

Open Topics | Community of Christ Sings at Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

hymns, hymnal, justice, congregation, Christ, worship, topic, repertoire

SPEAKERS

Carla Long, Nancy Hall, Daniel Damon, Josh Mangelson

Josh Mangelson 00:17

Welcome to the Project Zion Podcast. This podcast explores the unique spiritual and theological gifts Community of Christ offers for today's world.

Carla Long 00:33

Hello, and welcome to the Project Zion Podcast. I'm your host, Carla Long. And I'm so excited to be here with our guests today. I've never met them face to face, but I already feel like I know so much about them. They are the Reverend Daniel Damon and the Reverend Dr. Nancy Hall. So, Dan and Nancy, hello, and welcome to the podcast. (Hi, Carla.) (Hello.) So, I first heard about the two of you very recently when I heard that you use our hymnal, our sweet little Community of Christ Sings, as a basis for one of your classes that you're teaching. And I have to tell you, I was floored. I mean, I know we have an awesome hymnal. It's super awesome. I know they worked for like seven years on it. But I never thought that it might be used as a text, as in a university class. So, I'm super excited to hear more about that. And I, I really can't wait. But before we jump into that, I would love for you to take a minute or two and introduce yourselves. So, Dan, Nancy, I don't know who wants to go first. But let's hear about who you are, where you live, what you do. All that good stuff.

Daniel Damon 01:44

Nancy, would you go first?

Nancy Hall 01:46

I'll be glad to. So, I'm Nancy and I just completed, uh, 30 years as a professor at American Baptist Seminary of the West in Berkeley where I also live. I am a pastor. I've been pastor of First Baptist Church of Berkeley for 10 years, although, um, a part of that church for about 35 years. I am a graduate of a BSW class of 1980. So, I've spent many, many years of my life directly associated with the seminary and have been, um, Minister of Music for 40 some years. Uh, my passion is hymnity. That goes all the way back to being a, a very young person. I grew up in the Lutheran Church, so, I was steeped in the great German corals and some of the English hymns and, uh, early American hymns. So, uh, that's just followed me through my entire life and has become absolutely my favorite subject for teaching and sharing and, uh, worship planning.

Daniel Damon 03:07

So, my one sentence bio is I'm a United Methodist pastor, a hymn writer and a jazz pianist. Um, I have a degree in music from Greenville College in Southern Illinois, a Free Methodist Christian liberal arts school. And voice was my performance area. Um, I wasn't, I don't have any classical background in piano, so, that wasn't a path that was open to me. But I've always played, uh, you know, 19th century gospel hymns, and I learned to improvise. All the piano players in the Evangelical Free Church in Rapid City added notes. Uh, we didn't know the word improvisation, but we called it adding notes. And, uh, I came out to the Bay Area from, uh, the Black Hills of South Dakota and, uh, eventually was able to find work, uh, playing the piano on Geary Street in a sing along piano bar called the Curtain Call and, um, worked nine till two in the morning and learned a lot of songs, learned to transpose, started to improvise. And then I went to Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley. Um, felt the call to become a minister and put myself through school there playing, uh, the piano, um, in, uh, some of the nicer hotels and restaurants doing, uh, private parties and stuff. That's me in a nutshell.

Carla Long 04:36

Well, one of the things that really drew me to this podcast is that I lived in California for six years from 2005 to 2011. And I finished seminary during that time, and I was just drawn to the Graduate Theological Union and actually the Pacific School of, uh, Pacific School of Religion. I, and I don't know if it was because you had a Quidditch team or what, but I was really, I, I couldn't afford it. uh, so, that was a problem. But I, I did use, make excellent use of your library while I was in seminary. So, I felt every time I walked on campus, I felt like extra, extra cool. So, I already think that you two are extra, extra cool for teaching there. That's amazing. I'm, I mean, I love how you, yeah, I just, I love everything about it. So, Berkeley is one of my favorite places on the planet. I'm, I'm little jealous, I must admit. So, I, I am really even curious how, how did you even hear about Community of Christ Sings if, um, neither one of you are from, uh, our, you know, know about us necessarily. We're kind of a small denomination. How did you even hear about this hymnal?

Daniel Damon 05:48

Well, um, members of your committee came to the hymn society conferences for years and, uh, they seemed to be on the lookout for, uh, new hymns and, uh, hymn writers. So, um, I was, uh, friendly to them. I found them to be very nice olks. You know, I didn't try to promote my material exactly, but I was, uh, friendly to them and let them know I was glad they were part of the hymn society.

Carla Long 06:23

Well, I, I, I don't think our friendly listeners, our friendly listeners might know this or not, but, um, Dan, you actually have, I just counted them, 18 hymns in our hymnal, uh, and he has written some of Community of Christ's, what I would say favorites. Um, one is called I have Called You by Your Name. It's number 636 in Community of Christ Sings. Two Easters ago, we sang one of your hymns, Woman Weeping in the Garden, and it had a profound effect on the congregation. And also your hymn, Come Now You Hungry, was featured at our World Conference in 2019, in this year, 2019, was featured and we sang it every day, I think, at our World Conference where 5000 people from all over the world sang it. So, I think it's also become a bit of a favorite. So, Dan, I, I know now why you know what Community of Christ Sings is because you are featured prominently in it. And I'm so grateful for your talent.

Daniel Damon 07:18

Thank you.

Nancy Hall 07:21

My story's a little different with the hymnal, although very much connected. I was trying to figure out this afternoon which, uh, Hymn Society conference it was, since, uh, CCS was published in 2013. It was either that summer or summer of 2014. So, the hymnal was introduced and featured at the conference. And usually what that means is through the generosity of the denomination or the publisher, uh, everyone who comes to the, uh, hymnal features, uh, section gets a copy of the hymnal for free, which I always love receiving. And we sang through, I think it was led by probably Jan Kraybill and Jane Gardner, maybe a third person. I don't quite recall. Um, so, we each had a hymnal in our hand and they took us through some of the highlights and, um, things about the hymnal that were unique. And I was so impressed. I felt it was one of the best hymnals I'd ever seen. And ever since then, my husband and I have been kind of evangelists for the hymnal. Um, we talk to people about it and then we always show them the topical index. That's one of our favorite parts. We start reading off all the topics, and people are going, Really? You're kidding. Really? There's hymns about that. And there's hymns about this. And it's, it's really enjoyable to share that such a hymnal could exist that focuses on so many topics we're generally not used to seeing in a, in a Christian hymnal. So, the other thing that has intrigued me is, is the idea of a core repertoire for your denomination. We're very, uh, impressed by that and excited about it. So, those are just two things aside from the wonderful collection of hymns that I have, um, been impressed by.

Carla Long 09:23

Nancy, you're gonna make me cry. That is, that's very, very kind of you. And, um, for our listeners who might not know, do you want to explain what the core repertoire means?

Nancy Hall 09:33

This is a group of hymns. It's, I think it's about two pages long. Let's see if I can find it here so I can speak intelligently about this (Before.) Thank you. So, um, there's an ind, index, yes, it starts with non-English language hymns, and, yes, the core repertoire 824 however many hymns that long, um, how long the list is, um, I don't know, maybe 60 or more. And my understanding from the way it was explained to us is that your committee, knowing the life of your denomination so well, and your practices and habits, what you love, and, um, what you're exploring as a denomination shows this group of hymns to say, This is a good place to start for any, um, Community of Christ congregation learn these hymns and, and embody these hymns and, and you will know more about who we are and who you hope to be by engaging in this core repertoire. That's my, been my impression. And I'm serious, yeah, did I get it right?

Carla Long 10:48

You nailed it. That's exactly it.

Nancy Hall 10:49

Oh, good. Good. Yeah. And, so, um, ever since I discovered that and learned about it, I've been, uh, I have plans to work with at least a couple of churches on this idea of core repertoire. I haven't

accomplished it yet, but I'm keeping it definitely lively, um, in some of the work I do with congregations. So, that was, I've never seen that before and I thought that was genius.

Carla Long 11:15

Well, they did work on it for seven years. Um, so, I'm, I'm actually pretty intrigued by this idea of the topical index. I assumed that most hymnals had a topical index. That's not true? Or we just have a lot more different types?

Nancy Hall 11:29

They do. (Oh.) You have so many more topics. Would you say so Dan?

Daniel Damon 11:34

Yeah, they, they and they have a lot of topics that are not covered in other hymnals.

Nancy Hall 11:39

Exactly. For instance, I'm just looking at the first page. I have never in my life seen a hymnal that had a topic called alienation. I mean, my goodness.

Daniel Damon 11:50

Right. Also, aging is a new topic in our hymnals. (The one. . .) (Um hmm.)

Nancy Hall 11:58

Yes. Yes.

Carla Long 12:00

You two are giving me a newfound appreciation for this hymnal and I didn't think that was possible. So, gosh, okay. Well, I, I don't mean to, I don't really mean for this to be just like, Your hymnal's so awesome thing, but I do want to hear more about your class and, and why, in your words, why is it important to discuss hymns? How do they affect people? Why are you singing about justice and everything so important?

Nancy Hall 12:26

Dan, why don't you start with that one?

Daniel Damon 12:27

Well, um, way back in 2010, the Hymn Society met in Birmingham, Alabama. And, um, we were, I forget what the scene was exactly, but uh, definitely justice. And I was asked to do a plenary lecture there which I called A Cry for Justice in Hymnody. And we uh, it occurred to me at the time that, uh, we needed justice for creation, for children, for the elderly, for women, uh, for LGBTQIA community, justice for people with disabilities, justice for the poor and oppressed, and for people of other faith traditions. So, I did a lecture where I featured hymns that addressed these various things. A, a couple of mine made it into that lecture, but mainly I was featuring other, other writers and I've continued to write on those justice themes and, and also, uh, some others that I didn't think about way back in 2010. But, uh,

we've, we've ended up using that lecture as the basis for a course, uh, called A Cry for Justice in Hymnody. We've, we've taught it twice now, I think.

Carla Long 13:54

Well, you know, I was thinking about, um, after I heard about your class, part of me was like, is it, I mean, can you teach a whole class simply on hymns? And then I thought more about it and realized that hymns are probably a good quarter of the time that we spend together, we spend at least a quarter of that time singing together, if not more. And, so, of course, it's important. Of course, we should talk about it. Of course, we should think about the message behind the hymns and what we are saying and singing together. So, I, I appreciate you saying that very much. Nancy, what about you?

Nancy Hall 14:33

Well, I think that singing hymns is immensely important, uh, actually, for me, and I have no problem saying this. It's the most important thing we do in worship. Now, there's many important things we do. We pray. We, uh, hear the word and have it proclaimed, usually by one voice, a preacher. Through prayer, we share our joys and concerns or laments or praises. We give. We have the opportunity and the privilege of giving to God, back to God and to the community. But, for me, the basis of worship and where I always start, is the hymns themselves. So, my process of planning worship week by week is first I find out what the Scriptures are going to be. Depending on who the preacher is, what are they going to focus on. We use a Psalm every single Sunday. And, um, with those in mind, then the very next thing I turn to is choosing what hymns and songs the congregation will sing. So, I don't, you know, wait for a sermon to get that inspiration. I don't look and see what haven't we sung the, you know, in the last few months or something like that. The hymns that I choose and what I feel so passionate about is hymns that will speak to the theme of the morning or sometimes themes. Maybe there's a hymn of praise at the beginning that doesn't necessarily connect directly with the sermon, but, uh, it will lead us into that part of worship. And we should always leave with some sense of singing about commitment to going out the door and doing justice and caring for others. So, I believe that what we sing is what we embody. The words become a part of us. And, in a way, even though I'm no longer a creedal person, it's almost like the hymns or reciting a creed. It, it, the hymns at their best, help us understand where our beliefs lie. And even more important is, I think, that hymns and songs are a call to action. And it takes time. In my 10 years as a pastor, we've gone from, you know, good hymn singing and, uh, good choices to a much, much deeper engagement with hymns in our congregation where people really notice the words. They now come expecting the hymns to interact with the Scriptures, the preached word and, uh, everything else we do in worship. So, if justice is at the basis of that, I really do believe that we are by embodying hymns about justice along with other themes, we are equipping ourselves to move back out into the congregation after worship, or excuse me, into the community after worship, and live what we sing.

Carla Long 17:35

I love that. And you have brought me back to a little bit of a moment of shame that I had actually last Sunday because I was planning and presiding and, uh, I didn't have my preacher. He, he couldn't come. So, at the last moment, I had to try and figure out a service without a preacher and all that stuff. And I, I chose this hymn that was suggested in our worship helps art. Yeah. And I realized there's like this one line that really, really bothers me and I kind of hate, but I went ahead and chose it anyway. And

I, I told the congregation, There's one line in here that I really hate. See if you can figure out which one it is because we're, (Wow.) we're all pretty, like, uh, we're pretty loosey goosey congregation. We have a lot of fun. And at the end of it, for the first time that, ever, people started talking up about that, or speaking up about the hymn and saying, Well, I didn't like this line. Well, I didn't like this line. And I realized this is probably not a hymn that we should sing anymore in our congregation. It's number 66, Speak, Oh Lord. If you, I don't know, (Huh.) I don't know if you remember it or not. But there's a, there was quite a few people who are like, I don't, there's a lot of lines in here that I don't agree with and don't resonate with me. So, actually, I think it was a really good thing because people, after I said, There's a line in here I don't like I think people started really paying attention more so to the words. Anyway, so.

Nancy Hall 19:01

You gave them, you gave them permission to do that. You kind of, in a way, you kind of opened Pandora's box but I think in a good way.

Carla Long 19:08

Well, maybe not. We'll see. We'll see what happens later. Um, the line I do not like talks about full obedience. That word just drives me insane. (Uh huh.) Especially here in Utah. They talk about obedience a lot. Uh,

Nancy Hall 19:22

Yeah, that's why, that's why the, the old hymn Trust and Obey is the top of my hit list.

Carla Long 19:27

Oooo. Oh, I'm cringing. Um, so, I'm looking through your syllabus. Uh, they were kind enough to send me their syllabus. And it, it looks like one of the assignments that you give your students is they have to write an original hymn and they have to write an original music setting for that hymn and write a sermon that addresses, um, one of the gotten (opics. So, have you gotten some (. . .) really good hymns. Oh, what's that? (Do one or the other?) Oh, one or the other. (One of three.) Have you gotten some really good ones back?

Daniel Damon 20:00

Yeah, we did. Um, we, we tried to, you know, hear parts of the sermon in class or, uh, sing the songs in class. Uh, some, in some cases, the student was able to play and sing the piece. In one case, uh, the student sang it into my voicemail and I wrote it out, uh, harmonized the melody and brought it in and we sang it in class.

Carla Long 20:25

Um, and also, in your syllabus, you, you actually have them read through every hymn in our hymnal. It looks like they have to read hymns one through 50 the first class and (Hm hmm.) 51 through 100. So, they read through all of them. And then, do you, what, can you walk me through a typical class and what it would sound like and be like?

Nancy Hall 20:44

Usually, when we gather, when it's, um, we teach from, uh, 5 to 6:30 p.m., kind of in between, uh, other, uh, times that the GTU holds courses and that my seminary, where we are physically located for the class, starts, uh, evening classes, um, a little after seven. So, we slip in there with a 90 minute class that may allow students to take both our class and then go on to an evening class. So, uh, the first thing is Dan will sit down at the piano and start playing music. It may be familiar, it may be a little unfamiliar, maybe, it's usually sacred, but it might be more on the secular side. And that kind of calms everyone down, brings everyone to attention. And then, let's see, we've done it a little differently in the two semesters that we've, we've taught it, but we will collect their weekly 500 word essay. And the students write one every week on a hymn text that they choose to write about. It can be on the topic of the day, or, uh, can be something they may have come across, uh, in Community of Christ Sings. We also, uh, begin the semester thoroughly briefing them on hymnary.org, which is an incredible online resource, and, uh, Hope Hymns Online and some other resources so they actually can range kind of far and wide on where they look for the hymn that they write on. And we usually will choose one of those, uh, brief papers to read a little bit from. If we feel we have the time, we might have the student read, uh, at least some of the paper. And then, let's see, what do we do next? I think, Dan, this time, uh, around, we turn to you at that point in each class and you would give a ver, a mini lecture on the topic for the day. So, if it was a cry for justice for the environment or a cry for justice for racial equality, whatever the topic might be, you would give us a little, um, beginning lecture on that. And then, uh, from there, what did we do next, Dan?

Daniel Damon 23:05

Well, we try to sing, uh, some songs. We ask them if they found any songs on the topic. And, and (Um hmm.) either I have some and, uh, we were using my, uh, most recent hymn collection called My Child is a Flower, where I've written, uh, a lot of justice oriented hymns. So, sometimes we'd find something out of there, sometimes from Community of Christ Sings, but we would, we would spend the rest of the time singing, uh, hymns on, uh, on the topic of the day.

Nancy Hall 23:36

Right. And always with some commentary in between. (Right.) As the semester goes on, the students get get bolder in expressing their opinions kind of like your congregation, Robin, uh, Carla, I mean. Um, sorry. I was staring at the screen and said, Robin, but I know you're Carla. (That's okay.) Yep. And, um, they begin to be more willing to say things like, you know, This hymn really bothers me. And then, we'll have a brief discussion about that and others might chime in. Or someone might say, Oh, gosh, that reminds me of a hymn that I wish I'd brought for us to sing. And they might talk about that a little bit. Or about an experience in their congregation or in their life related to the hymn. So, all along, we're gathering experiences and opinions of the students and also of Dan and myself about how we feel about the words and the, and the music. We talk about how the words and music go together. And, uh, since Dan is one of the, the rare writers that writes both his words and his music, um, I would say those are always pretty well integrated. But sometimes we'll run across a hymn, you know, maybe even in Community of Christ, although I couldn't name one, and they say, You know, I think there could be a better tune for that. So, those are the kinds of things, then, we discuss, usually for the rest of the class session 'cause 90 minutes goes by very fast. And, um, yeah. Anything else, Dan, that, uh, we've tended to do in class?

Daniel Damon 25:13

The question, uh, Could you use this hymn in your church? And sometimes (Yeah.) students would say they like the hymn, but they couldn't use it in their church, maybe it's too radical, too far out on a theological limb of some kind, or, you know, they, they, they'll keep it in, in their bag of tricks. But in their current setting, they don't feel like they'd be able to haul it out and, and, uh, use it.

Nancy Hall 25:39

Um hmm. And that's always an interesting discussion, 'cause our, uh, this last semester, we had seven students, our classes don't tend to be very big, maybe seven to 10. But within those, that small number of students is incredible diversity in, in every way you can think about it. So, the students learn so much from each other about their settings, the churches or denominations, the churches', practices, what kind of music they have, all of those things end up getting shared over the semester's time.

Daniel Damon 26:14

We talk about where in in the worship service would this hymn work? Is it an opening hymn, a closing hymn, something in the middle? Uh, if it's a hymn on human trafficking, which I have one of those in my, my new collection, when human life is bought and sold? It's, like, is that a general use hymn? No, you know, if you're going to actually address the theme of human trafficking in the worship service, in, in your sermon, or in the prayers or something, then maybe you've got an opportunity to use that. Shirley Murray has a hymn, uh, on that topic. There's only two that I know of. I mean, it's probably something you'll never bring up in your church. But it's, it's one of the great pains of, uh, human life. And, uh, maybe it, if you have a song to sing about it, it can open a doorway into a difficult topic.

Carla Long 27:13

Oh, absolutely. Uh, you've reminded me of something, but before I say that, I just want to say your class sounds like the most fun class of any class I've ever taken in my entire life. I can't imagine, like, getting to go to class and get credit for singing and talking about hymns. That is so cool. (Yeah.) That is so cool.

Nancy Hall 27:33

It is fun. And I'll tell you, I really believe in this in all my years of teaching seminary, graduate level classes, theological education is generally pretty sober, pretty demanding. You're studying theology and history, ethics, Biblical Studies, pastoral care, lots of, you know, very serious subjects. I don't make any apologies for this class at all, uh, in terms of, uh, how important it is. It is fun. And it is, I will even say, easy. Mainly show up, participate, do the assignments, and you're probably going to be guaranteed a, a good grade at the end. But, to me, it is every bit as important as any other class students take. And, um, I've had to, you know, kind of do a few rounds about that with colleagues at times that you know, Oh, well, you know, this is just a hymn sing class. No, not at all. This is a class where we study one of the most significant and important things that every church does, every Sunday, across the globe. So, excuse me, but I make no apologies for my class.

Carla Long 28:51

Nancy, you don't get up. You go (Yeah. Right.) get 'em. Um, what you reminded me of, Dan, when you were talking about the, your human trafficking hymn, um, it was, I don't know if it was last year, the year

before. I'm really sad that I can't remember, but, um, there was a shooting in Florida, the Parkland shooting in Florida in a high school and the high school students had had enough and they were speaking out and they were really being vocal about this is not good enough. And, so, that Sunday, that really touched the, the planner and the presider, which was myself and a, a good friend of mine. And we decided actually, Dan, I didn't know it was your hymn at the time, but we decided to sing your hymn Strong, Gentle Children (Yeah.) (Hmm.) for, to honor though, what those kids were doing. (Yeah.) And, and there was not a dry eye in the place after we were done (Um hmm.) (Yeah.) because we really wanted to sing our, um, our appreciation for them and our support for them. So, it, it meant a lot.

Daniel Damon 29:56

Yeah, that's one of my favorites from my first collection.

Carla Long 29:59

It's, it's a beautiful hymn. It's beautiful. So, your class sounds incredible. It sounds super fun. Uh, and it sounds like something that is desperately needed. Um, for instance, when I'm planning a service, there are times when I just feel a little bit lost on what hymns to choose. And I (Um hmm.) think having a class like this would give me some focus and would help me to figure out exactly where I'm trying to go and exactly where I want to be. So, I, I appreciate the idea of your class very, very much.

Daniel Damon 30:34

Well, um, Carla, I know you're supposed to ask the questions, but I was wondering, have you read through your hymnal? Read the text of your hymnal?

Carla Long 30:45

That's a really good question. And I've read through probably three quarters of it, but I don't think I've read through all of it. A lot (So, there's . . .) of people have (. . .), but I haven't. Go ahead.

Daniel Damon 30:55

Yeah. So, I mean, I, I think one of the things we try to do in our class is just give our students exposure to a lot of hymns a, a, and, um, (Exactly.) it, uh, you know, because they're gonna have to be choosing hymns week after week after week for their entire career. And a lot of them, you know, haven't read the Bible and they definitely haven't read the hymnal.

Carla Long 31:16

Uh, that's very true. And, um, I feel like I'm gonna', like, sit down tonight and read the re, rest of the hymnal. Um, so, back to me asking you questions, (Right?) do you, do each of you have a favorite in Community of Christ Sings?

Nancy Hall 31:36

I, I do. I looked at the question, you know, and thought about it before this evening. It's full, chockfull of fantastic hymns, some of which I knew ahead of time and others which I've never seen before, which is a total delight. But, uh, two favorites so far. The first one is, Till All the Jails are Empty. (Ah, that's a good one.) I've found that when people sing this hymn for the first time, they are just blown away. Um, they, they can hardly speak after singing it. Um, it's so powerful. The words, of course, by Karl Daw,

and then the, the powerful music of the tune that it's set to in Community of Christ Sings, Work to Do. And then Dan's excellent arrangement, uh, is just a perfect match for the words. So, that one is such a call to action without even having to say, Now here's a hymn that's a call to action. I mean, everyone knows it as they sing it.

Daniel Damon 32:38

O, okay, so, I'll, I'll just comment on that particular one, Till All the Jails are Empty. I did that arrangement in self defense because I, uh, the, uh, actual composition by John Bell was a little too hard for me to play. It's got these 16th note runs in it and stuff. And, so, I felt like I, I needed, uh, I was, I was, uh, asked to play it, I think was at St. Olaf, but it was for the Hymn Society conference one year. And, so, I worked with my teacher on a, a piano arrangement of it that I could play. So, that's what I did.

Carla Long 33:14

Well, thank God you did. It's amazing. Thank God.

Nancy Hall 33:18

Great story. Yeah. Uh, my second favorite, and then Dan can respond, is, uh, Creator of the Intertwined by our friend Jacque Jones. And I, it's one of the very best interfaith hymns that I know. I can't manage to sing the last line, Your voice speaks many languages, just one of them is mine, without weeping every single time. Um, it's so powerful and it's such a, a hymn of universal love and the call to understanding and embracing each other and putting aside our differences and just basking in our differences really, and what we what we can teach each other, um, if we will just open up. So, those are my two favorites of many favorites.

Daniel Damon 34:10

Um, um, I have a few, but I'll just mention two. Sometimes We Wait, Expecting God. It's on 304. It's actually the facing page with Till All the Jails are Empty. Sometimes we wait, expecting God to feed the hungry from above, but bread is baked each day and shared by people who are moved by love. And there's four stanzas. It's, um, a four part setting with chord symbols. So, you could, you could do it, you know, with a choir and a band. I try to write in that style because a, a lot of our conferences, you know, use, uh, bass and guitar and drums as well as, you know, choir and so on. I also like Joseph, Son of an Ancient King. Uh, we, we have a lot of Mary hymns, but not too much that focuses on Joseph. And, um, I went through the New Testament and found every scripture that referred to Joseph and, uh, included all those in that text. The, the tune is kind of like a, a folk tune and, um, I don't know, I just, uh, it's a personal favorite.

Nancy Hall 35:25

Thank you on the first one. I'm looking at 304 and going, Oh my God, that's a perfect hymn for this Sunday which I'm in the midst of planning. (Oh, fantastic.) The Gospel, lection, lectionary reading is, uh, Luke 14, the story of the, that goes when you're invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at place of honor, etc, etc. This will fit beautifully and it will be new to my congregation. So thank you.

Carla Long 35:52

Well done. Well, that's, we use the lectionary, too, so, um, I'm going to keep that in the back of my mind, also. Thank you so much.

Nancy Hall 35:59

There you go Carla. (Thank you.)

Daniel Damon 36:01

You could sing the Joseph hymn at, for a Father's Day hymn. You wouldn't have to do it just at Christmas time?

Carla Long 36:08

Oh, cool idea.

Nancy Hall 36:10

Great idea.

Carla Long 36:11

I don't, I, I have, I have one more tiny little story that you've all remind me of, again. The other, once a month, we have what we call a spiritual practices worship, so, we, we go out of the sanctuary, we go into our fellowship hall and we,uh, meditate together or we have different types of spiritual practices together. And the last, last one we did or maybe two times ago now, we actually wrote letters to detainees, um, yeah, at the border. There are some organizations that, um, will give the, your letters to them. And, um, so we also sang Till All the Jails are Empty, um, in that service. And it was, it was so powerful. I mean, I, I agree with you, Nancy. When the right hymn is chosen, it can really just drive that message that you're trying to get out there, just drive it home. And that's what (Um hmm.) happened during that service. (Um hmm.) In fact, I think we called our service Till All the Jails are Empty, um, because we were (Nice.) kind of making it up as we went. It was real, it was a really powerful moment. (Wow.) So, what other hymnals do you use in your class besides Community of Christ Sings?

Daniel Damon 37:25

Nancy, why don't you take that one?

Nancy Hall 37:27

Okay. We've actually never used a hymnal as a textbook before. In fact, the last time we taught the class, Dan, did we have a textbook at all? I think we just relied on

Daniel Damon 37:40

Uh, this one, Liberation by Michael Hahn.

Nancy Hall 37:44

Yeah. And that was for, for A Cry for Justice in Hymnody or for other course on, um, (That might have been on) Singing through the Church Year.

Daniel Damon 37:53

Singing through the Church Year. I

Nancy Hall 37:55

Yeah, I think so. Yeah. Um, we've taught several years together, so, it starts to blur a little bit, but, um,

Daniel Damon 38:04

We just did our pack of, uh, of different readings, uh, (Yes.) for the first time for that class?

Nancy Hall 38:12

Yeah. We have access, um during the class to the hymnals that my church uses because we hold the class in the seminary at American Baptist Seminary of the West. And the room that we hold the class in is also the room where my church worships on Sunday. So, we have a cabinet with, um, the 1990 Presbyterian hymnal and the Chalice Hymnal from the Disciples of Christ. And then, uh, (. . .) the hymnal heritage IDF? Yes, yes. Thank you. The African American Heritage Hymnal, um, borrowed from our school's chapel. So, we have other hymnals in the room. Although, I found that this year, Dan, we didn't call on them nearly as often. And, um, you, you can bring the United Methodist hymnal, um, from church if we're going to need it. So, we do use other hymnals. And I usually put a, oh, what do I call it? At each week I have a supplement of hymns that I copy from various sources using our, our licensing so it's legal and, um, put that together and that's another set of hymns that, if we have time, we can sing on the given topic for that day. So, yeah, we, and then the other, the students, of course, some of them have their own denominational hymnal. Uh, we've had several Lutheran students over the years and, so, you know, they're conversant with their own hymnal. So, we have a lot of resources and that, to me, is one of the, the most important things we do in that class actually, is not just sing hymns, but open their eyes to the incredible wealth of resources that are available these days, uh, particularly through the internet. And, uh, hymnary.org is absolutely amazing. You could do a whole podcast on that. And then, uh, Hope Publishing Company has been so generous to have a whole, uh, page in their website devoted to humans by people like Dan Damon and many, many others. And those hymns can be accessed easily. And, um, so, we're just so grateful for all of these resources that are available. But I've found that our students, my students at least, from my seminary, have no idea. You know, they may have a bound hymnal in the pew at their church. That's all they know. So, they, I mean, it blows their mind that all of this is out there and accessible. So, we really try to pound that home that you can do this. You don't have to have a huge library at your house. You don't have to go running around collecting hymnals. Much of this is accessible via your computer.

Daniel Damon 41:08

One, I think one of the reasons we didn't, uh, use the African American Heritage Hymnal as much this time is, is that there are a lot of spirituals in Community of Christ Sings and also the, uh, non-English language pieces, you know, songs in Shona and Swahili and Khalsa, Yoruba, Zulu, I'm looking at, at, uh, you know, the indexes on page 822 and 23. There's a lot of African language, uh, hymns in the, uh, in this hymnal. So, we, we definitely, we have students of a lot, from a lot of different countries in the world (Um hmm.) and so it's important in, in, every class that we teach that we in, in, include, uh, songs from around the world and this hymnal makes it very easy to do that.

Carla Long 42:03

Oh, that's really nice to hear. I actually love the African songs. And I love listening to the, you know, the USB that we sell that has all of our hymns on it and, um, has our people singing some of these hymns to help out, you know, us with pronunciation. And there are times when I just listen to just those hymns, just the Africans singing because, I, I don't know what I find in them, but I find a, a connection with them and with the African members of our church that I might have never had before. So, I appreciate you saying that and bringing up the different languages that we have in here because, I, I'm sure you know more about this than I do, but I mentioned before that I live in Utah and the, the dominant church here in Utah has a hymnal for every country, basically. So, in France, they only sing French songs and, I don't know, South Korea, they only sing Korean songs. Is that pretty typical? Or is what we've done more typical and try to incorporate more languages?

Daniel Damon 43:06

I think what you've done is more typical. Certainly the Methodist hymnal from 1989, uh, included hymns from around the world. It was actually one of the first hymnals to start doing that. We call it global song. And, um, the, you know, they, they began that process, uh, in '89 and we're, uh, we're still continuing it now.

Carla Long 43:33

Well, that's good to know. I, I was, I was hoping that because I can't imagine having a worldwide church and not being able to communicate, uh, in song, at least, with other members of the church from around the world. So, I'm really glad to hear that.

Daniel Damon 43:47

Yeah, it connects with the idea of a core repertoire which, again, I, I don't actually know of another denomination that has declared a core repertoire and listed it in the back of their hymnal. (No.) However, I did look up the directions for singing in the United Methodist hymnal and number one is, Learn these tunes before you learn any others. Afterwards, learn as many as you please. So, John Wesley, uh, in 1761 is saying learn your Methodist hymns first.

Nancy Hall 44:18

Right. So, he had a core repertoire? (I think so. Yeah.) Thanks for pointing that out, Dan. That's great.

Carla Long 44:23

That John Wesley, I feel like he knew what he was doing. And with a brother like Charles writing, however many 1000s of hymns he wrote, I mean, it makes a lot of sense, right.

Daniel Damon 44:33

But John was a very good organizer.

Carla Long 44:36

He, yes. He absolutely was. Him and Joseph Smith Jr. were around, or, uh, well, I think John Wesley's a little older than Joseph Smith, Jr. But they were around around the same time. So, we've, we're coming to the close of our podcast and, um, one thing that I like to ask is, uh, if there's something that you thought I was going to ask or you wanted me to ask and something that you wanted to say and

didn't get a chance to say, now would be the time to say it. So, um, I'll go to either one of you, whichever one wants to go first. Is there something, um, that you're like, Oh, why didn't Carla mentioned this?

Daniel Damon 45:16

Well, I'm gonna jump on that one because, um, as a hymn writer, I'm always ex, excited about the ones I'm writing now. And, um, I noticed that your hymnal came out in 2013 and I've got, um, you know, My Child is a Flower I edited. At Your Altar is a book of short songs with a lot of different writers. In this coming summer, I'll have about 75 more hymns coming out in a little collection called Little Seeds. And, so, your, your hymnal, as good as, as it is, doesn't have anything written since 2013, you know, (That's true.) so I, I'm hoping that you'll, you know, continue to do supplements and, and update your hymnal every 20 years or whatever, and continue to do the groundbreaking work that you've been doing.

Carla Long 46:09

I hope so too. I mean, hymnals are a great thing. But they're static, aren't they? Like, once they're printed, they're printed. And, I mean, you're exactly right. We do try and keep up with the hymnal. But it's an expensive venture to make a hymnal and to get a hymnal out there. It's certainly an expensive venture. But and I think that will keep you in mind for more hymns, for sure, (Good. Okay.) considering some of you, our favorite hymns are the ones that you've written and arranged or then yeah, I think we're fans.

Daniel Damon 46:39

Thank you.

Nancy Hall 46:39

There are more really wonderful ones since the time your hymnal was, uh, put together, so, uh, you'll want to check in, uh, check, uh, Hope Hymns Online at Hope Publishing Company's, um, website because you can access, Dan, er, is every single one of your hymns on there or is it, would you say most of your hymns?

Daniel Damon 47:04

Most of my hymns are, are with Hope. I do have one collection with Abingdon Press. (Um hmm.) And I have (. . .) for a collection with, uh, Wayne Leupold, (. . .) texts, but, uh, (. . .) all my stuff is coming out with Hope.

Nancy Hall 47:20

Yeah, so that's a great place, um, Carla, that you could let others in the denomination know who our worship planners that there's there's more from Dan and also from a host of other excellent current hymn writers that I'm sure you all enjoy, too, like Shirley Erena Murray, Adam Tice, people like that. Uh, Mel Bringle, (. . .) all of, all of these are friends of ours. Yeah. And (. . .) these. Yeah. Um, these can be accessed easily.

Carla Long 47:53

Well, that is actually really exciting to hear. That's really cool. So, you can, uh, just go to, what is it, Hope Publishing, you said?

Daniel Damon 48:00

Yeah, you can get Hope's writers with Hope hymns online if you just Google that. You can get Carl Daws, Shirley Murray, Brian Wren. Uh, (Um hmm.) and, uh, you know, but if, if they're with GIA, then you have to go to, to that publisher to, uh, find their hymns.

Carla Long 48:21

Awesome. Well, some of the people that you just mentioned, like Shirley Erena Murray, she's obviously one of our favorites as well. So I think she has almost more hymns in our hymnal than almost anyone else. It's, it, she really gets (Um hmm.) Community of Christ, but she is not Community of Christ, but she really gets us. (Um hmm.) Yeah, we're big fans of hers, too. Well, I am so grateful that both of you took time out of your busy, busy lives, um, to come and talk to me about this, this. You have given me a new appreciation for my hymnal and, you know, shamed me just a little bit for not reading through it, but I needed it. So, thank you for that. (. . .) It's about time I read through it. And, um, Nancy, I didn't even know one of your favorite hymns, The Creator of the Intertwined. Is that what you said?

Nancy Hall 49:07

Of the Intertwined. (Yeah.) Look it up. Yeah.

Carla Long 49:08

I do. I was just looking at it when you were telling me about it and I need to hear it and sing it and, uh, (Um hmm.) learn more about that. So, I appreciate that very much. And thank you so much for being on the podcast.

Nancy Hall 49:21

You are so welcome. It was a pleasure.

Daniel Damon 49:24

You're very welcome.

Carla Long 49:26

Well, you two were fabulous. Born podcasters. (Well, thank you.) Really good. That was really great.

Josh Mangelson 49:39

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