare not trust this earth-ly frame, but
whol-ly lean on Je-sus’ name.

2 When shad-ows veil my Sav-ior’s face, I rest up-on un-
chang-ing grace; In ev-ery high and storm-y gale, my
an-chor holds with-in the veil.

3 Christ’s oath and cov-em-ant and blood sup-port me in the
ris-ing flood; When all a-round my soul gives way, Christ
then is all my hope and stay. On Christ, the sol-i-d Rock, I stand;

4 When Christ shall come with trum-pet sound, oh, may I then in
less to stand be-fore the throne.

all oth-er ground is sink-ing sand, all oth-er ground is sink-ing sand.

William Bradbury met great success by composing hymn tunes and religious songs in a lively, popular style. He also helped establish music programs in New York public schools, served a church, and co-founded a piano company.

Tune: SOLID ROCK L.M. with refrain

William B. Bradbury, 1863
1 Nun danket alle Gott, mit Herz- en, Mund und Händ- en,
O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,
All praise and thanks to God our Maker now be given,
der große Ding- e tut an uns und al- len End- en;
Who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoice,
To Christ, and Spirit, too, our help in highest heaven,
der uns von Mut- ter- leib und Kind- es- bein- en an
Who, from our parents' arms, has blessed us on our way
And keep us still in grace, and guide us when perplexed,
un- zäh- lig viel zu gut bis hier- her hat ge- tan.
With count-less gifts of love, and still is ours to- day.
And free us from all ills in this world and the next.
For thus it was, is now, and shall be ev- er- more.

For much of his life, German Lutheran pastor and musician
Martin Rinkart ministered to the walled city of Eisleben amidst the horrors of the Thirty Years' War. This hymn has become one of the most widely used hymns of the church.

Tune: NUN DANKET 6.7.6.7.6.6.6.
Johann Crüger, 1647
Harm. Felix Mendelssohn, 1840
O God, Our Help in Ages Past

Isaac Watts, 1719, alt.

Ps. 90:1–2, 4–5

1 O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
2 Under the shadow of your throne your saints have dwelt secure;
3 Before the hills in order stood or earth received its frame,
4 A thousand ages in your sight are like an evening gone,

Our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home:
Sufficient is your arm alone, and our defense is sure.
From ever-lasting light you are to end less years the night preceding
Short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.

5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream, soon bears us all away;
We fly for-gotten, as a dream fades at the opening day.

6 O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
Still be our God while troubles last,
and our eternal home!

We Gather Together

Netherlands folk hymn, 16th century
Transl. Theodore Baker, 1894
Adapt. Lavon Bayler, 1992

1 We gather to-gether
to ask for God's bless-ing,
to live in com-mu-ni-ty,
seek-ing God's will.
We come now, as sis-ters and broth-ers, con-fess-ing
the sins that di-vide
and the wrong in us still.

2 Be-side us, for-giv-ing,
en-a-bling, sus-tain-ing,
you call us, O Sav-ior,
to life that is new.
You draw us a-way
from self-cen-tered com-plain-ing.
You lead us and guide us
in ways that are true.

3 All praise to the Spir-it,
pro-vid-er, de-fend-er.
You of-fer us free-dom,
to fol-low or stray,
Em-pow-er-ing all by
the hope you en-gen-der.
Grant wis-dom and cour-age
to fol-low your way.

The original text of this hymn was one of thanksgiving for The Netherlands' independence from Spanish domination in the sixteenth century. It has been reinterpreted for contemporary congregations by United Church of Christ minister and writer Lavon Bayler.

Tune: KREMSER 12.11.12.11:
16th-century Dutch melody
Arr. Edward Kremser, 1877