

July 6, 2025 CCC

Psalm 30:11,12 "That My Soul May Praise You and Not be Silent"

Presbyterian Library Month: The Purple Hymnal

### **Foundational Documents of the PC(USA)**

We're deep in summer now, knee-high by the fourth of July. Pretty soon, you will be starting a relationship with Pastor Andrew Chapdelaine to continue building a beloved community here together. This month, July, in preparation for that fresh relationship, we will be looking at the foundations of our Presbyterian church through four foundational documents.

You may or may not identify as a Presbyterian. Unless there is something specific that your conscience will not permit you to live with, you can work within what is the Reformed and Presbyterian denominational framework for this congregation. The documents we are looking at this month are resources based on 500 years of Protestant life since Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of Wittenburg Church that served as a bulletin board. Before that, the practice of the Beloved Community traces back through varied Christian history to the community of Christ with his disciples. Beyond that, several thousand years of Jewish worship and community back to Abraham form precedent. Underneath that, creation of humanity by God for love and fellowship with God and humanity, are the basis on our lives together.

The resources of our denomination are truly wonderful. The questions you are wrestling with almost certainly have been addressed in hundreds of years of community life. You will find that people have attempted to find order and dignity out of varying perspectives and personalities. Yes, there are other ways of organizing the same material, other ways of emphasizing different parts of the life with God within the covenant community, and these will also enrich your life. But if you care to start from where you are, here with us, you will find that these materials form a useful toolbox, or articulate questions and concerns.

Today we will look at the book with the least history and credibility, the Presbyterian Hymnal.

The Constitution of the PC (USA) consists of Part I, Book of Confessions, and Part II, Book of Order. The Book of Confessions starts with the Nicene Creed, the Apostles' Creed, jumps more than a thousand years to the Scots Confession, and consists of eleven attempts in all to understand and organize what we believe the Bible teaches we must believe and do today. The most recent one is The Brief Statement of Faith from 1991, which doesn't seem brief compared to the Apostles' Creed, but is very brief compared to the Second Helvetic (Swiss) Confession of 1566. We'll look at the Book of Confession on July 20, God willing.

Part II of the Constitution of our denomination is The Book of Order, which consists of the nitty-gritty of life together. It is in three sections, the Form of Government, the Directory for Worship, and the Rules of Discipline, and is continually being examined and revised, a process that begins in a specific Presbytery and is brought before the General Assembly. This will be our focus on July 13, next Sunday.

We'll work our way to the foundational document of our denomination, the Bible, on July 27, and see how Presbyterians historically approach the Scriptures. If you want a Bible in English or your first tongue and do not have one, please speak to me about finding what you need.

The Book of Confessions and the Book of Order can be accessed online without charge, I believe, and can also be purchased as a paper copy. These are truly worthwhile to have at hand as resources in the project of living decently and in order before the Lord, the Presbyterian goal.

### **The Purple Presbyterian Hymnal**

The elements of worship are not very different from those of synagogues in the time of Christ. Praise, Singing, Prayers, Scripture, Offering, Statement of faith (Shema), Confession of sin. Sacrifices at Temple in Jerusalem are now for us the Eucharist. Circumcision is now baptism. Yearly cycle of feasts in OT, notably Passover Meal, but shared meal other times. Other: Snake handling Walking on coals Ecstatic prayers and tongues Prophecy Foot washing Feast days for the saints, special commemorations,

Psalms 30:11,12. Individual healing experience, used for corporate worship.

Heading of Psalm, in dedication of the Temple, Hanukkah, in rededication of temple after Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated it.

From 165 BC deliverance from "Syrian overlordship" (1 Macc 4:52ff, John 10:22)  
(Weiser p266,267)

Hebrew (Masoretic) text and Greek (Septuagint, LXX) count the headings as verses, so the numbering is sometimes different from English translations.

God speaks and acts. We respond with words and deeds, and songs.

vv. 4,5 and vv. 11,12 describe the change within us when we see what God has done for us.

Sing praises, give thanks, God's favor, Joy. Dance, Joy, Praise, Thanks.

It is our natural response and our duty to sing and give praise.

Why is a Hymnal an unlikely volume in a Presbyterian Library?

Hundreds of years, Presbyterian churches sang only Psalms, the Scriptures, not the words of people. Even though the Psalms are often the expression of human speech to God, they are

part of the divine Word, which is revered by Presbyterians. There is some discussion about this, but some Churches had two pulpits, the higher one reserved for only the reading of the Word from a place far beyond human experience.

Today some Reformed churches still sing only the Psalms, to various meters and tunes. John Wesley b 1707, and others expressed thanks and prayers in lyrics reflecting on Scripture and human experience of God's presence and work. Some sacred poems were attached to popular songs, or to tunes previously used for Psalms, and some new music was composed.

Although musical instruments are urged (Ps 33) in the Psalms, there are churches that try to only do what God commands, and they believe that God does not command instrumentation in the NT. Eph 5:19-20. Association of instruments with sensuality and evil.

Music should be an expression of congregational faith and performance (not by trained church ensemble, choir, or paid musicians). Question of reading music. Literacy for lyrics, ability to read music, shaped notes,

Bible and Hymnbook in every home for home worship led by head of household; individuals use for praise and comfort (especially in minority Christian societies) and bring to worship, often in a special bag or, recently, a zipped cover in that specialized size.

Purple Hymnal, 2013. Red is still in stock, but people aren't buying it. Available with ecumenical cover, or with the PC(USA) name and symbol and the words, content is the same.

Blue Presbyterian Hymnal, 1990.

Lift Up Your Hearts, also with content of songs in Reformed tradition, 1999. Newer lyrics, tunes.

See the paper of the CONTENTS of the Purple Hymnal. Much brought in from Blue Hymnal. If the internet or electricity went out, could use for Services of Worship, Other Texts for Worship. Indices to look up songs by Topics, the Lectionary Readings for the day, Scripture references, references to the Psalms, Author/Composer/Sources, Alphabetical by Tune Name, Metrical structure of tune, first lines/common titles.

Scripture Index, p. 980, Psalm 30 sung in # 798 and 805; verses of Psalm 30 in nine other songs, plus #242 specifically mourning turning to dancing, 30:11, in Easter song of joy.

Having a hymnal or hymnals in the pews reminds us of our duty to find a way to praise God in new ways, as well as following along with the praises led by the leaders of the congregation.

### **CCC Hymnbooks**

Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal. Westminster John Knox Press, 2013.

Lift Up Your Hearts: Songs for Creative Worship. Geneva Press, 1999.

The Presbyterian Hymnal. Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990.

### **Resources on Presbyterian Worship**

The Book of Psalms for Singing. Crown and Covenant Publications, The Board of Education and Publication, Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, 1973.

The Companion to the Book of Common Worship. Geneva Press, Office of Theology and Worship Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

### **Resources for Psalm 30**

Boerger, Brenda H., Psalms: Poetic Oracle English Translation. Self-Published, 2009. Pp. 51, 52.

Dahood, Mitchell, S.J., Psalms I, 1-50: Introduction, Translation, and Notes. The Anchor Bible, Garden City, NY, Doubleday & Co, 1965, 1966. Pp. 181-184.

Davie, Donald, ed., The Psalms in English. Penguin Classics, 1996. Pp. 63, 64.

Eaton, J. H., Psalms: Introduction and Commentary. The Torch Bible Commentaries, London, SCM Press, 1967. Pp. 91-93.

Wieder, Laurance, (Compiled, Edited and Introduced by), The Poet's Book of Psalms: The Complete Psalter as Rendered by Twenty-Five Poets from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries. Oxford University Press, 1995. Pp. 40, 41.

Weiser, Artur, The Psalms: A Commentary. Translated by Herbert Hartwell. The Old Testament Library, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1962. Pp. 265-273.