



COVID-19 Resources

In this time of uncertainty and fear, Christians around the globe turn to scripture and turn to song for comfort. We remember that our help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. Indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. In that spirit, Hymnary offers resources for churches, home worshippers and others during COVID-19. May these offerings be a blessing to all who seek them. May the words of old bring comfort and peace.

A New Tool Called FlexPresent

-Hymnary.org has launched a new tool called FlexPresent aimed at helping churches and people worshipping at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is available free of charge to any and all who might need it. "FlexPresent will make it easy to project songs for use in worship, whether lyrics only or lyrics with music notation," said Hymnary founder and Calvin computer science professor Harry Plantinga. "Users also can choose different music notation styles and sizes, select stanzas and more. They also can play a recording of the accompaniment." FlexPresent is part of a bigger project called My.Hymnary which will launch later this year.

<https://my.hymnary.org/flexpresent-preview>

Ten Hymns with Testimonies of Comfort in Times of Trouble

The following ten hymns were selected by [Emily Brink](#) for times when people might not be able to worship with others, including during the current coronavirus pandemic. Brink notes that the tradition of communal worship has always included song as a foundational corporate prayer or testimony. She adds: "During times of social separation and physical isolation, how and what can we sing, even when we are alone?"

The following hymns were selected for such a time as this because they:

were composed by those who experienced suffering or trauma and cried out to God in song;

were composed in difficult contexts that may comfort to us as we sing across time and space with them and other brothers and sisters in Christ;

are familiar and available in most hymnals, with materials also available at hymnary.org.

Brinks says that for those who plan worship for church communities during times people cannot gather together, consider not only including these hymns but also providing the brief stories of context. May these stories help to comfort us as we sing to God in our own difficult time, also when alone.

Blest Be the Tie That Binds

This hymn was originally written by a pastor who decided to stay with his small poor country church, turning down all a call he had accepted to a larger, more influential church. The grief of the little church at the thought of his leaving compelled him to stay with them the rest of his life. "When we are called to part" takes on new meaning today as many cannot even gather with two or three, and not even funerals are being held. But we will meet loved ones again, whether in a month or in eternity.

Children of the Heavenly Father

Written by a daughter who had witnessed the tragic death by drowning of her father, this tender text was written to comfort others who experienced loss. Her text is a humble confession of confident trust that nothing will ever separate us from God, even though we might be separated from those we love—strong comfort at a time when many family members, young or old, are separated from each other even at the time of their death.

Comfort, Comfort Now My People

This setting of Isaiah 40:1-5 is often sung during Advent, reminding us of a people in exile who longed for comfort in darkness, and for “the peace that waits for them.” The gospels of Mark and Luke quote from this passage when introducing John the Baptizer, the one calling in the desert to prepare the way for the Lord. John’s call to repentance commends this hymn any time of year, especially when God’s people are isolated in a new kind of exile, longing for comfort.

For the Healing of the Nations

Often our congregation prayers are filled with concerns for those we know, but in a global pandemic, how can we not pray for the whole world, as Paul urges young pastor Timothy (1 Tim. 2). Dutch-born Fred Kaan lived through World War II and began to write hymns “to fill in the gaps” from his perspective as a pastor and ecumenist concerned with justice for the whole world God loves. He begins with John’s vision of the tree of life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:2).

He Leadeth Me

In spite of the old language, this hymn continues to comfort many, young and old, who have been in “scenes of deepest gloom” as well as around flowers in bloom; experiencing “waters calm” or “troubled sea.” The author based his hymn on the words from Psalm 23: “He leads me beside quiet waters.” The confidence that we are led by a loving God no matter what helps us to “fear no evil, for you are with me.”

How Can I Keep from Singing?

The hymn begins “My life flows on in endless song above earth’s lamentation.” The whole earth is indeed lamenting and suffering during a global pandemic that may have long lasting consequences. Many are afraid. And yet, with ears of faith, if we listen closely, we can hear the “far-off hymn of a new creation.” So let us sing in trust that “No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that Rock I’m clinging.”

I Want Jesus to Walk with Me

No one is meant to be isolated; we long for relationships. One of the hardest parts of dealing with the COVID-19 virus is the isolation required to keep safe. During Lent we remember that Jesus was alone in his suffering, but during Easter we want to rejoice in his resurrection, together with others! Yet, this plea for Jesus to walk with us in our trials and troubles is rooted in trust that God is indeed with us, always, even when walking in the shadow of death (Ps. 23).

Now Thank We All Our God

Pastor Martin Rinkart was a pastor during the Thirty Years War in the walled city of Eilenburg, Germany, which became ever more crowded with refugees seeking safety. But overcrowding led to famine and disease; In 1637 he officiated at over 4,000 funerals, including his wife’s. How could he write this hymn of thanksgiving after such suffering? Only by God’s grace, learning that when we give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thess. 5:18), God will “guide us when perplexed,” and will provide hope, even joy, in suffering.

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

One week after the death of his wife in childbirth along with the death of his newborn son, Thomas Dorsey wrote this song of helplessness (st. 1), crying out for help (st. 2), yet still confident of God’s saving power even in the face of death (st. 3). Often considered the father of Black gospel music, Dorsey is best known for this song, written when he had just begun a long tenure as choral director at Pilgrim Baptist Church in Chicago.

When Peace Like a River

This hymn was written by a grieving father over the death of his two daughters on board a ship in the Atlantic that collided with another ship in 1873. His wife and daughters had been on their way to Europe from New York; his wife survived. Horatio Spafford then traveled to join his wife and wrote this hymn near the spot where his daughters had perished. He wrote a friend, "It is well, the will of God be done."

Most Popular and Most Trending Hymns on Hymnary

-You will find both lists to be worth perusing. The Most Popular list is filled with go-to hymns. Most Trending will give you a sense of what others are finding helpful in these difficult days.

<https://hymnary.org/browse/popular>

Hand-Selected Hymns for the Lectionary

-If you follow the lectionary, these hand-picked hymns will be of some benefit. But even for those who do not follow the lectionary, this resource is bound to be of use.

<https://hymnary.org/browse/lectionary>

A Word Cloud of Popular Topics for Hymns on Hymnary

-This is a really great visual way to see what the more than one million hymns on Hymnary (yes, more than one million!) contain. The bigger the word or term, the more instances of that word or term in the Hymnary database.

<https://hymnary.org/browse/topics>

Small Church Music

-This page presents recordings in MP3 format that churches all around the world use, with downloads averaging over 60,000 per month. The recordings normally have an introduction, several verses and a slowdown on the last verse. Non-commercial use of these recordings is permitted.

<https://hymnary.org/hymnal/scm>

From the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship

Funeral Practices During COVID-19

<https://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/funeral-practices-during-covid-19-praying-for-wisdom-in-pastoral-and-liturgical-adaptations/>

Holy Week in Uncertain Times

<https://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/holy-week-in-uncertain-times/>



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