

The Heartsong Project College Mennonite Church, 2019-2020

Note from the Music Director:

When I was first hired a few months ago, I was tasked with helping unite our increasingly diverse congregation in song. Many of us deeply love singing 4-part *a capella* hymnody. But others of us grew up in different religious traditions, or outside the church. Some do not know how to read musical notation. Others strongly prefer more contemporary musical styles, or songs in Spanish. I believe there is room for all different styles of music at CMC, and in particular I feel it is important that we learn to sing each other's heartsongs.

A heartsong is a song that sustains, strengthens, and enriches us. Heartsongs stay with us outside of the worship service, helping us pray and praise in our day-to-day lives. We may learn them in childhood, or they may be linked with a powerful faith experience. Or, they may simply be beautiful, moving songs that we sing again and again. In the context of CMC, I hope that, by singing the songs on this list many times over the coming year, we can all come to learn and appreciate them better, and come closer together as a community of faith in the process.

In this list, I have selected twenty-five heartsongs, trying to represent many different groups from within our congregation. There are beloved *a capella* hymns, of course, alongside praise and worship songs, contemporary folk liturgical music, African songs, and simple tunes I hope our children will grow up humming. There are songs appropriate for various parts of the worship service, and songs representing different types of worship; a contemplative Taizé prayer song, for instance, alongside a Hispanic praise chorus which asks us to "lift up our hands" as we seek strength from God. All the songs were suggested by at least one person, and I examined every suggestion carefully. (I have kept track of all the suggestions, and will use them to inform other song selections and possibly even future heartsong lists. So if your personal favorites did not make the list, please don't worry: we will still sing them, when the time is right!)

We will be making a concerted effort to teach all the songs on this list. Recordings will be posted on the website, and we will be singing lots of these heartsongs during the Wednesday evening programming in October and December. We will also be singing at least one heartsong every week during worship! So hopefully, over the course of the year, we will develop a bank of songs which we all know. We will learn new favorites as we share our heartsongs with others, and the new styles which we will learn through this list will help us add other new music to our repertoire more easily.

As Kenneth Nafziger and Marlene Kropf have said, singing together is a sacramental act for Mennonites. As we sing we tune our hearts to focus on God, but we also strengthen the bonds between us. Learning and coming to love each other's most beloved songs is one of the most significant ways we can practice hospitality to others, and build the beloved community. So, I invite you to enter the mighty choir that is College Mennonite Church. Bring your favorite songs, a voice of praise, and an open heart. *Come, let us all unite to sing!*

1. Abre mis ojos, SS 65. This Spanish-language praise song has a simple but profound text, and a lovely singable melody.
2. Be thou my vision, H 545. This old Irish hymn was one of the most-requested songs in the hymnal.
3. Cantemos al Señor, H 55. This energetic chorus is one of our favorite Spanish-language songs.
4. Come, let us all unite to sing, H 12. This is a classic old gospel hymn, a real “golden oldie.”
5. God of the Bible, SJ 27. The poetic and profound verses of this song combine irresistibly with an uplifting, lyrical refrain.
6. Holy Spirit, come with power, H 26. From the old shape note tradition, this is a great *Sacred Harp* hymn tune.
7. How can we be silent, SJ 61. This is a powerful song of social justice and protest.
8. I am the bread of life, H 472. Suzanne Toolan wrote this for the Catholic church in the 1960’s, but it has proven to be an enduring, uplifting communion song for many different traditions.
9. I bind myself this tide, H 411. This text is like a creed, but combined with a subtly powerful call to action, and Randall Zuercher’s tune is a simple but effective introduction to four-part singing.
10. I will sing with you. This praise song by Bethany alum Nathan Grieser was one of the last songs chosen for this list, but may be one of the most appropriate, with a text that speaks of singing together despite differences.
11. Levanto mis manos. This is a true heartsong for many in the Embajadores class—a song to reinforce faith in times of struggle, and to express the heart’s deepest emotions.
12. My life flows on, H 580. This beloved hymn of comfort and hope is our most requested song at funerals.
13. My soul cries out, SS 124. A stirring combination of the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) with a spirited Irish folk dance—it stirs us to protest and gives us hope that the world really will begin to turn!
14. Nada te turbe, H 562. This simple chorus from the contemplative Taizé tradition can be sung in many different ways.
15. Nothing is lost on the breath of God, SS 121. This was the second most requested song in my survey--its combination of a lyrical, singable tune with a text that speaks to all of life’s cares and concerns both great and small has become a heartsong for many.
16. Over my head, SJ 18. This tuneful song can be sung in many ways! I selected it particularly with our children in mind, since it is already a favorite for many of them.
17. Peace before us, SS 16. A simple reminder of God’s universal, enveloping care that we all need and crave. Without singing this song, it is far too easy to forget that God truly IS before us, behind us, and within us.
18. Rain down, SJ 49. This wonderful gospel song is a particular favorite of the pastoral team.
19. Siyahamba. Is this an African song, a Spanish song, or a children’s song? The way we sing it, it is all of them, and more!

20. Som'landela, SS 40. Another African song, this time a song from Zimbabwe with a simple, direct message of following Christ.
21. The Lord bless you and keep you, SJ 76. Peter Lutkin's gorgeous blessing song is one of the most complicated songs on this list, and also one of the most requested.
22. The Lord is my light, SJ 97. Another wonderful gospel song, full of hope and courage.
23. This is God's wondrous world (This is my Father's world, H 154). The *Voices Together* team has taken this beloved hymn and changed the words just slightly, removing the masculine language and simultaneously helping us appreciate the sheer miracle of creation.
24. Wade in the water, H 446. I really wanted to include one African-American spiritual in the list. This one can be sung in many different ways!
25. We are people of God's peace, H 407. The text, by Menno Simons, contains a core statement of our peace theology. The tune is an unmeasured Renaissance chorale that is both well-known and not too difficult to sing!