

URCNA Psalter Hymnal Committee

Report of April 2011 Meeting

The URCNA Psalter Hymnal Committee wrapped up another rigorous and productive meeting from April 5-7, 2011, at the facilities of Faith URC in West Olive, Michigan. The Psalter Hymnal Committee (the Committee) worked through selections of Psalms for the new songbook, clarified copyright issues, and took care of many other matters. Here are some highlights from the meeting:

Psalms Selections. The bulk of the meeting consisted of choosing Psalm songs, and the Committee has now chosen proposed Psalm renditions for Psalms 1-61. Each Psalm in Scripture is represented by at least one selection in the proposed Psalm section, with many Psalms having more than one proposed selection. The Committee has made sure that the full text of each Psalm is included for at least one primary version; in addition, there are secondary selections of some Psalms that contain a partial Psalm text.

The Committee has decided to retain appropriate Psalm paraphrases in the Psalm section instead of including them in the proposed hymn section. Thus, Psalm texts that are true to Scripture will be listed as the first selection(s), with the paraphrases being listed after these primary selections. Paraphrase versions will be noted as such. Many well-known blue *Psalter Hymnal* Psalms are paraphrases and several are being retained as paraphrase versions. Also, some Psalm paraphrases currently in the Hymn Proposal (HP) will be moved to the proposed Psalm section.

The Committee has been numbering the Psalm selections according to their biblical Psalm number, designating multiple renditions of a particular Psalm by letter (e.g. Psalm 51a, Psalm 51b, etc.). Paraphrases come last in the lettering (e.g. Psalm 51d).

In keeping with its mandate to produce a new URCNA psalm/hymnbook (as opposed to merely revising or editing the CRC-copyrighted blue *Psalter Hymnal*), the Committee is drawing from many excellent sources from the Reformed English-speaking world, including the blue *Psalter Hymnal*, *Trinity Hymnal*, *Book of Praise* (CanRC), *Book of Psalms for Worship* (RPCNA), *Sing Psalms* (FPCS), *Sing to the Lord* (RCNZ), and more. However, the Committee is sensitive to carefully evaluate the Psalms in the blue *Psalter Hymnal*, and has included some of the best as primary or paraphrase versions.

Copyright Permissions. The Committee is continuing to pursue copyright permissions for the 27 copyright protected hymns in the HP that are not in the public domain nor covered by a CCLI license. The Committee will alert URCNA churches when all permissions have been granted. Please continue to refrain

from copying or distributing any of the copyright protected hymns until the Committee secures permission. For a list of these copyright protected songs, visit the Psalter Hymnal Committee page at www.URCNA.org .

Ecumenical Relations. In keeping with its mandate to consult with churches that the URCNA has entered into corresponding relations, the Committee continues to engage in discussions with other NAPARC churches who are interested in working together to produce a joint psalm/hymnbook.

New Committee Members. Two new members of the Committee were in attendance in West Olive who were appointed since the previous face-to-face meeting: Denise Marcusse and Joel Pearce. To read more about the recent Committee appointees, read Glenda Mathes' article in the April 6, 2011 issue of *Christian Renewal*.

Moving Forward. The Committee is striving to submit the proposed Psalm section to URCNA churches shortly after Synod 2012. The Committee is continuing to work faithfully through monthly Skype meetings and biannual face-to-face meetings. The next face-to-face meeting of the Committee is planned for November in the Chicago area.

Overture Reminder. The deadline for classes to submit overtures on the Hymn Proposal, following the specific synodical procedures, is October 31, 2011. The Committee is encouraged to hear of so many churches excited to sing through the Hymn Proposal, and the Committee looks forward to receiving overtures.

For more information on the Hymn Proposal, the Psalter Hymnal Committee, and its synodically-mandated work, visit the FAQ section of the URCNA Psalter Hymnal Committee Public Page at www.URCNA.org .

Submitted by the URCNA Psalter Hymnal Committee:

Rev. Randal Lankheet, Chairman (Classis Southern Ontario)
Mrs. Angeline Vanderboom, Secretary (Member At Large)
Prof. Scott Finch (Classis Western Canada)
Rev. Christopher Folkerts (Classis Pacific Northwest)
Mrs. Denise Marcusse (Classis Michigan)
Mr. Joel Pearce (Classis Eastern U.S.)
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