



# WELS HYMNAL PROJECT

---

## *2014 District Convention Update*

Writing to the Colossians, Paul reminds us that one of the ways in which the Word of Christ dwells richly in God's people is by teaching and admonishing each other with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Writing to the Corinthians, Paul reminds us that orderly worship serves for the building up of God's people. Writing to Timothy, Paul reminds us that the public reading of scripture is something to which we are to remain devoted. Such encouragements and many more are in our minds as we set about preparing for our church body the next hymnal, along with its many ancillary resources, to be released sometime in the first half of the next decade. Pray for us that our work may benefit many.

### **WEBSITE**

The hymnal project's public website is approaching its first anniversary. All are encouraged to register an email address at [www.welshymnal.com](http://www.welshymnal.com). Registration results in email notifications of blog and other updates to the site. Once in a while we may also send out a direct email to registered users. We encourage any and all to send us thoughts and opinions and feedback through the comments form on the site. We are also glad to receive materials (hymns, psalms, canticles, prayers, rites, etc.) which can be attached in various formats to the submissions form. The comments and submissions forms are both available on the homepage of the site.

### **SURVEYS**

We are grateful for the responses received from the first survey which went out to all active pastors. The responses were informative and helpful. We have learned that there is overall satisfaction with the rites, hymnody, and psalmody in current volumes. This helps us to define the scope of our work as refinement and enhancement of materials we have, rather than drastic overhaul or starting from scratch. Three additional surveys going out this calendar year will bring us information from teachers, musicians, and lay members.

### **COMMITTEES**

An Executive Committee of thirteen members has met twice. A brief synopsis of the work of seven subcommittees is intended to provide adequate detail of the scope of the work as it currently exists.

#### **PSALMODY COMMITTEE**

The survey of pastors indicated broad use of Christian Worship (CW) psalmody. Increased use of psalmody, specifically an increase in the singing of the psalms, is something we view as a benefit from our Lord derived in part through the refrain and verse format of psalmody published in Christian Worship. Building on this growth, plans are to expand the format of psalmody offered, to include, for example, psalms which have a combination of a refrain and melodic rather than chanted verses, and psalms which are metrical paraphrases, such as CW #238.

#### **HYMNODY COMMITTEE**

A comprehensive review of all existing hymns in CW and CW: Supplement (CWS) is underway. This will result in identifying hymns which will not be printed in the next hymnal, as well as any modifications to music or text or number of stanzas deemed most wise for hymns which are kept. (All CW and CWS hymns remain available in elec-

tronic versions.) Acquisition of or gaining access to many hymnals, ancient and recent, is taking place, in order to compile a working list of thousands of hymns for review.

### **RITES COMMITTEE**

The first survey indicated broad usage of the rites in CW and CWS. Our work on orders of service will accordingly focus on refinement and improvement of existing rites, with a careful degree of expansion in the area of new materials. The Rites Committee is also covering the broad and labor-intensive areas of occasional services and prayers which will need to be reviewed and/or drafted.

### **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

We are determined to remain in touch with the members of our church body and to make our work as transparent and our communication as two-way as possible. This is happening through: a project website; a three-year collaborative review of Sunday by Sunday worship as it relates to the lectionary and rites and hymns which are being used; a series of surveys; and updates and presentations at various conferences and conventions.

### **LITERATURE COMMITTEE**

Many ancillary resources accompany the release of a hymnal. Initial plans are to make available materials equivalent to CW: Manual and CW: Handbook. These materials are being tailored for both popular and professional use. They will include study and background information in the areas of hymns, psalms, rites, preaching, presiding, musicianship, and so on.

### **SCRIPTURE COMMITTEE**

The three-year CW lectionary has a very high percentage of use among WELS congregations and worship planners. Attention is being given to the church year calendar, the lectionary choices, and the worship planning resources which relate to the selection and use of lessons and hymns and psalms. This committee will eventually also review the creeds and prayers we print, as well as language issues across the entire project.

### **TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE**

This committee is among the first to recognize and to assure interested parties that we plan to print a hard copy pew edition of the hymnal. In referring to digital resources which accompany the hymnal, practically all of the materials of the hymnal and its ancillary products will be made available in electronic format, be that in a database, a downloadable document/file, or a desktop or device or cloud-based application. Identifying user needs and meeting those needs are topmost in the minds of those who are working on worship planning applications, digital tools for musicians, and a possible digital edition of the hymnal itself.

Our website makes mention of the fact that this hymnal project, on which we are currently in the early stages of our work, is one that seeks to also serve a generation that is yet to be born. As that generation also, God-willing, will make use of materials we work on and produce now, we are driven to make sure that our next hymnal and its resources are Christ-centered, scripturally accurate and reliable, and beneficial for all God's people who will make use of them. To that end, please consider us...

Yours in Christ,  
The members of the WELS hymnal project  
Rev. Jon Zabell, chairman  
Rev. Michael Schultz, project director  
Rev. Jonathan Bauer, communications committee chairman