

Why a new hymnal?

- **A curated and consolidated collection of hymns.** God blesses his Church in every generation with talented poets and composers who add their voices to those from past generations. The new hymnal retains the best of old treasures (from our current hymnal and supplement) while making room for new treasures. Careful curation assures not only doctrinal faithfulness but also a good balance across seasons and themes. God's love in Christ remains at the center of worship that clearly proclaims law and gospel.
- **A complete and flexible musical psalter.** In the late 20th century denominations throughout the world (re-)discovered the value and delight of singing psalms. One happy surprise with our 1993 WELS hymnal was that psalm singing became widely appreciated. But only one musical style was used. The new psalter features multiple musical settings in a variety of styles for all 150 psalms.
- **A singer's book.** In contrast to some of the musical settings in our current hymnal, more hymns are set in straightforward and familiar four-part harmony, making it easier for people to sing in harmony. Some familiar canticles will also appear in harmony rather than melody-only (CW pages 16, 22, 23, 46, 48.)
- **The blessing of digital resources.** *Christian Worship: Service Builder* will streamline the work of worship planners and church offices. In many cases the time saved easily pays for the annual cost. Two additional products are: *Musician's Resource* (downloadable files for involving a wide variety of instrumentalists) and an app that brings hymnal resources to smartphones or tablets for various personal and family uses.
- **Stay ahead of the curve.** When our current hymnal arrived in 1993, we were long past the time when a new hymnal was needed. The wisdom and benefit of staying ahead of the curve was apparent in 2008 when adoption of the hymnal supplement far outpaced expectations. Simply put: it is good to keep liturgical worship both fresh and strongly rooted in our heritage.
- **Reflect our unity in Christ.** Sharing the same hymnal is not necessary for spiritual unity. But there are benefits when we do share common worship resources. Think of WELS guests or transferring members at churches throughout our country. A familiar core of worship resources and a shared worship philosophy are welcome touchpoints of familiarity and comfort.

For extensive additional information, visit christianworship.com. This provides previews of 54 hymns. The reverse side of this page features a draft of the introduction to the pew edition of the new hymnal and a comment from the new psalter.

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Introduction to the hymnal

For a generation yet unborn.

Like its predecessors, this hymnal celebrates our worship heritage with an eye to the future. Gifted poets, artists, and musicians don't stand by idly while the church marches on. The majority of hymns and rites you'll find here are time-tested and approved, but there are also worthy texts and musical settings that are fresh and new.

Also unique and new is the sheer volume of supporting materials connected to this hymnal. A musicians' resource adds thousands of vocal and instrumental options in a number of musical styles for churches of any size. A psalter provides additional musical variety and includes settings for all the psalms in the Bible. *Christian Worship: Service Builder* is a time-saving worship planning and publishing interface that affords easy access to all hymnal content. Four new manuals offer educational, practical, and devotional context. When you add to these a commentary on the lectionary, a planning guide, and an updated agenda and handbook, it becomes evident that this worship resource is truly comprehensive.

With so much carefully curated content on hand, there is something for everyone to appreciate and to use: seasoned worshipers, newcomers, and *a generation yet unborn*. Those who produced this hymnal pray that it will be welcomed by many.

More important, this book of worship delivers what this and every generation needs. Cultures and customs change, but the next generation is going to inherit the sin of this generation, and the solution they will need tomorrow is the same one we need today. Early in the hymnal committee's work, it was resolved that *this hymnal will confess Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, who comes to us in the means of grace*. Whether the things we sing and say are time-tested and approved or fresh and new, the central focus of this book is Jesus Christ: the forgiveness he purchased with his blood, the peace he gives us in Word and sacrament, and the praise he inspires from our lips and in our lives.

We still work and worship in weakness, but God has promised that his church will stand and that not even the gates of Hades will overcome us. We can't help but respond by saying, *We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord!*

From the introduction to the psalter

Martin Luther said, "No devotional book has ever appeared that is superior to the Psalms. They clearly and prophetically detail the death and resurrection of Christ. The Psalms, inspired by the Holy Spirit, are the songs of his people, his Church, with hearts laid open, praising and lamenting. They are our words of devotion."

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