

SUPPLEMENT 2 PSALMS AND HYMNS

Closing Reflections

Herewith the Committee has completed its evaluation of the feedback received from the churches on all of the proposed alternate Psalms and additional hymns. As Committee, we are confident that we have received sufficient feedback from the churches to make final recommendations to Synod on all of the proposed songs. At the same time, we recognize that we have not yet had opportunity to reflect on how best to incorporate these songs into a new edition of the *Book of Praise*. Some questions that require additional reflection on our part are the following:

1. Should the alternate psalms be collected in a separate section of the *Book of Praise* (to keep the Genevans together as a discrete collection), or should they be distributed within the Genevan Psalter and labelled, for example, as Psalm 4B, etc. (as is done in the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*)?
2. Should the new songs be included in four-part harmony (as distributed to the churches), or should they be printed in a unisonal setting (for the sake of consistency)?
3. How should the hymns potentially approved for inclusion be arranged within the existing categories in the hymn section?
4. Are there hymns in the current hymn section of the *Book of Praise* that could be removed? The Committee has discussed this matter but has not included this in the report. The Committee felt it would make better sense for Synod first to rule on the question whether the 100-hymn cap will be maintained.

It would take some time to address such questions, and more time to prepare and type-set a new edition of the *Book of Praise* for publication. Further, the Committee is well aware that the churches have had limited opportunity to become familiar with the proposed songs, due to the worship restrictions resulting from COVID-19. In addition, the current edition of the *Book of Praise* is still quite new, having been printed only eight years ago. It is, no doubt, for this reason that a number of churches stated quite strongly that no songs should be added to the *Book of Praise*. At the same time, many churches would welcome the opportunity to continue to sing the proposed songs at home and in the worship services.

With all of this in mind, the Committee would like to suggest the following way forward: that in the short-term, the alternate psalms and additional hymns approved by General Synod Guelph be published as a Supplement to the *Book of Praise*, in an inexpensive print format **and / or** by way of updated electronic files posted on the *Book of Praise* website (subject to copyright holders' permission), with a view to incorporating them into the next edition of the *Book of Praise* in due time.

Such a way forward would give the Committee time to reflect on the above questions and to prepare a new edition. At the same time, it would give the churches opportunity to continue to sing the new songs, without immediately having to replace their current copies of the *Book of Praise*.

Respectfully submitted,

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PROPOSED PSALMS

Psalm 69

Step 1: Initial Review

Observations:

1. The churches submitted 4 alternates.
2. This psalm is sung infrequently.
3. The ministers' survey included 4 references to this psalm, all of them commenting on the text, not the melody.

Considerations:

1. The Committee found that Psalm 69A - TPH, a complete rendition of the Psalm, is close to Scripture, and its melody is suitably mournful.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose Psalm 69A -TPH to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Observations:

1. 37 churches provided feedback, with 16 supporting and 21 rejecting the proposed alternate.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. 12 churches made positive comments about the melody, calling it easy to learn, suited to the text, moving, interesting, and beautiful.
 - b. 3 churches commented that the text was faithful to Scripture.
 - c. Of the 16 churches that accepted the psalm, some wondered if it was necessary, given that the Genevan melody is well known from Ps 51, while others noted that it is nice to have an alternative for a Genevan melody that is already used for another psalm.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. 10 churches were critical of the melody. Most noted that it is unfamiliar, difficult to sing and play, and not better than the Genevan melody, and that an alternate is not needed, though one church also commented that it is beautiful, nonetheless.
 - b. 6 churches made negative comments on the text, e.g., that the flow of the text is awkward, text does not pair well with the tune, and the rhyming isn't ideal.
 - c. 1 church gave four specific criticisms of stanzas 4, 5, and 12, and proposed a revision for each.

Considerations:

1. Though the melody is new to the churches, its plaintive tone fits the contents of the psalm, and its step-wise character and repeated patterns make it fairly easy to learn. Since the Genevan melody is also used for Psalm 51, it is nice to have the variety of an additional melody here.

2. Its text is a complete rendition of the psalm, which sticks quite closely to the text overall, though churches have indicated that the text could be improved in particular places. Improvements could be investigated, though the fact that this Psalm is copyrighted should caution us to pursue improvements only if deemed indispensable for adopting the song for use in the churches.
3. The changes that one church proposes to stanzas 4, 5, and 12 do not significantly improve the faithfulness of the lyrics to Scripture, nor their flow within the melody.
 - a. Stanza 4, lines 3-4 (“and all the insults I received / have fallen first on you”) expresses the meaning of the corresponding words of Scripture: “the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me” (ESV).
 - b. Stanza 4, line 5 (“I wept, with fasting bowed my soul,): though not a common expression, the expression “bowed my soul” is clear within its context.
 - c. Stanza 5, Line 4 (“and all the drunkards sitting there make me their jest and song”) is a fairly close rendition of the corresponding words of Scripture: “the drunkards make songs about me” (ESV).
 - d. Stanza 12, line 2 (“you saints, your hearts revive”) is likewise a fairly close rendition of the Scriptural words, “let your hearts revive” (v. 32).

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt Psalm 69A – TPH for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Psalm 84

Step 1: Initial Review

Observations:

1. The churches submitted 2 alternatives.
2. This psalm is used frequently.

Considerations:

1. The Committee found that 84C – TPH is a faithful rendition of the whole text of the psalm. The melody is strong and supports the words of this psalm. As this psalm is sung frequently another melody/versification would provide another alternative for this well-loved psalm.
2. This versification does include some archaic language (e.g. thy, thee). While the Guidelines state that “antiquated language should be avoided,” it need not be ruled out all together.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose Psalm 84C – TPH to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Observations:

1. 36 churches provided feedback with 11 accepting and 25 rejecting this alternate.
2. Positive feedback:

- a. 5 churches gave positive feedback on the melody, calling it a beautiful tune and a “classic sounding hymn of the church.” One church that approved the melody nevertheless called it a bit weak and indicated that it breaks some fundamental rules of good melody writing (e.g., the diminished fifth interval from A flat down to D at the end of line 1, and the jump from F up to E-flat in line 3). One church that approved of the melody commented that the Genevan tune is also well known and loved.
 - b. 5 churches commented on the text, describing it as a beautiful and scriptural rhyming of the psalm. However, 2 churches that approved this alternate nevertheless expressed criticism of its antiquated language and noted instances of awkward grammar and free paraphrasing.
3. Negative feedback:
- a. Six churches gave critical feedback on the melody, commenting that it is not a nice tune, does not complement the words, goes too high for congregational singing, not intuitive and far too challenging.
 - b. Five churches commented on the undesirability of antiquated language. One church that was critical of the lyrics nevertheless noted that the words fit the melody. One church noted that the word "then" in stanza 2 is unclear and suggested that it be changed to "thus".
 - c. One church noted that the reference to “banishment” in stanza 1 is not found in Scripture.
 - d. Two churches noted that in stanza 3, the words “Though tried, their tears like showers / shall fill the springs of peace” reflect a questionable interpretation of the biblical text, which reads, “As they go through the Valley of Baca they make it a place of springs; the early rain also covers it with pools.”
 - e. One church regretted that stanza 5 omitted direct references to the familiar "doorkeeper" and "tents of wickedness" in the Biblical text.
4. Other feedback:
- a. One church correctly noted that in the blue Psalter Hymnal, stanzas 4, 5, and 6 are set to a different melody (Crux Christi, by Arthur H. Mann) and that the author of the lyrics is not given. The TPH, however, attributes all six stanzas to Justin H. Knecht and Edward Husband.
 - b. Many churches commented that an alternate is not needed for this psalm, since the Genevan version is well known and much loved.

Considerations:

1. The proposed alternate is not intended to replace the Genevan version but to provide an alternate rendition for a psalm that is frequently sung. Yet the churches are right to note that the Genevan version is well loved, and many of the responses to the proposed alternative were critical of both words and melody.
2. The melody could be transposed down a key to D-Major to address the high E-flat, and the third line of the melody, though initially challenging, is easily learned with practice. The melody as a whole is well suited to the lovely contents of this psalm.
3. The word, “then,” in stanza 2 means “in that case,” or “that being the case,” but it is indeed somewhat unclear.
4. The phrase, “in banishment afar,” in stanza 1 is indeed an interpretive addition, though the Scripture passage does imply that the psalmist is away from God’s dwelling place.
5. The churches are correct to question the interpretation of the Valley of Baca in stanza 3. There is a longstanding tradition (going back to the Septuagint and the Vulgate) that Baca means

Weeping (which gave rise to the expression “Vale of Tears”). The Hebrew word used here is spelled slightly differently, however, and the connection to weeping is weak. Here Baca refers to a plant, such as the poplar or balsam tree, which can grow in dry places (see 2 Sam. 5:23). Thus the point seems to be that as the pilgrims travel through this valley it is transformed from a place that is arid to a place that is well-watered and refreshing. Some modern translations do, however, retain the translation “Valley of Weeping” (ASV, NLT).

6. Though it is true that the doorkeeper and the tents of wickedness are not explicitly mentioned, the paraphrase in stanza 5 is reasonably close to the meaning of Scripture.
7. The churches are correct to note the presence of archaisms, and updating them would require some further adjustments. Updating the language also gives an opportunity to bring the text closer to Scripture. For example, in stanza 1, the reference to “tabernacles,” though plural, clearly refers to God’s one dwelling place in Zion, and in stanza 4, “our shield” refers to the anointed king.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt Psalm 84C – TPH for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*, with the text revised as below.
2. That its melody be transposed down to D-major to make it easier to sing.

Revised text:

*1. O LORD of hosts, how lovely your tabernacle is;
how dear to me, how precious, your holy dwelling place.
My soul is longing, fainting, your sacred courts to view;
my heart and flesh are singing, O living God, to you.*

*2. If you let little sparrows find room for peaceful rest,
and you give space for swallows to build their young a nest,
then, LORD, my King Almighty, your love will shelter me,
and there beside your altars my dwelling, too, shall be.*

*3. How blessed are those who live there, who ever give you praise,
and those whose strength is in you, their hearts set on your ways!
They cross the driest valley and leave it fresh with rain;
as they trek on to Zion, more strength they ever gain.*

*4. LORD God of hosts, in mercy my supplication hear,
and to my earnest pleading, O Jacob’s God, give ear!
And from the king who shields us, LORD, do not hide your face,
but look upon your servant, anointed by your grace.*

*5. One day spent in your courtyard is better, LORD, by far
than even thousands elsewhere, where fleeting pleasures are.
If standing at your threshold should be my lowly place,
I’d much prefer that station to tents of wickedness.*

6. A sun and shield forever is God, the LORD Most High;

*to those who walk uprightly no good will he deny.
His lasting grace and favour on them will he bestow.
O LORD of hosts, how bless-ed are those who trust in you!*

Psalm 90

Step 1: Initial Review

Observations:

1. The churches submitted 3 alternates.
2. According to the data available to the Committee, the Genevan psalm is sung occasionally in the worship services, fewer times than average.

Considerations:

1. Psalm 90A – TPH is a beautiful rendition of the psalm and covers the whole text of the psalm.
2. The melody is associated with the hymn “Faith of our Fathers,” but the Committee does not feel that this association is a hindrance to its use.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose Psalm 90C - TPH to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Observations:

1. 35 churches provided feedback, with 21 accepting and 14 rejecting this alternate.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. 15 churches commented on the melody, calling it familiar, easy to sing, well known and well loved from the hymn, “Faith of Our Fathers,” and an improvement over the Genevan melody. One church questioned the wisdom of using a melody associated with another hymn.
 - b. Five churches commented on the text, calling it accurate, very good, and faithful to Scripture.
 - c. It should be noted that the feedback of one church was a mix of individual comments for and against, while another church simply endorsed all of the alternate psalms proposed.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. Three churches commented that the choice of this melody ran counter to the Committee’s guideline that melodies with a strong association to a well-known hymn should be avoided if possible.
 - b. Two churches found the lyrics awkward and difficult to sing. One of these churches provided a detailed list of awkward phrases and imperfect rhymes.
 - c. Three churches questioned the need for an alternate, since the Genevan version is well known, while one church simply expressed its view that no alternate psalms or hymns should be added to the *Book of Praise*.

Considerations:

1. The reason for proposing an additional rendition for this psalm is to provide some variety for a psalm that is regularly sung but shares its Genevan tune with another psalm (Psalm 78). The Committee considered three alternate versions and found TPH 90A to be the most suitable.
2. None of the churches that commented on the melody found it difficult to sing, and many found it pleasant and well suited to the lyrics. The main critique was its association with the hymn "Faith of Our Fathers."
3. The fact that so many churches recognized the melody from this hymn shows that the association is quite strong. Nevertheless, the purpose of the guideline is not to rule out the use of all melodies that are associated with another hymn. Our current *Book of Praise*, too, includes melodies well known from other hymns, such as Hymn 7 ("Angels from the Realms of Glory"), Hymn 67 ("Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven"), and a number of repurposed Genevan melodies.
4. The text is the copyright (2017) of the Trinity Psalter Hymnal, and thus changes to the text should only be pursued if these are important for maintaining faithfulness to Scripture or clarity of meaning. While it is true that there are occasional instances of awkward grammar, overall the text of TPH 90A is both clear and close to Scripture.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt Psalm 90A – TPH for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Psalm 95

Step 1: Initial Review

Observations:

1. The churches submitted 4 alternates for this psalm.
2. This psalm is regularly sung in the churches.

Considerations:

1. Of the 4 alternatives, the Committee found that Psalm 95B – TPH was to be preferred. It is a faithful rendition of the text of Scripture, and its melody fits well with the words.
2. The melody of Psalm 95B – TPH is well-suited for congregational singing.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose Psalm 95B – TPH to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Observations:

1. 35 churches provided feedback, with 22 accepting and 13 rejecting this alternate.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. 14 churches commented on the melody, calling it a welcome alternative to an oft-sung Genevan melody, easy to sing, familiar, joyful, and well suited to the text. Some preferred it to the Genevan version, while others found the Genevan version superior. Three churches wondered about the need for an alternate, given that the Genevan version is well known.

- b. 5 churches commented on the text, finding it faithful to Scripture, though two churches found some small omissions from the Scriptural text.
- 3. Negative feedback:
 - a. Five churches commented on the melody, noting that the Genevan version is well known and thus an alternate is not necessary. One commented that it has large leaps but is otherwise familiar, while two churches commented that if an alternate version is needed, the proposed alternate would be a suitable choice.
 - b. One church commented that the choice of this melody ran counter to the Committee's guideline that melodies with a strong association to a well-known hymn should be avoided if possible.
 - c. Three churches commented briefly on the text. The first found its language archaic (without giving examples). The second found it faithful to Scripture. The third said that its copyright status prevented it from supporting this recommendation.

Considerations:

1. The reason for proposing an additional rendition for this psalm is to provide some variety for a psalm that is frequently sung and shares its Genevan tune with three other psalms (i.e., Psalms 24, 62, 111). The Committee considered four alternate versions and found Psalm 95B – TPH to be the most suitable.
2. Though the melody is known from the hymn, "O Worship the King," this need not rule out its use for Psalm 95, since the purpose of the guideline is not to rule out the use of all melodies that are associated with another hymn. Our current Book of Praise, too, includes melodies well known from other hymns, such as Hymn 7 ("Angels from the Realms of Glory"), Hymn 67 ("Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven"), and a number of repurposed Genevan melodies.
3. The association with "O Worship the King" is appropriate here, since Psalm 95, too, is about the kingship of the Lord.
4. The text does not contain any obvious archaisms, and it is faithful to Scripture.
5. The text is the copyright (2016) of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*, but since it does not need to be changed, its copyright status is not an obstacle to including this song.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt Psalm 95B – TPH for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Psalm 98

Step 1: Initial Review

Observations:

1. The churches submitted 3 alternates for this psalm.
2. This psalm is regularly sung in the worship services.

Considerations:

1. The version of Psalm 98 from the Seedbed Psalter was deemed to be faithful to Scripture.
2. The RICHMOND melody is a fitting melody that reflects the joyful tone of this psalm.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose Psalm 98 from the Seedbed Psalter, set to the RICHMOND melody, to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Observations:

1. 35 churches provided feedback, with 12 churches accepting and 23 churches rejecting this alternate.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. 7 churches commented on the melody, calling it easy to learn, suited to the words, singable but not well known, and a grand melody for a grand psalm.
 - b. One church that favoured this alternate nevertheless noted that the wide intervallic leaps in the last few bars may be difficult to sing for some.
 - c. Three churches noted that while the Genevan melody is well known, the fact that it is often sung (also for other psalms) means that it is good to have an alternate melody.
 - d. Six churches expressed appreciation for the words, noting that it covers the whole psalm and is very close to Scripture.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. 12 churches commented on the melody, observing that it has a number of large jumps between notes, that sometimes the lyrics fit awkwardly with the notes, that syllables are too often spread over multiple notes, that the melody is hard to sing, that it is too subdued for the contents of the psalm, and that it is not an improvement on the Genevan melody and therefore unnecessary to include.
 - b. Most churches which expressed concerns about the melody noted that the words were faithful to Scripture. Two churches commented on the use of “joyful song” in place of “new song” in stanza 1.
 - c. One church gave detailed criticism of the lyrics, noting, for instance, the somewhat unnatural grammar of “with harp” (rather than “with the harp”) in stanza 4, and the unsuitability of the word “reply” in stanza 4 (since the singing is not responsive). This church also understood stanza 5, lines 1-2 to mean that “all peoples are exhorted to let the oceans roar.”
 - d. One church which found the text faithful nevertheless did not support the inclusion of this song due to its copyright status.

Considerations:

1. Regarding the lyrics, the Committee chose this rendition because its words closely follow the words of Scripture. Small discrepancies are almost impossible to avoid within the constraints of meter, rhythm, and melody.
2. In stanza 5, lines 1-2 (“Let oceans roar and all therein, / all peoples of the earth”), the phrase “all peoples of the earth” is not the subject of “let oceans roar” but a further explanation of “all therein,” which follows the text of Scripture: “Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who dwell in it” (Ps 98:7 ESV).
3. Since the lyrics have a copyright date of 2017, changes to the text should only be pursued if these are important for maintaining faithfulness to Scripture or clarity of meaning. While it is true that there are occasional instances of awkward grammar and small departures from Scripture (e.g., “joyful song” in place of “new song”), overall, the text is both clear and close to Scripture.
4. Regarding the melody, the Committee found that there are few melodies in this meter (8.6.8.6) that can well express the joyful tones of this psalm, and that the RICHMOND melody does so quite well. While it is true that syllables are sometimes drawn over successive notes, this is not

in itself a reason to reject this melody, since several hymns in our current *Book of Praise* do this as well (see, e.g., Hymns 10, 16, 19, 23, 32, 38, 45, 73, 75, and 80).

5. The Committee proposed this alternate rendition to provide some melodic variety for a psalm which is frequently sung, and which shares its Genevan tune with three other songs in the *Book of Praise* (Psalms 66 and 118 and Hymn 71).

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt Psalm 98 as versified in the Seedbed Psalter, set to the RICHMOND melody, for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Psalm 100

Step 1: Initial Review

Observations:

1. The churches submitted 4 alternates for this psalm.
2. According to the data available to the Committee, this psalm is sung more often than the average frequency.

Considerations:

1. Psalm 100A – TPH was submitted by 4 churches. The Committee found that this version was a complete and faithful rendition of the Scripture passage.
2. This versification is set to the melody DIADEMATA, most commonly known for its use in “Crown Him with Many Crowns”.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose Psalm 100A - TPH to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Observations:

1. 37 churches provided feedback, with 22 churches accepting and 15 churches rejecting this alternate.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. 16 churches commented on the melody, describing it as very suitable, familiar, beautiful, easy to sing, joyful, majestic, and suited to congregational singing. Three churches which noted that the melody is that of “Crown Him with Many Crowns” found that it fits this psalm well.
 - b. 3 churches that approved of this melody questioned the need for an alternate, since the Genevan melody is well known; 2 churches found the Genevan version better, while 3 preferred the proposed alternate, and 3 expressed appreciation for the option of singing another melody besides the Genevan.
 - c. 5 churches commented that the text is faithful to Scripture, while one church noted that it contains only part of the psalm.

3. Negative feedback:
 - a. 5 churches commented on the melody, finding that its association with the hymn, “Crown Him with Many Crowns,” ran afoul of Guideline 6. Nevertheless, one of these churches also observed that the familiar tune made it “easy to sing with some vigour!”
 - b. 3 churches found the proposed alternate unnecessary, since the Genevan melody is well known, while 3 other churches noted that, if an alternate were deemed necessary, they would not object to this proposed rendition. One church expressed its preference for Psalm 100B – TPH rather than 100A.
 - c. One church stated that, while the proposed alternate has a faithful text and a tune that was appreciated by their musicians, its copyright status prevented them from supporting the recommendation.
 - d. 3 churches that rejected this alternate commented on the text: one called it a loose translation, while two others found it to be a faithful and close rendition of Scripture.

Considerations:

1. The churches are right to note that the Genevan version is well known. The proposed alternate was not intended to replace the Genevan version but to provide an alternate rendition for a psalm which is frequently sung and which shares its Genevan tune with two other psalms (131 and 142). The Committee considered four alternate versions and found Psalm 100A – TPH to be the most suitable, especially because of its faithfulness to the Biblical text.
2. Contrary to the observation of one church, Psalm 100A – TPH is in fact a rendition of the entire psalm. While it is true that this song is the copyright of the Trinity Psalter Hymnal (2017), its copyright status is not an obstacle, since the text is faithful to Scripture.
3. The churches are right to question whether this choice violates Guideline 6, namely that melodies which have a strong association with a particular hymn should be avoided. The purpose of this guideline is not to rule out the use of all melodies that are associated with another hymn. Our current *Book of Praise*, too, includes melodies well known from other hymns, such as Hymn 7 (“Angels from the Realms of Glory”), Hymn 67 (“Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven”), and a number of repurposed Genevan melodies. Yet it must be admitted that the association with the hymn, “Crown Him with Many Crowns,” is quite strong. On the other hand, its jubilant tone is well suited to the festive character of this psalm, and its familiarity also makes it easy to sing. Thus, there are good reasons to consider an exception to the guideline in this instance.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt Psalm 100A – TPH for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Psalm 103

Step 1: Initial Review

Observations:

1. Psalm 103C – TPH was recommended by a number of churches.
2. Two ministers provided feedback to the Committee concerning the Genevan melody.
3. This psalm is sung very frequently in the churches.

Considerations:

1. Psalm 103C – TPH is a complete rendition of the Scriptural text. It has a singable melody that is within the range of an octave and thus well within the range for congregational singing.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose Psalm 103C – TPH to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Observations:

1. 36 churches provided feedback, with 21 accepting and 15 rejecting this alternate.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. 15 churches commented on the melody, calling it nice, singable, simple, flowing, fitting to the text, and suitable for worship.
 - b. 2 churches wondered whether an alternate is needed; 3 churches called it a nice alternative for a psalm that is often sung; 2 churches mentioned that the proposed alternate was a favourite in their congregations and preferable to the Genevan since it does not have as many high notes.
 - c. 4 churches commented on the text, noting that it is faithful to Scripture and follows the text of Scripture closely.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. 6 churches commented on the melody, calling it unfamiliar, unsuitable for congregational singing, and inferior to Genevan 103.
 - b. One church sent a wide range of individual comments, ranging from boring, artificial, trendy, and “one of the worst proposed” on the one hand, to beautiful, interesting, and “my favourite” on the other. Two of these comments claimed that this alternate violates Guidelines 6-11 and Principle 2, saying that it is “modern and trendy, not timeless, not from the Reformed tradition, not suitable for congregational singing, lends itself to conjuring up artificial emotions and contexts other than reverent worship,” and “forces an emotional climax in the chorus.”
 - c. 6 churches commented that they saw no need for an alternate rendition of this psalm. Two of these indicated that they had no specific objections to the proposed alternate, while a third indicated that it would hate to lose the one we have.
 - d. One church gave a list of supposed deviations from Scripture and grammatical infelicities, while 2 churches indicated that the words were good and close to Scripture.
 - e. One church made the following comment: “Our reviewers appreciated the text. The tune received a very high rating. The copyright status of this song prevents us from supporting the recommendation.”
 - f. 2 churches made general comments, one that this song could not be tested, and the other that no alternate renditions of psalms should be added to the *Book of Praise*.

Considerations:

1. The proposed alternate is not intended to replace the Genevan version but to provide an alternate rendition for a psalm that is frequently sung. The lower singing range of this melody may make it a welcome alternative for some. Though it is unfamiliar and new to some churches, the melody is easily learned and does not present any obvious impediments for congregational singing.

2. Though its musical style is somewhat different from that of most songs in the *Book of Praise*, it does not thereby violate the Guidelines and Principles for selecting additional songs. While it is true that the melody comes to a climax in the third line, this feature of the music is not at odds with the words sung there. The wide-ranging feedback received from the churches gives evidence for variety in musical preference.
3. Overall, the text of the proposed alternate is a close rendition of the Scripture passage, and it covers the whole psalm. The suggestions made by one church to improve the accuracy of the text do not significantly improve its faithfulness and clarity.
4. Since no changes need to be made, the copyright status of this song is not an obstacle for adopting it for use in the churches.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt Psalm 103C – TPH for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Psalm 104

Step 1: Initial Review

Observations:

1. Three churches submitted Psalm 104B – TPH as an alternate rendition.
2. The ministers' survey provided 6 comments concerning the Genevan melody of Psalm 104.
3. According to the data available to the Committee, this psalm is sung with average frequency in the churches.

Considerations:

1. Psalm 104b – TPH is a complete rendition of the psalm text but is set to a shorter melody, resulting in 17 stanzas as compared to eight in Genevan 104.
2. Transposing the key of the melody to G major and removing the dotted-eighth notes at the end of the lines 2 and 4 would make the melody more conducive for congregational singing.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose Psalm 104B – TPH to the churches with the changes noted in Consideration 2.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Observations:

1. 37 churches provided feedback, with 27 accepting and 10 rejecting this alternate.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. Churches noted that this tune is familiar because it shares its melody with Hymn 84 (“Ye servants of God”). Some noted that it was a little distracting because they had to mentally block the lyrics for Hymn 84, but they liked the ease of singing this psalm to a well-known melody. Several churches stated that it suited the words and was easy for congregational singing. Two churches observed that the Genevan version in the *Book of Praise* is well known and has more of a sense of majesty and awe. Some churches stated that the TPH version has a pleasant melody and is an improvement. Some churches prefer not to have psalm tunes that are similar to hymns.

- b. Most churches stated that the text of this psalm was a good rendition and faithful to the biblical text.
- 3. Negative feedback:
 - a. A few churches considered the melody of the alternate to violate Guideline 6, and some churches did not consider this melody to be an improvement over the Genevan melody in the *Book of Praise*.
 - b. One church noted that the words do not flow smoothly at the beginning of stanzas 3 and 15, and it suggested that this be changed. One other church made some minor suggestions for changes to the text.
- 4. Other feedback:
 - a. Several churches gave general comments, that they did not see the need for any alternate renditions of the Psalms, or that they were not able to test this alternate.

Considerations:

- 1. The proposed alternate was not intended to replace the Genevan version but to provide an alternate rendition to psalm that is often sung.
- 2. The changes to the text proposed by one church were of a minor nature and did not significantly improve its faithfulness to Scripture.
- 3. Though the melody calls to mind Hymn 84, this association need not rule out its use for Psalm 104, since the purpose of the guideline is not to rule out the use of all melodies that are associated with another hymn. Our current *Book of Praise*, too, includes melodies well known from other hymns, such as Hymn 7 ("Angels from the Realms of Glory"), Hymn 67 ("Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven"), and a number of repurposed Genevan melodies.

Final Recommendation:

- 1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt Psalm 104B – TPH, with the melody LYONS as proposed to the churches, for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Psalm 106

Step 1: Initial Review

Observations:

- 1. The churches submitted 2 alternates for this psalm.
- 2. The ministers' survey included one comment about the melody of Genevan 106 and another minister noted that some verses were rarely used due to the text.
- 3. According to the data available to the Committee, this psalm is sung with regular frequency in the churches.

Considerations:

- 1. Psalm 106B – TPH is a partial rendition that includes verses 1-15, 21 – 27 and 40 -41 of the Psalm 106. The portions of Scripture that have been included are faithful to the biblical text.

Initial Recommendation:

- 1. To propose Psalm 106B – TPH to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Observations:

1. 36 churches provided feedback, with 11 accepting and 25 rejecting this alternate.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. The churches accepting this alternate considered it to be singable and pleasant. One church noted that it was a “good melodic alternative to this long psalm, where some verses might be better suited to using this tune.” Another church appreciated that the melody was not set as high as the Genevan melody.
 - b. Several churches which accepted this alternate noted that it was, however, not a complete rendition of Psalm 106.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. Many churches referred to the melody as poor, repetitive, too short, uninspiring, feeling unfinished, boring, or disappointing. One church suggested considering the ST. FLAVIAN melody instead (used for Hymn 43 in the *Book of Praise*), and another church suggested that Psalm 106A – TPH would have been a better choice.
 - b. Most comments were about the incomplete/partial rendition of the psalm. Many churches considered it to be “too condensed and disjointed.” Several churches noted that much of the historical storyline of Israel is missing in this rendition.
 - c. One church listed many omissions and condensed sections in the text that led them to consider this rendition unacceptable.
4. Other feedback:
 - a. 3 churches made general observations that they did not have opportunity to test it, or do not support any alternate renditions of the Psalms.

Considerations:

1. Many churches pointed out that this rendition was a very condensed version of Psalm 106. Even some congregations that approved it referred to this fact. Though it is true that it is a partial rendition, the parts that it does include are faithful to Scripture. The length of this psalm is such that it would seldom be sung in its entirety in the worship service.
2. The proposed alternate was not intended to replace the Genevan version but to provide an alternate rendition. Since the *Book of Praise* already has a complete rendition that allows congregations to sing the Psalm in its entirety, an alternate that allows for selective singing is worth considering for inclusion.
3. After considering both Psalms 106A – TPH and 106B - TPH, the Committee found Psalm 106B – TPH easier to sing and the parts that it versifies to be faithful to Scripture.
4. The proposed alternate has a melodic range that makes it easier to sing in comparison with the Genevan melody.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt Psalm 106B – TPH for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Psalm 110

Step 1: Initial Review

Observations:

1. The churches proposed one alternate, namely, Psalm 110B – TPH.
2. According to the data available to the Committee, this psalm is sung with average frequency in the churches.
3. The ministers' survey included two comments about the words of this psalm.

Considerations:

1. The Genevan version in the *Book of Praise* is sung with average frequency, and thus the addition of Psalm 110B – TPH would add melodic variety for singing this psalm. It is a complete and faithful rendition of Scripture.
2. Since Psalm 110 is often cited in the New Testament, there is good reason to encourage more frequent singing of this psalm.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose Psalm 110B – TPH to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Observations:

1. 34 churches provided feedback, with 13 accepting and 21 rejecting this alternate.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. 8 churches provided positive feedback related to the melody, noting that this version was better than that of the *Book of Praise*, well written and easy to sing, that the melody has a good range and a nice shape, and that the lyrics and melody fit each other well. Some churches gave both positive and negative feedback but remained in favour of adding this alternate selection.
 - b. 4 churches gave positive feedback related to the text, observing that it is well written, a good versification, suited to the melody, and faithful to Scripture.
 - c. It should be noted that some churches which provided positive feedback also had concerns about the melody, as noted below.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. Specific concerns about the melody included the high E-flat in the first line, the descending pattern of the third line with its frequently repeated notes, and its complicated rhythm. One church felt that the proposed song is not a good alternative to the beautiful melody of Genevan 110, and that it sounds like music from non-church contexts. Another congregation called the melody "unsingable" and a third called it "uninspiring."
 - b. Regarding the text, churches noted that the words "Of th' order of" in the last line of stanza 2 are awkward to sing, and that the words "in vict'ry lift the head" in stanza 3 could be changed to "in vict'ry lift his head." One church submitted proposed adjustments to the wording of stanza 2 and 3, suggesting that the current wording is "insufficient", "rather weak", and "distorts the meaning".

Considerations:

1. Psalm 110 is sung with average frequency in the churches. Since Psalm 110 is often cited in the New Testament, there is good reason to encourage more frequent singing of this psalm. The proposed alternate will be appealing for those who are less familiar with Genevan melodies.
2. Post testing feedback on the melody included a wide range of comments, ranging from “unsingable” to “better than that of the *Book of Praise*.” Despite the broad range of feedback, the proposed melody is not difficult to learn.
3. The majority of the post testing feedback regarding the text agrees that it is faithful to Scripture. Since this song has a recent copyright date (2009), changes to the text should only be pursued if necessary for faithfulness and clarity. The Committee considers the text to be faithful to Scripture.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt Psalm 110B - TPH for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Psalm 111

Step 1: Initial Review

Observations:

1. The churches submitted two alternates for this psalm.
2. According to the data available to the Committee, this psalm is sung with above average frequency in the churches.

Considerations:

1. The Committee found that Psalm 111B – TPH is faithful to Scripture and that it would add melodic variety for a psalm that is sung frequently and shares its Genevan melody with three other psalms (24, 62, 95).
2. The melody is structured in a stepwise manner and is conducive to congregational singing. Although there are some large melodic leaps, these fit the tune well.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose Psalm 111B – TPH to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Observations:

1. 33 churches provided feedback, with 18 accepting and 15 rejecting this alternate.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. 16 churches commented on the melody, calling it easy to sing, beautiful, fitting, wonderful, nice, and easy to learn. Five churches mentioned that the Genevan melody for Psalm 111 is used for three other psalms as well (24, 62, 95) and that an alternate melody would therefore be desirable.
 - b. One church mentioned that the rhyming and tune make it easy to sing.
 - c. One church that approved of this alternate nevertheless cautioned that the melodic contours in measures 11-16 could result in the congregation taking breaths in the middle of words, interrupting the flow of the song.

- d. 6 churches commented on the text, calling it faithful to Scripture, “of a Reformed perspective,” and a complete and balanced representation of the Biblical text. One of these found the text of this alternate to be closer to Scripture than the Anglo-Genevan rendition.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. 4 churches commented on the melody, commenting that it is not an improvement, that there is no need for an alternate since the Genevan is well known and better, and that the tune of the alternate is fair but somewhat awkward to sing and play. One church that rejected this alternate noted that it actually received five responses in favour, five against, and one undecided.
 - b. Of the six churches which rejected this alternate for reasons of text, four churches provided specific concerns about the inversion of phrases within the text, and two of these suggested that it is insufficiently literal and shifts the focus from God to our response.
 - c. Two churches rejected this alternate for general reasons, one citing inability to test it, and the other expressing its opposition to all alternate renditions of the psalms.

Considerations:

1. The alternate is not intended to replace the Genevan setting but to provide melodic variety for a psalm that shares its Genevan tune with three other psalms (24, 62, 95).
2. It is true that there is no break between lines 3 and 4 of the melody, which can leave the congregation a bit “breathless” at the end. This challenge can be addressed by ensuring that the song is not sung too slowly. Further, the joining of these lines is natural for the climax of the melody, and it also fits the text well, since the last two lines usually cover a single sentence.
3. The churches are correct to note that the words and phrases of the text of this alternate are not always in exactly the same order as in the text of Scripture. Yet the resulting text does not distort the meaning of the passage and remains faithful to Scripture. For example:
 - a. In stanza 1, the words, “with all his people,” adequately express the meaning of the words, “in the company of the upright, in the congregation.”
 - b. In stanza 2, the words, “His saints delight to search and trace his mighty works and wondrous ways,” adequately express the meaning of the words, “Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them.”
 - c. In stanza 3, the words, “God’s wondrous deeds of faithfulness his people ever keep in mind,” adequately express the meaning of the words, “He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered; the LORD is gracious and merciful.”
 - d. In stanza 4, the words, “God’s promise shall forever stand; he cares for those who trust his word” capture the essence of the words, “He provides food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant forever.”
4. Adjustments such as those listed above are unavoidable within the constraints of poetry and melody, and similar allowances have been made in the Anglo-Genevan Psalter as well, within the bounds of clarity and faithfulness to Scripture.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt Psalm 111B - TPH for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Psalm 112

Step 1: Initial Review

Observations:

1. A number of churches proposed that Psalm 112 – TPH be added to the *Book of Praise*.
2. According to the data available to the Committee, this psalm is sung very infrequently in the churches.
3. Two ministers provided feedback concerning the Genevan melody of this psalm.

Considerations:

1. Comments received via the ministers' survey suggest that Psalm 112 is infrequently chosen for worship because its Genevan melody is unfamiliar.
2. There is a broad range of support from the churches for Psalm 112 – TPH. Its text is faithful to Scripture, and its melody is suitable for congregational singing.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose Psalm 112 – TPH to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Observations:

1. 34 churches provided feedback, with 19 accepting and 15 rejecting this alternate.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. 12 churches gave positive feedback on the melody, commenting that the melody is easy to sing and suits the lyrics, the rhyming and melody are well done, cheery and lively, bright and joyful, that it is a nicer melody than what we have, and its joyous tone fits the text very well.
 - b. 7 churches gave positive feedback on the text, observing that the rhyming is well done, that they liked the tune and the words, and that the text is well versified, accurate, and faithful to Scripture.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. 7 churches expressed concerns about the melody, noting that there were strange runs in the melody, that the last line is too difficult for congregational singing, and that the alternate is "more suitable to a brass band," uninspiring, and not an improvement.
 - b. 4 churches had concerns about the text, noting small flaws of versification, unnatural wording, and ineffective word choice.

Considerations:

1. A number of churches had recommended Psalm 112 – TPH, and post testing feedback has confirmed support for this recommendation.
2. The proposed alternate has a robust and joyful melody that suits the text and is thus well worth the effort to learn.
3. The churches that rejected this song did not support this with substantive concerns about the melody or the text.
4. Since this song has a recent copyright date (2009), changes to the text should only be pursued if necessary for faithfulness and clarity. The Committee considers the text to be faithful to scripture.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt Psalm 112 - TPH for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Psalm 113

Step 1: Initial Review

Observations:

1. The churches submitted three alternates for this psalm.
2. The ministers' survey included one comment recommending that an alternate be found.
3. The accompanists' survey included a suggestion to start the Genevan melody of Psalm 113 on the "G" rather than the "A" to make it easier to sing.
4. According to the data available to the Committee, this psalm is sung with less than average frequency in the churches.

Considerations:

1. After review of the three alternates submitted by the churches, the Committee considered Psalm 113B – TPH to be the most suitable. It is a faithful rendition of Scripture, and its melody is easy to learn.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose Psalm 113B – TPH to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Observations:

1. 35 churches provided feedback, with 16 churches accepting and 19 rejecting this alternate.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. 9 churches provided positive feedback on the melody, observing that it is easy to sing and that the melody fits the words well.
 - b. 5 churches responded favorably to the text, noting that it is faithful to Scripture and represents the whole psalm. Two churches expressed appreciation for the repetition of the last line in each stanza, while one church wondered if this repetition puts unwarranted emphasis on that line.
 - c. One church questioned the use of the word "sons" in stanza 5, noting that the corresponding Scripture passage speaks of "children".
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. 6 churches commented on the melody, noting that it is repetitive, not exciting, lacks depth, and is not better than the current melody. Two churches also noted the absence of rests between the lines, thus making it hard for congregations to sing.
 - b. Two churches commented on the word "condescend" in stanza 3, suggesting that it might not be an appropriate word in this context.
 - c. A number of churches indicated that the current Genevan version is fine and that no alternate is needed.

Considerations:

1. The Committee considered three alternate renditions and concluded that this alternate was to be preferred, since the melody suits the words, and the words are faithful to Scripture.
2. This version is not intended to replace the existing Genevan version but to provide an alternate melody and versification to encourage increased use of this psalm.
3. The repetition at the end of each line does not detract from the faithfulness of these words to the original text. In fact, the repetition at the end of stanza 4 matches the repetition of “princes” in the psalm (verse 8), and at the end of stanza 5 it forms a fitting close to the psalm.
4. The word ‘condescend’ in this context does not mean ‘patronizing’ or ‘in a haughty manner’ but means to ‘lower oneself’ or ‘come down’. It is common in theology to speak of God’s “condescension.” Yet it is true that condescension can have negative connotations in common parlance, and thus it could create misunderstanding here. The NIV captures the intent quite well by using the verb “stoops down.”
5. Stanza 5 contains the phrase “and blesses them with holy sons.” The Hebrew word can mean either “sons” or “children.” Since the point here is motherhood for the barren, “children” is the more likely intent. Further, the word “holy” is not found in the Scripture verse.
6. Revising the text gives the opportunity to update the language and improve its clarity and accuracy, thereby addressing some of the concerns with the text.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt Psalm 113B - TPH for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*, with the text revised as below.

*1. Praise God, O servants of the LORD!
Praise, praise his name with one accord.
O bless the LORD, his name adore
from this time forth forevermore,
from this time forth forevermore.*

*2. From sunrise until setting sun
God’s name be praised by everyone.
He rules all nations by his might
above the skies in glory bright,
above the skies in glory bright.*

*3. Who is like God the LORD Most High,
exalted far above the sky,
and who in tender care stoops low
to look on heaven and earth below,
to look on heaven and earth below?*

*4. Those sunk in helpless poverty
he lifts from dust to dignity.
He seats them by his mighty hand
among the princes of the land,
among the princes of the land.*

5. God gives the childless one a home

*to raise a family of her own.
He gives the joy of motherhood.
Sing hallelujah! God is good!
Sing hallelujah! God is good!*

Psalm 117

Step 1: Initial Review

Observations:

1. The churches submitted 4 alternates for this psalm.
2. According to the data available to the Committee, this psalm is sung with less-than-average frequency in the churches.

Considerations:

1. Psalm 117 – GPH is a faithful rendition of the text. Its melody provides variety of choice.
2. While it has the same melody as Psalm 117A – TPH, the text of Psalm 117 – GPH avoids the use of “Jehovah” and the use of archaic language (e.g., endureth).

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose Psalm 117 – GPH to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Observations:

1. 35 churches provided feedback, with 18 accepting and 17 rejecting this alternate.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. 10 churches commented positively on the melody, noting that it is joyful and fitting to the words, that the melody is fitting for a psalm of praise, and that it had a nice range and shape. Two churches added that they felt that the current version in the *Book of Praise* is good too.
 - b. Two churches which accepted this alternate provided some feedback on the words, noting that it was longer than the biblical text and that it did not need to be so long. One church felt that the words were faithful to Scripture.
 - c. Two churches that accepted this alternate expressed concern about the tune credit at the bottom of the page (which one church loosely translated as “Old and new Dutch farmer songs and square dancing”.)
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. 6 churches did not like this melody. Two called it boring and repetitive, and others noted that it was hard to sing (and difficult to play) and that the rhythm was complicated and not conducive to congregational singing.
 - b. 6 churches provided commentary on the text, most observing that it is a loose rendition that deviated too much from Scripture by expanding on it.
 - c. One church noted that the omission of the phrase “steadfast love toward us” (v. 2) robs this song of its covenantal joy and focus.
 - d. One church indicated it was satisfied with the Genevan version and that no alternate was necessary, and another church noted that this alternate violated Principle 3 and Guidelines 6 through 11.

Considerations:

1. While it is true that this melody contains more eighth notes than is common in most of the psalms and hymns in the *Book of Praise*, our churches have nevertheless learned to sing such melodies (e.g. Hymn 32 “Christ the Lord is Risen Today” and Hymn 38 “Since our Great High Priest, Christ Jesus”).
2. The melodic repetition is not uncommon in other psalm and hymn melodies. For example, in Psalms 36/68 the first three lines are repeated twice, and lines 7 and 8 are repetitions. Further, in Psalm 150, the first two lines are repeated and lines 6 and 7 are repetitions.
3. The phrase “steadfast love toward us” has not been left out in this alternate but is expressed with the words “God’s grace and lovingkindness.”
4. The proposed alternate provides a unique melody for a psalm which shares its Genevan melody with another psalm (127).
5. The Committee reviewed 4 submissions from the churches and found this alternate to be the most suitable. It is not intended to replace the current version but to provide an alternate to encourage more frequent singing of this psalm.
6. The church that expressed concerns about violation of the Principles and Guidelines did not provide any other explanation than to say that it is a short psalm and “doesn’t need to be bloated.”
7. Despite the note that this melody comes from “Oude en Nieuwe Hollandtse Boerenlites en Contradansen,” any such cultural association has been lost over time. The melody itself is appropriate for congregational singing.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt Psalm 117 - GPH for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Psalm 120

Step 1: Initial Review

Observations:

1. The churches submitted 3 alternates for this psalm.
2. In the ministers’ survey, four respondents cited the Genevan melody and 11 respondents cited the psalm’s content as the reason why this song is not sung very often.
3. 6 accompanists also provided feedback concerning the Genevan melody.
4. According to the data available to the Committee, this psalm is one of the least frequently sung of all the psalms.

Considerations:

1. Psalm 120 – TPH was submitted by a considerable number of churches. Its versification was written by the OPC/ URCNA Trinity Psalter Hymnal Committee and is a faithful rendition of Scripture.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose Psalm 120 – TPH to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Observations:

1. 34 churches provided feedback, with 17 accepting and 17 rejecting this alternate.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. 4 churches commented on the simplicity of the melody and found that its plaintive tone was well suited to the words. Two churches felt that the melody was easy to learn, while a few other churches found that it was not so easy. However, some of those that found it hard also noted that the current melody in the *Book of Praise* is also difficult and expressed a preference for the proposed alternate.
 - b. One church noted the melody was modal and that it sang well.
 - c. One church noted that its wording is “slightly more literal and accurate” than the Anglo-Genevan version, and 2 other churches said the words were faithful to the text.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. Six churches noted the tune was unfamiliar or hard to learn. One noted that the melody was better than the version in the *Book of Praise*, while another felt it was not an improvement over the version in the *Book of Praise*.
 - b. One church noted that since it was modal, like the Genevan melodies, there was no advantage to this version.
 - c. 2 churches that rejected this alternate gave some general feedback on the words, observing they were faithful to the Biblical text and included the content of the whole psalm.
 - d. One church provided some feedback on the words, providing some examples of what they felt were unacceptable word choices. This church also proposed an alternate version of the text based on the version in *Sing Psalms*, the song book of the Free Church of Scotland, but it also made some slight alterations to that version.
 - e. One church noted that the text was faithful to Scripture and that the tune was very good, suited to the words, but that its copyright status prevented it from supporting this recommendation.

Considerations:

1. The proposed melody is appropriate for the words of this Psalm. The melody is written in the Dorian mode, which is suitable for its plaintive text. The churches are accustomed to singing melodies in the Dorian mode, and thus its modal character is not an obstacle to adopting it.
2. Regarding the alternate lyrics proposed by one church, since the text of these alternate lyrics is the copyright of the Free Church of Scotland (2003), it is not clear that we would have permission to make the alterations proposed to stanzas 2 and 3. It is further of interest that while the Trinity Psalter Hymnal took the melody from the *Sing Psalms* collection of the FCS, the TPH has its own version of the lyrics. In some instances, the lyrics of the FCS are slightly closer to Scripture, while in other instances those of the TPH are slightly closer to Scripture. The Committee believes that the TPH version is faithful to Scripture, and that the differences between the two versions are not significant enough to change course.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt Psalm 120 - TPH for inclusion in the Book of Praise.

Psalm 130

Step 1: Initial Review

Observations:

1. The churches submitted 4 alternates for this psalm.
2. In the ministers' survey, one minister commented on the mismatch of the words and Genevan tune.
3. According to the data available to the Committee, this psalm is sung more frequently than average.

Considerations:

1. Psalm 130B – TPH is set to a familiar melody, one which suits the text.
2. The text is faithful to Scripture.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose Psalm 130B – TPH to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Observations:

1. 35 churches provided feedback, with 18 accepting and 17 rejecting this alternate.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. 14 churches commented positively on the melody, noting that it was (somewhat) familiar and easy to learn.
 - b. A number of respondents noted that the melody was particularly suited to the words, describing it as “expressive,” “haunting,” and “melancholy,” and observing that it “reflects tone of the words well,” “supporting both the despair at the beginning of the psalm and the hope at the end.”
 - c. Most of the feedback reported that the words were faithful to the text, but one church noted that phrase “I love you, Lord” (stanza 1, line 2) is not found in the original text of the psalm, while another noted that it would have preferred the first words in stanza 1 to say, “Out of the depths” (e.g. as in GPH 256) rather than “From out the depths”.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. One church noted that the melody was in a major key not suitable to the tenor of the psalm. None of the other churches provided specific negative comments about the melody but a number stated that they preferred the Genevan melody.
 - b. A number of churches that rejected the alternate noted that the words were faithful to the biblical text but that some phrases were awkward:
 - i. Stanza 1: 1st line: “From out the depths” is awkward; better to have “Out of the depths”;
 - ii. Stanza 1: end of 1st phrase does not rhyme with end of 3rd phrase.
 - iii. Stanza 1 has the words, “I love you, Lord,” and “forgiving all,” not found in Scripture.
 - iv. Stanza 2 has the words, “I look for him to drive away my night,” not found in Scripture. Also, looking “till light arise” is less direct and sounds less poetic than waiting “for the morning.”

- v. Stanza 3: 1st line, "you waiting saints" should rather be "O Israel." Also, "he will well provide" sounds awkward.
 - vi. Stanza 3: The reference to God's "almighty arm" in the last line is misplaced. At this point the focus is on merciful forgiveness.
 - vii. Stanza 3: line 2, "mercy and redemption" are mentioned, however "steadfast love" is in current translation.
- c. A number of churches gave general reasons for rejecting this alternate, noting that they had not had time to test it, or that alternate Psalm renditions were not needed.

Considerations:

1. As expressed in the feedback received by the churches, the melody is well suited to express both the lament and the praise portions of this psalm.
2. This proposed alternate is taken from *The Psalter*, 1912, so the proposal to change the opening words of stanza 1 to "Out of the depths" is not restricted by copyright.
3. Small differences from Scripture such as those listed above are unavoidable within the constraints of poetry and melody, and similar allowances have been made in the Anglo-Genevan Psalter as well, within the bounds of clarity and faithfulness to Scripture. For example, to describe Israel as "waiting saints," while not literal, is a fitting description within the context. Likewise, to say, "I wait for him to drive away my night," fits the tenor of the psalm which speaks not only of literal night but also of darkness of spirit.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt Psalm 130B - TPH for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*, with the following change to stanza 1, line 1, namely, to change "From out the depths" to "Out of the depths."

Psalm 145

Step 1: Initial Review

Observations:

1. The churches submitted 4 alternates for this psalm, and the Committee reviewed two additional alternates.
2. In the ministers' survey, one minister commented on the Genevan melody of this psalm.
3. According to the data available to the Committee, this psalm is sung with above average frequency in the churches.

Considerations:

1. Upon reviewing all 6 alternates, the Committee preferred Psalm 145A – TPH for the following reasons:
 - a. Despite a large melodic range, the frequent stepwise motion, combined with well-placed melodic leaps makes this an easy melody for congregational singing.
 - b. The melody suits the text.
 - c. The text is a faithful rendition of Scripture.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose Psalm 145A -TPH to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Observations:

1. 37 churches provided feedback, with 15 accepting and 22 rejecting this alternate.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. Positive feedback regarding the melody included words such as “easy to sing”, “familiar”, “easy to learn”, and fitting. Two churches, however, noted that melody has a wide range, and the high notes (high e) may be hard to reach for some.
 - b. 7 churches commented positively on the words, describing them as faithful to the Biblical text and covering the whole Psalm. One church noted that this version is “written more like we speak.”
 - c. Two churches that accepted this alternate indicated that they still preferred the current version of Ps 145 in the *Book of Praise*.
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. 8 churches commented that the melody was not an improvement over the current version, with 9 churches noting that its wide range (from ‘C’ to high ‘E’) made it challenging for congregational singing.
 - b. One church provided the following commentary on the proposed text:
 - i. In Stanza 2: Line 1 is missing an important element. The Psalmist refers to what is passed on from one generation to the next. (v. 4: “One generation shall commend your works to another.”)
 - ii. In Stanza 3: Line 1 is incorrect in stating that men will pour forth God’s goodness. It is the fame of his goodness, not the goodness itself, that they will pour forth. (v. 7, ESV).
 - iii. In Stanza 4: In v. 9 the Psalmist states that the LORD is “good to all,” which is not quite the same as “good to all created things” in Line 1.
 - iv. In Stanza 6: In v. 16 the Psalmist says: “You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing.” “Every living thing” is not quite the same as “all that breathe” in line 5 and “all who live” in line 6. In the expression “satisfy the wants” in line 6 the noun “wants” is not as good a choice as “desire,” which is the word used in v. 16 in practically all Bible translations.
 - v. Stanza 7: Line 4 (“all those who call on him in truth for aid”) is weakened considerably by the awkward filler “for aid.”
 - vi. The church summarized its comments by noting that many more examples could be given to demonstrate that this is a mediocre versification.
 - c. A number of churches indicated that the Anglo-Genevan version in the *Book of Praise* is much superior in both melody and text.

Considerations:

1. Each of the individual textual criticisms is not weighty enough on its own to warrant rejection of this alternate. For example:
 - a. The comment on stanza 4 above does not acknowledge that the latter half of v.9 includes the phrase “he has compassion on all he has made,” which makes the phrase “good to all created things” an acceptable rendering of the parallelism in the Biblical text.
 - b. The comment on stanza 7 above notes that the Biblical text of verse 18 is weakened by the addition of the words “for aid”. However, in the context of the preceding verses (13b to 17) the Psalmist states that “The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food

at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.” Thus, the phrase “all who call on him in truth for aid” is not inconsistent with what the Psalmist expresses.

2. The range of the melody (middle ‘c’ to high ‘e’) is such that it would be difficult to transpose down, since it already starts at the low end of the scale.
3. It is true that the rhyme scheme is irregular and varies from stanza to stanza (e.g., stanza 1: A,B,C,D,E,D; stanza 2: A,B,C,D,A,D, and stanza 3: A,B,C,D,E,F). Further, the lyrics do not flow well: evidently the attempt to follow the text of Scripture closely resulted in awkward phrasings.
4. The totality of the feedback, on both text and melody, suggests that this alternate does not have the support of the churches.

Final Recommendation:

1. To remove Psalm 145A – TPH from the list of alternates proposed for addition to the *Book of Praise*.

Psalm 149

Step 1: Initial Review

Observations:

1. The churches submitted 3 alternates for this psalm.
2. In the ministers’ survey 3 respondents felt there was a mismatch between the words and the melody.
3. One accompanist noted that the melody is unfamiliar due to infrequent use, but that it is singable.
4. According to the data available to the Committee, this psalm is sung slightly less often than the average in the churches.

Considerations:

1. Psalm 149A – TPH was found to be a faithful rendition of the text and preferable to the other alternates submitted by the churches.
2. The melody of Psalm 149B – TPH (HANOVER) is fitting to this psalm. It is stronger in shape and contour than LAUDATE DOMINUM (used for Psalm 149A- TPH) and is easier for the congregation to sing.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose Psalm 149A – TPH, set to the melody HANOVER, to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Observations:

1. 35 churches provided feedback, with 22 accepting and 13 rejecting this alternate.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. Most of the churches accepting this alternate commented positively on this melody, observing that it was a familiar melody and that it was easy to learn.
 - b. Two churches specifically mentioned that this melody was preferable to the Genevan melody in the *Book of Praise*, with one church drawing attention to the difficulty of lines

- 5 & 6 of the Genevan melody. One church that accepted this alternate noted, however, that this melody “pales in comparison to the original” (i.e. the Genevan).
 - c. One church observed that this melody is also proposed for the alternate for Psalm 95.
 - d. 5 churches commented that the words were a faithful rendition of Scripture.
3. Negative feedback:
- a. One church felt that the use of this melody was a violation of the Guidelines, citing “overkill on this tune - 2x in Psalm selections - 104.”
 - b. One church provided feedback on the lyrics:
 - i. In stanza 1, line 3 the use of “his” in “Let Israel rejoice in his Maker” while found in the KJV and ESV, should be replaced with “their”.
 - ii. Stanza 4 includes the expression “nations and lands,” which serves no purpose other than to fill out the line and is stylistically flawed; the noun “bands” is not a particularly fitting substitute for “fetters”; the phrase “this judgment will fall” is not easily understood; and line 3 seems to state: “It is written that the judgment will fall,” which is not quite what the Psalmist is saying in v. 9 (and “fall” does not rhyme with “LORD.”)
 - c. One church rejected this alternate due to the “copyright status” but otherwise noted that the words were a very close rendition of the Biblical text and that the melody reminded them of the hymn “Ye Servants of God”, which it found fitting since the theme of that hymn is consistent with the theme of Psalm 149.

Considerations:

1. The use of the same melody for multiple psalms is not a violation of Guideline 6. The current *Book of Praise* has 20 instances where a melody is used more than once. While one church cites the alternate Psalm 104 as the duplicate, it is the proposed Psalm 95 which also uses this melody (HANOVER) and its use for both psalms is appropriate considering they are both expressions of praise.
2. The criticisms of the text by one church are minor in nature and the version proposed cannot be said to be unfaithful to the Biblical text. For example:
 - a. In stanza 1, since “Israel” is a collective proper noun, it can be represented by either a singular or a plural pronoun (note the parallel line: “children of Zion rejoice in their king);
 - b. In stanza 4, “lands” is a synonym of “nations” and thus true to the Biblical text, and “bands” is a synonym of fetters, as is clear from the preceding phrase, “to bind kings with chains.”
 - c. In stanza 4, the line “for so it is written, this judgment will fall” adequately expresses the meaning of Ps 149:9: “to execute on them the judgment written” (ESV).
3. Since this song has a recent copyright date (1991), changes to the text should only be pursued if necessary for faithfulness and clarity. The Committee considers the text of the proposed alternate to be faithful to Scripture.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt Psalm 149A – TPH, set to the melody HANOVER, for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

Psalm 150

Step 1: Initial Review

Observations:

1. The churches submitted 4 alternates for this psalm.
2. The ministers' survey included one comment about the words and one comment about infrequent use of this psalm in the worship service.
3. According to the data available to the Committee, this psalm is sung with average frequency in the churches.

Considerations:

1. Of the 4 alternates submitted, the Committee selected Psalm 150C – TPH. It is a faithful rendition of the Scripture passage.
2. The tune is familiar from the hymn "All Creatures of Our God and King," and it is well suited to the text.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose Psalm 150C – TPH to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Observations:

1. 35 churches provided feedback, with 20 accepting and 15 rejecting this alternate.
2. Positive feedback:
 - a. Many churches noted the melody is familiar and that it fits well with the text. One church noted that this melody is a better option for congregational singing, since it removes some of the current challenges with Genevan 150 (e.g. its unclear rhythm due to the lack of a rest after lines 1 and 3, and the G notes in lines 1, 2, 6, and 7 which tend to be sung as G#). One church that supported this melody nevertheless felt that the Genevan version is superior.
 - b. A number of churches indicated that this alternate should be added to the *Book of Praise* but that the Genevan version should also be retained.
 - c. Two churches suggested that the penultimate (second-last) note of the melody should be shortened.
 - d. The churches that accepted this alternate called its text "faithful to Scripture" and "a balanced representation of what the Bible speaks".
 - e. Two churches noted that, though they liked the melody, it is also used for a proposed hymn. One church wondered if the proposed alternate should be included in the hymn section since some of the words of the Biblical text are missing (but it provided no examples).
3. Negative feedback:
 - a. One church noted that the use of the melody of "All Creatures of Our God and King" constituted a violation of Guideline 6.
 - b. One church provided input on the text, recommending changes to stanza 2, lines 4 and 5 to make these lines rhyme ("Praise God with harp and strings and lute, with dance and tambourine and flute"), and to stanza 3, line 4, correcting "all that breathes" to "all that breathe."

- c. A number of churches noted the frequent use of the word Hallelujah, with one church adding that it is not advisable to have “psalms with refrains unless the psalm is written that way (e.g., Psalm 136).”
- d. Many of the churches who rejected this alternate did so based on their preference for the current version, noting that the Genevan version is “well loved” and “very singable”.

Considerations:

1. This alternate is intended to be an addition to the *Book of Praise* and is not meant to replace the current version.
2. The use of the melody of the Hymn “All Creatures of Our God and King” is not a violation of the Guidelines. The Guideline recommends that melodies with a strong association to a particular hymn be avoided. In this case, though the association is no doubt present, the use of this melody also underscores the themes that the two songs share and fits the grandiose content of Psalm 150 particularly well.
3. The change to stanza 2, lines 4-5 proposed by one church do indeed enhance the rhyme, but the text as it stands is faithful to Scripture. The churches are right to note that “all that breathe” is grammatically more correct than “all that breathes.” The Committee has requested permission from the Trinity Psalter Hymnal Committee to make this change.
4. The words of this alternate are faithful to Scripture and while it is shorter than the current version, it does not leave out any elements. It is noted that the comparative length of the Anglo-Genevan version of the Psalm 150 in the *Book of Praise* is due to its inclusion of parallel phrases not explicitly found in the biblical text.
5. The use of a refrain is not inconsistent with the biblical text, which starts with the words “Praise the Lord” in verse 1 and ends with the words “Praise the Lord” in verse 6. Further, the repeated Hallelujahs are fitting here when one considers Psalm 150's role as a closing crescendo to the book of Psalms.
6. Adapting the penultimate note would require adjusting both the meter/timing of the melody and the supporting harmony. Rather than generating a unique *Book of Praise* setting of the hymn, it would be wiser, for the sake of commonality with hymn books of other denominations (e.g., URC), to adopt the present Williams setting of the hymn. The Williams setting with the dotted whole note of the penultimate measure has become a classic arrangement in its own right. A desire to change the penultimate note length does not seem to be living in the churches, and the temptation to shorten this note can be addressed via sage accompaniment.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt Psalm 150C - TPH for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*, changing the words “all that breathes” to “all that breathe” in stanza 3.

PROPOSED HYMNS

COME, YOU FAITHFUL, RAISE THE STRAIN

Step 1: Initial Review

TPH 356

Lyrics: Ancient hymn by John of Damascus 8th century

Tune: *St. Kevin* by Arthur Sullivan

Copyright: Public Domain

Observations:

1. Various forms of this hymn are included in 353 hymnals, according to hymnary.org.
2. It was recommended by 2 churches.
3. TPH includes it in the section, "Resurrection of Christ."
4. There are different versions in the blue and grey Psalter Hymnals: the latter has more modern language than the former.
5. Its tune is well known and suitable for congregational singing.

Considerations:

1. Verse 3: The meaning of "now the queen of seasons" is not clear. Does it refer to the spring season? The Easter season?
2. Grey Psalter (1987 CRC Psalter Hymnal - GPH) #389 has the phrase, "'Tis the spring of life" in verse 2, which is better than the TPH phrase "'Tis the spring of souls."
3. GPH has three stanzas instead of five, eliminating the stanza with the words "queen of seasons."
4. The hymn section "Christ has risen" in the *Book of Praise* includes four hymns on this topic, but two of them have been recommended for removal by multiple churches, and a third by a smaller number of churches. TPH 356 could be a replacement.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose GPH 389 **Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain** to the churches.

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

Churches: 35 Accepted: 8 Rejected: 27 (4)

Rejected because of text: 12

Rejected because of melody: 17

Rejected for other reasons: 10

Observations:

1. Positive feedback included that it was a joyful Easter hymn, that melody and text were okay or even mediocre, and that the "melody needs to be learnt."

2. Critics of the tune noted that it was difficult to sing which, as noted by another congregation, may be caused by the “unpredictability of the melody” and particularly the “strange drops in line 3.”
3. In terms of text, critics not only found the text to be archaic, but also raised a number of concerns with particular phrases:
 - a. “all the winter of our sins, long and dark, is flying” can suggest that sin is no longer a concern for believers, and “flying” is an archaism that has a different meaning today;
 - b. “raise the strain” is archaic language, obscures the intended meaning, and is not the nicest choice to describe singing;
 - c. “this the spring of life today” is confusing, and there are concerns about the hymn being written in the historical present;
 - d. “affection” has connotations that do not fit the context of this hymn;
 - e. the phrases “and from three days’ sleep in death” and “burst the bars of the tomb’s dark portal” were considered to be “old” and laborious.
4. Additional text critique found that the words did not seem to directly reference specific passages of scripture and that the words would not add anything to the *Book of Praise* and, as noted by other churches, it would not add melodic or textual substance to our existing Easter hymn section

Considerations:

1. The SCBP recognized in their initial considerations that this hymn did include some challenging phraseology (eg. “queen of seasons”) and so decided to reduce it from five to three stanzas, avoiding the above-mentioned phrase.
2. Some churches still expressed concerns with the archaisms and obscurity of text in the remaining three stanzas.
3. Even though the remaining three stanzas include examples of language from an earlier time period, none of it is obscure.
 - a. Eg. In stanza 2, “winter of our sins” is a phrase that seeks to express that the spiritual darkness of sin is removed in Christ, even though we still need to contend with our sins.
4. The remaining stanzas exemplify a poetic freshness of text.
5. The practice of singing about past events as if they are occurring today is a device characterized as “the historic present”, and is considered legitimate as such.
6. Although melodic challenges were noted by some congregations, the melody does exhibit qualities suitable to congregational singing:
 - a. its melodic range is just over an octave (a ninth);
 - b. its has a largely stepwise motion;
 - c. its melodic leaps are mostly well positioned.
7. With some repetition and practice, the melody is very singable for a congregation.

Final Recommendation:

That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt GPH 389 **Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain** as an additional hymn for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

CROWN HIM WITH MANY CROWNS

Step 1: Initial Review

TPH 380

Lyrics: Matthew Bridges 1851

Tune: Diademata

Copyright: Public Domain

Observations:

1. It is included in 711 hymnals, according to hymnary.org.
2. It was recommended by 20 churches.
3. The TPH includes it in the section, "The Exaltation of Christ."
4. It has a familiar tune.
5. It has a strong text in some stanzas.
6. It does have some archaisms.
7. There is some imaginary material in stanzas 3 and 4 (no angels can bear to look at Christ's wounds in heaven; flowers of paradise surround Christ's feet).
8. It was the third most recommended hymn by the churches, together with "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing."

Considerations:

1. If we omit verses, might we appear to be passing judgement on the URC and OPC, which have included these? No, many hymnals present different verses of various hymns. We are tasked with recommending hymns that are suitable for the *Book of Praise*.
2. Stanzas 1, 2 and 5 appropriately exalt Christ, and the hymn has a strong tune.
3. This hymn is comparable to Hymns 32, 41, 44, and 46 of the *Book of Praise*.
4. The high support for this hymn from the churches carries some weight.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose the revised stanzas of TPH 380 **Crown Him with Many Crowns** to the churches.

Step 2: Post-Feedback Report

Churches: 36 Accepted: 28 Rejected: 8 (3)

Rejected because of text: 4

Rejected because of melody: 1

Rejected for other reasons: 4

Observations:

1. Positive feedback noted that this hymn was classic, well-known and loved.
2. Its melody was considered to be singable, strong, powerful, familiar, having weight and majesty, triumphant, and having a good melodic range.

3. Its text was found to be scriptural, expressing beautiful formulations of scriptural truths, and also echoing elements of Revelation 19. It was also noted that “it is a much better version of the hymn than found elsewhere,” and the “wording is good.”
 - a. Churches that gave positive comments did suggest to change “rich wounds” in stanza 3 (end of line 1)
 - i. One suggestion was to revise it to “those wounds.”
 - b. The syllables in the phrase, “the in-car-nate word,” are aligned under the melody in a way that suggests that “in-” goes with the G sharp (resulting in an unnatural emphasis). It is natural to sing “th’in-car-nate word” with “car-” on the G sharp and a melisma for “-nate.”
 - c. The words “your praise shall never, never fail” could be changed to follow the formula of other hymnals “your praise and glory shall not fail.”
4. Those who criticized the text wondered who did the crowning (believers, angels etc.), some even suggesting that its theology is Roman Catholic. More significant was the following observation: “Nowhere in Scripture are believers exhorted to crown him who is their King and Lord. One who is already crowned does not need to be crowned again, especially not by his subjects. The opening words of each stanza are therefore totally unacceptable.” The sequence of events described in this hymn were also questioned. Other respondents criticized specific lines in various stanzas as ornate (stanza 1: the phrase “drowning music” is a “too ornate embellishment”), ambiguous (stanza 3, lines 1 and 2), obscure (stanza 5, line 1), or awkwardly expressed (stanza 5, line 2).
5. Additional concerns regarding the text of this hymn include: 1) Singular and plural first-person forms are used inconsistently: “awake, MY soul,” “now WE sing,” “died for ME,” “for US he died”; 2) in stanza 1, line 3, “to be” as substitute for the original “for thee’ may fit grammatically but, considering its meaning, makes for a weak line ending that receives undue emphasis when it is sung; 3) the “Hail . . . hail” in stanza 3 is far removed from the way we speak today (i.e., it is an archaism); 4) in the description of what saints and angels do in the “realms of light,” the reference to “night” in stanza 4, line 4, is “out of place.”

Considerations:

1. The melody of this hymn was clearly appreciated by the churches.
2. The revised text was also appreciated by the churches
3. The words, “Crown him with many crowns,” are taken from Revelation 19: 12 (NIV): “His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns.” This line should not be understood as a command given to believers to place many crowns on Jesus’ head, but rather as a poetic way of ascribing honour to him, of attributing high honour to him and rejoicing in his victory.
4. By rewriting the phrase “the in-car-nate Word” (stanza 4) as “th’in-car-nate Word”, and realigning it to match the other stanzas (with the syllable “-nate” held over two eighth-notes), would enhance the singability of text and melody.

Stanza 4 - Line 2

who once on earth, th'in - car - nate Word,

5. The process of versification allows for a measured use of poetic license. In this case, the ordering of events does not oppose the scriptural account, but simply sets forth a summary of such events.
6. The visually descriptive language of stanza 3 is not out of step with the scriptures:
 - a. Revelation 5:6 refers to the Lamb which looked “as though it had been slain.”
 - b. In John 20: 27, Jesus tells Thomas to see and to touch his wounds.
7. The interchange of singular and plural pronouns reflects the activity of singing, which is done both corporately as congregation and individually within the congregation.

Final recommendation:

That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt TPH 380 **Crown Him with Many Crowns** for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*, including the contraction and realignment of the phrase “th-in-car-nate Word” (Stanza 4).

FOR YOUR GIFT OF GOD THE SPIRIT

Step 1: Initial Review

TPH 399

Text: Margaret Clarkson 1960

Tune: *Blaenwern* by William Rowlands 1905

Copyright: Hope Publishing, 1960

CCLI License Cover: Yes

Observations:

1. It is included in 9 hymnals, according to hymnary.org.
2. It was recommended by 1 church.
3. The TPH includes it in its section on the Holy Spirit.
4. Its author also wrote “We Come O Christ to You” (Hymn 79, *Book of Praise*).
5. Its text is a rich description of the work of the Spirit.
6. First line of stanza 3 suggests the sacred word is not alive unless the Spirit awakens it.

Considerations:

1. It has a beautiful tune.
2. The first line of stanza 3 can be read as “wakes *in us* the sacred Word”; such a reading is more in keeping with the meaning/intent of the rest of the hymn.
3. It is a solid scriptural hymn.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose TPH 399 **For Your Gift of God the Spirit** to the churches.

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

Churches: 36 Accepted: 15 Rejected: 21 (3)

Rejected because of text: 11

Rejected because of melody: 10

Rejected for other reasons: 5

Observations:

1. Positive Text Comments

- a. It supplements the other four hymns which deal with the Holy Spirit (especially the Spirit's work of creation). Feedback included a request to update archaisms, e.g., in stanza 2 to change "brooded" to the more modern "hovered".
- b. There are currently four hymns about the Holy Spirit in the *Book of Praise*, but none of these thank God for giving us his Spirit, as this hymn does. This hymn also more clearly prays that God will continue to give us the Spirit, as taught in Luke 11:13 "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!". It also includes the warning not to grieve or quench the Spirit within us, repeating the warnings of I Thessalonians 5:19 and Ephesians 4: 30.

2. Negative Text Comments

- a. The text of this hymn goes against Guidelines 4, 5, and 6.
 - i. It attributes names to, and uses language of, the Holy Spirit which Scripture and the Reformed Confessions do not generally use, which may confuse singers (especially newcomers).
- b. The feedback received repeatedly mentions that the text is hard to understand and even theologically questionable.
- c. Its text has archaic expressions, e.g., "brooded on the lifeless deep."
- d. Specific concerns
 - i. Stanza 1
 1. Line 2 does not make sense.
 2. Line 3: Christ ascended to heaven, not to the throne.
 3. Line 4: How do we make Christ's life our own? Christ paid for our sins and we are made alive by the Holy Spirit, so these words don't make sense.
 - ii. Stanza 2
 1. Questions were raised concerning the proper use of "Advocate" and the meaning of the phrase "thrust us thro'."
 - iii. Stanza 3
 1. The intent of this stanza is difficult to understand.
 - iv. Stanza 5
 1. Line 3: The regular order of the trinity has been altered for the sake of rhyme scheme: "God the Father, Spirit, Son."
- e. The *Book of Praise* already has four hymns about the Holy Spirit.
- f. The hymn does not refer directly to Scripture.

3. Melody

- a. Feedback included a mix of appreciation and concern for the tune.
- b. This tune is best known from the hymn, "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling".

Considerations:

1. The initial rationale for recommending this hymn was its description of the work of the Spirit. This was also recognized by a few churches. As such, it could enhance our present collection of 4 hymns. At the same time, its content overlaps somewhat with Hymn 47.
2. In this hymn, worship is first directed to Christ, who gives the Spirit (stanza 1). The hymn then goes on to describe the work of the Holy Spirit. The final stanza is most clearly Trinitarian.
3. The meaning of particular phrases can be understood when read in context.
4. The word "brooded" evokes Gen 1: 2 which uses the image of a mother bird brooding over her young (see also Deut 32: 11).
5. Interactions with text concerns
 - a. Stanza 1, lines 1 and 2 read as follows: "Saviour, we would worship you for your gift of God the Spirit, power to make our lives anew, pledge of life and hope of glory." Reading the phrase in its logical order, it means that the Saviour is worshipped because of the gift of God the Spirit, who is the power that generates new life, and who is a promise of life and hope of glory.
 - b. In stanza 1, line 3, the hymn does not deny that Christ ascended into heaven. Rather, it expresses the Biblical teaching that he sends his Spirit from the position of his heavenly throne (see Acts 2: 29-36).
 - c. Stanza 1, line 4 reflects the teaching of Romans 8: 9-10: Since the Spirit of God dwells in us, we can even say that Christ is in us.
 - d. Regarding the use of "Advocate" in stanza 2: The intercessory work of the Spirit is clearly taught in Scripture (see Romans 8:26-27).
 - e. Stanza 3: Regarding the phrase, "living author": II Peter 1:21 (cf. BC Art. 3) indicates "No prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." For the meaning of the phrase, "teaching rebel hearts to pray," see Romans 8: 15 and Galatians 4:6: it is the Spirit who makes us cry: "Abba, Father."
 - f. In stanza 5, it is indeed true that the Spirit is mentioned before the Son in order to maintain the rhyme scheme of the hymn.
6. While it is true that the *Book of Praise* already has four hymns on the Holy Spirit, the importance of including such hymns is clear from Romans 8:10 and Lord's Day 20 of the Heidelberg Catechism.
7. This hymn includes numerous allusions to Scripture, even though these are not specifically referred to in the heading or subtitle. Examples include Ephesians 2: 4-10 and Romans 8: 27.
8. Melodic association with "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" does not undermine this hymn; it may even help to increase the familiarity of the melody.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt GPH 399 **For Your Gift of God the Spirit** as an additional hymn for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

GOD HIMSELF IS WITH US

Step 1: Initial Review

TPH 164

Text: Gerhard Tersteegen 1729

Tune: *Wunderbarer König*

Copyright: Public domain

Observations:

1. It is included in 53 hymnals, according to hymnary.org.
2. It was recommended by 13 churches.
3. The TPH includes it in the section, “The Opening of Worship”
4. It can be used in the liturgy as a call to worship.
5. It has a familiar text and tune, though it is somewhat repetitive.
6. Its text uses straightforward language.
7. It has some archaic language.
8. There is an updated version with additional verse, copyrighted by Morningstar.

Considerations:

1. Stanza 2 raises a question: Can we actually hear the heavenly harps resounding while we’re still on earth? Metaphorically, through revelation, yes, we can, in the same way that we can “see the crowds the throne surrounding,” in the mind’s eye and ear.
2. The words and melody are well-balanced for congregational singing.
3. This hymn would serve well in the liturgy.
4. The *Book of Praise* has no comparable ‘call to worship’ hymn, though there are of course plenty of psalms that could be used for this purpose.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose TPH 164 **God Himself is With Us** to the churches.

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

Churches: 34 Accepted: 14 Rejected: 20 (3)

Rejected because of text: 11

Rejected because of melody: 7

Rejected for other reasons: 8

Observations:

1. One comment about the text is that this hymn does not focus on any specific situation but simply glorifies God.
2. Seven churches commented on the phrase, “God we own,” in stanza 1. Though the verb “to own” can mean “to acknowledge,” the churches noted that the phrase “God we own” is neither scriptural nor confessional, but is sentimental and man-centered language that seeks to bring God down to our level. God is indeed our God (as we can sing from Psalms 23, 42, 43, 55, 73, 118), but we don’t own him. Rather, we are God’s possession, and He has purchased us by the blood of Christ. Thus the hymn is said to violate Guidelines 4 and 7.
3. Churches also commented on the use of archaic language (eg. “thou” and “thee”).
4. Negative feedback on the melody noted that it is repetitive and simplistic.

Considerations:

1. This hymn could fill a perceived void in the *Book of Praise*, which does not include specific “call to worship” hymns, as noted in the initial considerations, although Hymns 5, 27 and 78 include similar content.
2. The words, “Him alone, God we own,” generated the most critique from the churches. Yet it should be noted that “own,” in this context of “deepest reverence,” refers to “acknowledging” God. Further, even if “own” did mean “possess” here, it would be acceptable to speak of God as “our God”. On the one hand, Psalm 135:4 says, “For the LORD has chosen Jacob for himself, Israel as his own possession.” On the other hand, we read in Numbers 18:20 that the LORD said to Aaron, “You shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall you have any portion among them. I am your portion and your inheritance among the people of Israel.” Likewise, Deuteronomy 10: 9 says, “Therefore Levi has no portion or inheritance with his brothers. The LORD is his inheritance, as the LORD your God said to him.”
3. There is indeed some archaic language in this hymn (stanza 1 – “own”; stanza 3 – thou, thy, thee).
4. The musical repetition of lines 1, 2 and the last two measures, as well as the sequential repetition in system 4, all contribute to the melodic repetition of this hymn, which makes it easier to sing.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt TPH 164 **God Himself Is with Us** as an additional hymn for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*, updating the archaic language of stanzas 2 and 3, as found below (GPH 244):

God Himself is With Us

Stanza 2

God himself is with us; hear the harps resounding!
See the crowds the throne surrounding!
“Holy, holy, holy,” hear the hymn ascending,
angels, saints, their voices blending!

Bow your ear to us here;
hear O Christ, the praises
That your church now raises.

Stanza 3

Fount of every blessing, purify my spirit,
Trusting only in your merit.
Like the holy angels who behold your glory,
May I ceaselessly adore you,
And in all, great and small,
Seek to do most nearly
What you love so dearly.

GOD MOVES IN A MYSTERIOUS WAY

Step 1: Initial Review

TPH 256

Text: William Cowper 1774

Tune: *Dundee*

Copyright: Public domain

Observations:

1. It is included in 1045 hymnals, according to hymnary.org.
2. It was recommended by one church.
3. The TPH includes it in its section on "Providence".
4. Its tune is well known from Hymn 72: "Behold the amazing gift of love."
5. Is "frowning providence" a questionable phrase?

Considerations:

1. Verses 1-3 refer to Psalm 77, so the hymn has a good biblical basis.
2. Its text expresses trust in God's providence during difficulties, making this an encouraging hymn to sing.
3. "Frowning providence" is a poetic way of expressing the challenge of understanding difficulties in life. If the churches struggle with this phrase, they will let us know in the feedback.
4. The contents of TPH 256 and Hymn 72 correspond to / support each other, so the fact that they have the same tune need not be an obstacle.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose TPH 256 **God Moves in a Mysterious Way** to the churches, with an update to the text of stanza 3 ("ye" to "you"), as it appears in GPH 434.

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

Churches: 34 Accepted: 10 Rejected: 24 (2)

Rejected because of text: 17

Rejected because of melody: 8

Rejected for other reasons: 6

Observations:

1. This hymn was highly criticized for its “vague”, “ambiguous”, “awkward”, “cumbersome”, “strange”, “subjective” and even “unscriptural” language.
 - a. Stanza 1 “God moves in a mysterious way” was questioned. Rationale included:
 - i. God does not move in a mysterious way. He moves through His Word and Sacraments, as He promises.
 - ii. The title has a secular association and is an expression often used to try and come to grips with a conundrum.
 - iii. Is it even edifying to sing about God’s actions being “mysterious”
 - b. Stanza 2: the five syllable word “unfathomable” was awkward to enunciate.
 - c. The most frequently criticized aspect of this hymn was the line, “behind a frowning providence he hides a smiling face.” Criticisms included the following:
 - i. This is not a picture of God’s providence as revealed in Scripture. Rather, as we confess in Lord’s Day 10, “God’s providence is his almighty and ever present power, whereby, as with his hand, he still upholds heaven and earth and all creatures, and so governs them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, food and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, indeed, all things, come to us not by chance but by his fatherly hand.”
 - ii. This is not confessional language; the providence of God does not “frown”; rather it is a blessed thing, especially for His covenant people.
 - iii. It expresses a one-sided view of providence as grim.
 - iv. It is not theologically accurate and potentially confusing.
 - v. It sounds as though some kind of impersonal force is active apart from God, and it suggests that all God’s works are bitter pills to swallow.
 - vi. This description of providence goes beyond what God has revealed in Scripture.
 - d. Eight churches critiqued the fact that the *Dundee* melody was already used for Hymn 72.

Considerations:

1. The Committee’s original consideration notes that the first three stanzas are loosely based on Psalm 77 (the verses 13 through 19). In the context of v. 13, God’s ways are termed “holy” and the psalmist asks the question: “What god is great like our God?”
2. Regarding the greatness of our God, Scripture uses words such as “unsearchable” and “inscrutable” (Job 5: 9; Psalm 145:3; Romans 11: 33). Such passages confirm that the ways of the LORD are indeed “mysterious”, that is, beyond man’s comprehension. Evidently, God’s ways are clearly known to Him alone.

2. The Heidelberg Catechism highlights the positive aspects of God's providence in its references to Acts 17: 24-25 and Romans 8: 38-39. Consequently, the wording of the fourth stanza seems to conflict with the more familiar positive understanding of God's providence and may also be the reason why this particular stanza did not appear in the blue (1959 CRC) *Psalter Hymnal* # 461. The removal of the fourth stanza does not hinder the flow of thought in the remaining stanzas.
3. Although churches clearly associate the *Dundee* tune with Hymn 72's versification of 1 John 3: 1-3, such a melodic association does not conflict with the content of this hymn and makes it easier to sing.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt TPH 256 **God Moves in a Mysterious Way**, with the exception of stanza 4, as an additional hymn for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

GUIDE ME, O MY GREAT REDEEMER

Step 1: Initial Review

TPH 524

Lyrics: William Williams 1745

Tune: *CWM Rhondda*

Copyright: Public domain

Observations:

1. It is included in 1656 hymnals, according to hymnary.org.
2. It was recommended by 2 churches.
3. The TPH includes it in its section, "Pilgrimage and Guidance"
4. It is a familiar tune and hymn.
5. Its inclusion in so many hymnals testifies to its ecumenical character.
6. Its content is redemptive historical in nature; compare Belgic Confession, Article 34.
7. It has archaic language, including 'Jehovah.'

Considerations:

1. The GPH #543 removes the archaisms and replaces "Jehovah" with "Redeemer."
2. Stanza 1 could be sung for a Lord's Supper celebration.
3. Comparable language is found in Hymn 71:2 (mutual encouragement in pilgrimage) and Hymn 83 (thanksgiving for the conclusion of the day's 'pilgrimage'). TPH 524 differs in that it is a prayer about the believers' life-pilgrimage.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose GPH 543 **Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer** to the churches.

Step 2: Post-Feedback Report

Churches: 36 Accepted: 24 Rejected: 12 (3)

Rejected because of text: 7

Rejected because of melody: 0

Rejected for other reasons: 5

Observations:

1. Eight churches commented that the melody was well-known. There were no criticisms of the melody.
2. There were a variety of general concerns regarding the text:
 - a. There are other, more biblical hymns with direct references to Scripture.
 - b. The repetitive nature of text and music was a concern.
 - c. Questions were raised about the imagery of this text and whether it was biblical or misapplied.
 - d. One church wondered whether this hymn “superimposes the believer into the OT events of the exodus and wilderness journey without clear reference to the reality that Christ fulfilled these shadows” (his work is only signaled by the capitalizations in “Redeemer,” “Bread of heaven,” “Deliverer”).
 - e. The number of first-person pronouns begs the question: is this really a congregational hymn?
3. There were some questions regarding the text of the hymn.
 - a. In stanza 2, “the crystal fountain” seems to be an obscure allusion to Rev 22:1: “the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb” But what does the expression mean? One comment mentioned that crystals are used in new age “healing” practices.
 - b. In stanza 3, what does the phrase ‘Hell’s destruction’ mean?
 - c. The words, “tread the verge of Jordan,” sounds pretentious. Further, the personification whereby “Death” and “Destruction” are asked to “land” the speaker “on Canaan’s side” is awkward and ineffective. “Canaan” as a name for heaven or paradise is questionable. More importantly, nowhere does the Bible refer to death as crossing the Jordan and entering Canaan. John Bunyan’s allegory, not Scripture, is the source of these details.

Considerations:

1. The initial observations of the Committee note that this hymn is a prayer which uses OT imagery to refer to the Christian’s pilgrimage.
2. The melody is well-known and easy to sing. The repetition of text corresponds to the repetition of the various musical phrases in the second half of each stanza. Such sequences and repetition are musical devices used to strengthen both melody and text of a hymn.
3. The hymn’s use of “my” and “I”, is in keeping with the confessional language of the Heidelberg Catechism, e.g., in Lord’s Day 1. While the hymn does speak in the first person singular, that does not make it individualistic. Apart from the wide use of the first person

singular in many psalms, the apostle Paul also felt free to speak in the first person singular about his faith and his spiritual life and experience: see, e.g., Romans 7:7-25; Galatians 6:14; and Philippians 3:2-16.

4. This hymn has a freer poetic form, largely because it refers indirectly to a number of Scripture passages rather than directly versifying one particular passage.
5. Scriptural references can be found for most of the images in this hymn
 - a. Stanza 1
 - i. Line 1: the combination of rock/ Redeemer is found in Scripture in Psalm 19: 14 "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer," and in Psalm 78:35 "They remembered that God was their rock, the Most High God their redeemer."
 - ii. Line 2: expresses the truth of Psalm 136:11, 12 "and brought Israel out from among them [Egypt], ... with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, for his steadfast love endures forever"
 - iii. The chorus reflects John 6:51 "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."
 - b. Stanza 2
 - i. Line 1 alludes to Exodus 17:6 "Behold, I [the LORD] will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink." This event appears again in 1 Corinthians 10:4 "and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ." In light of these passages, the "crystal fountain" is a poetic reference to the Rock of Christ.
 - ii. Line 2 alludes to Exodus 13:21 "and the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night"
 - iii. The chorus reflects Psalm 140:7 "Sovereign LORD, my strong deliverer, you shield my head in the day of battle."
 - c. Stanza 3
 - i. Line 2: The phrase "Death of death, and hell's Destruction" expresses how Christ in his resurrection was the "Death of death" and, in a sense, destroyed the power of hell. See for instance: Hebrews 2:14-15 "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil." The hymn's phrase does not mean that hell no longer exists, but that Christ shows his power over the ones he saves. From this perspective, Christ is the Death of death and Destroyer of hell.
 - ii. The chorus reflects Ps. 61:8 "So will I ever sing praises to your name, as I perform my vows day after day"

6. Although the images of “treading the verge of Jordan” and “landing on Canaan’s side” are not specifically mentioned in scripture, the imagery does appear in the Belgic Confession, Article 34, where we confess that “[regeneration] is not brought about by the water as such but by the sprinkling of the precious blood of the Son of God, which is our Red Sea, through which we must pass to escape the tyranny of Pharaoh, that is, the devil, and enter into the spiritual land of Canaan.” Such a symbolic or allegorical reference to Canaan can also be understood from the book of Joshua. Just as Joshua led the people of Israel to their inheritance, so our Joshua (the Lord Jesus Christ) is leading us to our inheritance. The symbolic or allegorical use of Canaan as an inheritance can rightly apply to the Christian experience.
7. The image of pilgrims seeking a homeland is also found in 1 Peter 2:11: “Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.” See also Hebrews 11: 8-16. These Scripture references use typological language to speak of our entry into the new heavens and new earth. Further, the language of pilgrimage to the promised land is also found in Hymn 71:2 of the *Book of Praise*.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt **Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer** as an additional hymn for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

HAIL THE DAY THAT SEES HIM RISE

Step 1: Initial Review

TPH 371

Lyrics: Charles Wesley 1739 and Thomas Cotterill 1820

Tune: Llanfair

Copyright: Public domain

Observations:

1. It is included in 519 hymnals, according to hymnary.org.
2. It was recommended by one church.
3. TPH section: “Ascension of Christ”
4. “Alleluia” at the end of each line is repetitive.
5. Its tune is familiar and easy to sing.
6. The last word in stanza 4 (“race”) may be problematic.

Considerations:

1. The repetition of “Alleluia” is suitable for the content of the hymn.
2. Hymn 32 in the *Book of Praise* (also by Charles Wesley) has “Alleluia” at end of lines as well.
3. The use of the word “race” is okay in the context of the hymn
4. The *Book of Praise* already has multiple hymns (9) in the section “The Lord ascended up on high.”

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose TPH 371 **Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise** to the churches.

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

Churches: 37 Accepted: 24 Rejected: 13 () September 22

Rejected because of text: 8

Rejected because of melody: 3

Rejected for other reasons: 5

Observations:

1. Six of the positive responses and three of the negative responses note that this hymn's melody and text are quite repetitive, and they even question whether there is a need for more ascension hymns.
2. Comments from the churches repeatedly observe that Hymn 32 of the *Book of Praise* has a similar textual design. One church recommends replacing Hy. 32 with "Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise."
3. Concern was expressed about the appropriateness of the historical present in stanzas 1 through 3
4. Feedback expressed concern regarding the third stanza: "Highest heaven its Lord receives; Alleluia, yet he loves the ones he leaves, alleluia." Hebrews 13:5 says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." The concern is that "we are told that we should be content because Christ will never leave us, or forsake us." The line is "not heretical, it has a point to prove, but it is problematic."
5. In the last line of stanza 3 the text says: "still he calls us all his own." Since the hymn author, Charles Wesley, was known for his Pelagian views, who is the "us" referred to in the text?

Considerations:

1. The content of this hymn is covered elsewhere in the *Book of Praise*, e.g. stanza 2 in Psalm 24, and stanza 4 in Hymn 42.
2. The practice of singing about past events as if they are occurring today is a device characterized as "the historic present", and is considered legitimate as such.
3. The reference to "leaving" in stanza 3 simply speaks of Christ's departure to His heavenly throne. Indeed, with the outpouring of His Spirit, Christ Himself dwells in us. (Romans 8: 9-10 and 32; John 17: 11)
4. Its similar textual structure (repeated "Alleluias" at the end of the line) to that of Hymn 32 points to common authorship: both were written by Charles Wesley. Unlike Hymn 32, the melody of lines 1, 2 and 4 is repeated. Over the course of four stanzas, this soprano line is sung twelve times.
5. As already noted in the Committee's initial observations, the *Book of Praise* already has 9 hymns on Christ's ascension.

6. Regarding the identify of “us” instanza 3, line 4 (“still he calls us all his own”), as Reformed believers we would say it refers to “God’s children,” those who sing this song in faith, those who God has called to himself (1 Peter 5:10: “the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you”). That said, Romans 8:32 also confirms that God “did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all”; this passage does not presume that “all” means everyone. Read alongside Titus 2: 13b-14 (“the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good”), it is clear that “us” refers to God’s children because Christ only intercedes for his own.
7. On second thought, this hymn does not add any new content to the *Book of Praise’s* section on the ascension.
8. Even though a majority of churches supplying feedback supported this hymn, the lack of new content questions the need to include this hymn.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 remove TPH 371 **Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise** from the list of proposed hymns for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

Step 1: Initial Review

TPH 311

Lyrics: Charles Wesley 1739, 1753; alt.

Tune: Mendelssohn

Copyright: Public domain

Observations:

1. It is included in 1211 hymnals, according to hymnary.org.
2. It was recommended by 17 churches.
3. The TPH included it in its section, “The Birth of Christ.”
4. It is a well-known Christmas hymn and easy to sing.
5. Scripture does not say that the angels sang, “Glory to the newborn,” but rather, “Glory to God in the highest.”
6. It was the Christmas hymn most recommended by the churches (followed by Joy to the World, classified as an Advent hymn)

Considerations:

1. Many churches already sing the hymn (e.g. extra singing before or after Christmas service).
2. It would add ecumenicity to the *Book of Praise* to have a few carefully chosen, classic Christmas hymns.

3. The high support from the churches carries some weight.
4. The section “The Word became incarnate” in the hymn section of the *Book of Praise* includes 3 hymns explicitly about Christ’s birth. Hymn 19 is the Isaiah 9 prophecy, leaving hymns 20-21 (22) as NT-based hymns, a relatively small number. TPH 311 could augment this section.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose TPH 311 **Hark! the Herald Angels Sing** to the churches.

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

Churches: 33 Accepted: 23 Rejected: 10 (3) September 22

Rejected because of text: 4

Rejected because of melody: 0

Rejected for other reasons: 6

Observations:

1. 11 churches mentioned that it was “well-known” or “familiar.”
2. The concern was expressed that use of this hymn/ carol would be limited to Christmas time/ Christmas Day.
3. Although 2 churches felt that this carol was true to the account of Scripture, concerns were also raised regarding text and authorship.
4. The following concern was raised regarding singing past events as if they are in the present: “It is a major flaw that again and again we are invited to respond to past events in the history of salvation as if they are occurring today. We are thus exhorted to join the angels in their singing as if this were even possible. It would be correct to say that the angels *sang* (not *sing*) “Glory to the newborn King,” for at that point the King was indeed newborn. Aside from the fact that we are physically unable to sing along with them today, it would also be improper to do so. At present, in the absence of the angels, we would sing to ascribe glory not to Christ as newborn child but to him as our risen and ascended King. In short, this fine carol does not meet the standards that have always governed the selection of hymns in the *Book of Praise*.”
5. The comment was made that this hymn violates Guidelines 1 and 4 by changing the words of the angels in Luke 2:14. “That’s changing Scripture and should not be done. Even more concerning is the line ‘mild, he lays his glory by,’ which is a very weak translation of/allusion to Philippians 2:7 [“but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death”]. Our language regarding the dual nature of Christ MUST be very carefully chosen and in line with the creeds and confessions of the church.”
6. A concern was expressed regarding the hymn’s authorship: “Wesleyan teaching is known for its explicit heresy as it is Pelagian in its doctrine of salvation. If we would not allow this man in our pulpit (even if he behaved himself), then we should not allow him in our songbook. He is teaching our congregation and that is unacceptable. Authorship matters.”

Considerations:

1. This Christmas carol is very well known, but that does not mean that we should forego the same scrutiny we would apply to a new or lesser-known hymn
2. It must be acknowledged that a carol like this one has a limited use (around Christmas and possibly in connection with Lord's Day 14, on the incarnation and birth of Christ).
3. The practice of singing about past events as if they are occurring today is a device characterized as "the historic present" and is as such legitimate.
4. Regarding scriptural accuracy, the song of the angels in stanza 1 is a reference to the angels' words in Luke 2:14, where it says: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" The hymn text is versified as follows: "Glory to the newborn King; peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled." Such an adaptation of text is not uncommon in the process of song versification. Psalm versifications found in our BoP also display a similar approach whereby the spoken words of God are reworded. See for instance:
 - a. Psalm 50 (compare verses 12-13 to stanza 6, which gives God additional questions not found in the biblical text)
 - b. Psalm 81 (compare verse 6 to stanza 5, which replaces two clauses God speaks in the biblical text with one of its own making)

Some other instances of *Book of Praise* psalms that alter the biblical text in other substantial ways include:

- c. Psalm 122 (compare verses 1-2 to stanza 1, which adds an entire sentence to the biblical text);
- d. Psalm 130 (compare verses 1-2 to stanza 1, which significantly expands the biblical text and adds a descriptor of God – "O Fount of consolation" – not present in the biblical text);
- e. Psalm 134 (compare verse 2 to stanza 2, which adds an invocation that is not part of the biblical psalm: to kneel in the Lord's house and extol his name with sacred vows).

Thus song versifiers (aka poets), while intending to capture the heart or essence of what is said in the Bible, do not quote a passage word for word, but display a level of textual flexibility that both honours the integrity of the biblical text and fits the intricacies of versification. In stanza 1, then, the opening "quotation" is better understood as a poetic summary of Luke 2:14 and 2 Corinthians 5:19.

5. In terms of its authorship, Wesleyan texts without Pelagian views already have a place in our current hymn section. See, e.g., Hymns 32, 44, 81, and 84. The erroneous views of a hymn writer do not immediately imply that all of his hymn texts are heretical.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt TPH 311 **Hark! the Herald Angels Sing** as an additional hymn for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

HOW LOVELY SHINES THE MORNING STAR

Step 1: Initial Review

TPH 296

Lyrics: Philipp Nicolai, 1599; William Mercer, 1859

Tune: *Wie schön leuchtet*

Copyright: Public domain

Observations:

1. It is included in 13 hymnals, according to hymnary.org.
2. It was recommended by 11 churches.
3. The TPH includes it in its section, "The Advent of Christ."
4. It is a popular and powerful tune and hymn.
5. It has some archaic language, especially stanza 4 with -eth endings on verbs.
6. Stanza 3 has some odd expressions (e.g. "for the savor of thy favor").
7. The GPH has a version, entitled **How Bright Appears the Morning Star** (#357), which has updated the language, and has dropped the stanzas with objectionable or obscure expressions.

Considerations:

1. Stanzas 1, 2, and 5 are suitable.
2. The BPH #336 has only 3 stanzas: the 1st differs slightly from the 1st in the TPH (somewhat preferably); the 2nd and 3rd match the 2nd and 5th in the TPH.
3. If we omit stanzas, might we appear to be passing judgement on the URC and OPC, which have included it? No: many hymnals present different stanzas of various hymns. Our mandate is to recommend hymns suitable for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.
4. The GPH version - #357 **How Bright Appears the Morning Star** - is preferable.
5. The Advent section in the *Book of Praise* is small (4 hymns). Of the four Advent hymns recommended to be added, this one comes third in the number of recommendations from the churches and in the number of hymnals that include it.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose GPH 357 **How Bright Appears the Morning Star** to the churches.

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

Churches: 32 Accepted: 15 Rejected: 17 (5) as of September 22, 2021

Rejected because of text: 4

Rejected because of melody: 8

Rejected for other reasons: 9

Observations:

1. This hymn was recognized for its applicability around Advent/Christmas time.

2. Additionally, one church noted that it was not wise to include fewer stanzas than the TPH (see Consideration 3. above for answer).
3. In terms of its text, critical comments suggested that there were no direct scripture references, the hymn was not found to be faithful to Scripture (but no references given), and it seems odd to sing about a star, while positive comments noted that the language is scriptural, using imagery from a number of OT and NT texts, specifically drawing on OT names of Christ (eg. Righteous Branch, Jesse's Rod, Conqueror), and that it was even confessional ("assume our nature")
4. Regarding the melody, four churches specifically expressed concerns about the difficulty of the melody and remarked that it was "complicated" (though only tested once) and not easily accompanied because the "intervals are inconsistent." More significantly, a few comments correctly observed that the melody and timing were somewhat strange near the end
5. Practically speaking, a concern was raised with the wording of line 2 of stanza 2: "he deigned to cast a pitying eye upon his helpless creature." The concern was that the word "Pitying" is aligned as a 2 syllable word, which results in it sounding like "pit-ting".

Considerations:

1. The *Book of Praise* presently has an "Advent" section that includes four hymns. This hymn would serve to augment that section.
2. The fact that the present hymn text only includes three stanzas and differs textually from the TPH was answered in the Committee's initial considerations which noted that "many hymnals present different stanzas of various hymns." More importantly, the Committee is tasked with finding hymn content suitable for the *Book of Praise*.
3. The hymn contains content that is scriptural, confessional, and even includes a reference to the Lord's Supper form.
 - a. Scriptural references present in this hymn include:
 - i. Christ as "**morning star**": 2 Peter 1:19 and Rev. 22:16;
 - ii. Jeremiah 23:5 – "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a **righteous Branch**," and again, Jeremiah 33:15 "In those days and at that time I will cause a **righteous Branch** to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land";
 - iii. Isaiah 11:1 "There shall come forth a **shoot** (or KJV "rod") **from the stump of Jesse**, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit";
 - iv. countless references to the Lord Jesus as the "Son of Man" in the gospels;
 - v. reference to "Conqueror" – Micah 1:15 "I will again bring a conqueror to you."
 - b. Confessional content present in this hymn: Lord's Day 14, Q.A. 35 "The eternal Son of God, who is and remains true and eternal God, took upon himself true human nature";
 - c. This reference is also present in the form for Lord's Supper, where it says that "he [the Lord Jesus Christ] assumed our flesh and blood". See Hebrews 2:14.
4. This hymn melody is designed for congregational singing. The melodic range is an octave and features stepwise motion and melodic repetition (lines 1-3 are repeated in lines 4-6; repetition of measures one and three also occurs in system 5) which aid the singability of the tune. Regrettably, the tested version taken from hymnary.org has some musical notational errors which leads to the issues of "awkward" meter and challenging melody identified by some churches.

- In the last system, the measure line should be placed between the soprano “E” and “D” of the first measure, between soprano “C#” and “B” of the second measure, and between the “F#” and “E” of the third measure.
- Furthermore, the half-note “D” at the end of system two and the end of system six should be a quarter-note with a fermata marking on top.
- These corrections would align this hymn’s musical notation with that of Hymn 55 (*Book of Praise*) and would more importantly simplify the notation for singers and accompanists.

1. How bright ap - pears the Morn - ing Star, with mer - cy beam - ing
O Right - eous Branch, O Jes - se's Rod, the Son of Man and

4 from a - far; the host of heaven re - joic - es. voic - es: Je - sus, Je - sus!
Son of God! we too will lift our

10 Ho - ly, ho - ly, yet most low - ly, come, draw near us; Great Em - man - uel, come and hear us.

- Since there is no copyright on the text and poetic license/liberty is appropriate, there is opportunity to replace the word “pitying” with an appropriate synonym, such as “caring”:
Though circled by the hosts on high, He deigned to cast a **caring** eye upon his helpless creature.

Final Recommendation:

- That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt GPH 357 **How Bright Appears the Morning Star** as an additional hymn for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*, making the necessary revisions to the musical notation, as well as replacing the word “pitying” with “caring”.
- The revised text for stanza 2 reads as follows:
Though circled by the hosts on high, He deigned to cast a **caring** eye upon his helpless creature.
The whole creation’s head and Lord, by highest seraphim adored, assumed our very nature.
Jesus, grant us, through your merit, to inherit your salvation. Hear, O hear our supplication.

HOW DEEP THE FATHER'S LOVE FOR US

Step 1: Initial Review

TPH 351

Lyrics: Stuart Townend, 2018

Tune: *Townend*

Copyright: Text and Tune – 1995 Thankyou Music (PRS)

CCLI License Cover: Yes

Observations:

1. It is included in 18 hymnals, according to hymnary.org.
2. It was recommended by 18 churches.
3. The TPH includes it in its section, "Passion and Atoning Death of Christ"
4. The hymn and its tune are well known.
5. This was the fifth most recommended hymn from the churches.
6. Its text is a rich expression of God's love and work of grace.

Considerations:

1. The topic of Jesus as "Man of sorrows" topic is represented in Hymns 23 and 24 in the section "The Word became incarnate," but especially in Hymn 25 in the section "Christ Jesus full atonement made."
2. It is possible that the words, "I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers," may raise questions, since the event is past, not present. On the other hand, "in Adam we all sinned," so the expression may correctly communicate that we are/would be no better than those scoffers.
3. The high support from the churches carries some weight.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose TPH 351 **How Deep the Father's Love for Us** to the churches.

Step 2: Post-feedback Review

Churches: 38 Accepted: 29 Rejected: 9 (2)

Rejected because of text: 3

Rejected because of melody: 4

Rejected for other reasons: 5

Observations:

1. A large number of the survey respondents were supportive of this hymn. Frequent comments spoke again about the familiarity and beauty of both text and melody. More concretely, appreciation was expressed for the inclusion of a modern song that spoke personally about God's love.
2. Regarding the text, 6 of the 9 comments declining this hymn mentioned the challenges of singing this song corporately. Reasons for this include the singular pronouns (termed "individual/

man-centered character”) of stanzas 2 and 3. Although stanza 1 appears to be corporate in content, stanzas 2 and 3 use the first-person singular.

3. The melody also seemed to be challenging for some congregations, even though lines 1, 2 and 4 are virtually identical. It was mentioned that this song was more easily accompanied with the piano than with the organ. This fact may also explain why one church felt that it was more “a song for soloists.”
4. Specific concerns regarding principles and guidelines 6, 7 and 9 through 11
 - a. Concerns may be summarized as follows: not from Reformed tradition; stirs up emotions; not suitable for congregational singing with its syncopation; none of the language about Christ’s love is explicitly scriptural or confessional; individualistic;
 - b. In stanza 2, the words “ashamed, I hear my mocking voice” raises the question whether the text is overly dramatic.

Considerations:

1. The high number of churches supporting this hymn in the initial observations was again reflected in the most recent feedback survey.
2. Although stanza 1 begins with the plural “us” and is clearly corporate, stanzas 2 and 3 speak in the first-person singular. Such movement is also known from the psalms, though there such movement seems more commonly to move from the singular to plural (e.g. Psalms 123, 130).
3. The static harmony, with usually one chord change per measure, indirectly makes the melody line a “solo voice”. Although the static supporting notes exemplify an accompaniment practice that is atypical for *Book of Praise* songs, nevertheless feedback from testing suggests that congregations have been able to sing this hymn well.
4. Even though this hymn text is not based solely on one passage of Scripture, it does summarize a number of scriptural passages. Some examples include:
 - a. Stanza 1 – 1 John 3:1: “See what kind of love the Father has given to us”; Hebrews 2:10: “For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.”
 - b. Stanza 3 – 1Corinthians 1:31 or 2 Corinthians 10:17: “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”
5. There is scriptural basis for the phrase (“ashamed, I hear my mocking voice”)
 - a. Our responsibility for and contribution toward Christ’s suffering is expressed in Scripture, e.g. in Isaiah 53:4: “he was despised, and we esteemed him not”
 - b. The Scriptures also give instances of godly people confessing the sins of previous generations. For example, Psalm 106:6 says, “Both we and our fathers have sinned; we have committed iniquity; we have done wickedness.” Likewise, in Daniel 9:4-20, even though Daniel was an exemplary and righteous man, he included himself in the words, “we have sinned,” in his prayer.
 - c. As mentioned in the initial observations of the Committee, the truth of Romans 5:12 (“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned”) confirms that through Adam we are all sinners. From that vantage point, the words of stanza 2 do convey how we would behave as scoffers before the cross.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt TPH 351 **How Deep the Father's Love for Us** as an additional hymn for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

HOW GREAT THOU ART

Step 1: Initial Review

TPH 227

Lyrics: Stuart K. Hine 1949

Tune: *How Great Thou Art*

Copyright: Text and Tune – 1949, 1953, The Stuart Hine Trust admin. Hope Publishing Co.

CCLI License Cover: Yes

Observations:

1. It is included in 104 hymnals, according to hymnary.org.
2. It was recommended by 19 churches.
3. The TPH includes it in its section, "The Power of God."
4. It is a well-known hymn and an emotional favourite.
5. It's about gospel fulfillment and has suitable New Testament references.
6. It is the fourth most recommended hymn from the churches, together with two other hymns ("Take My Life and Let It Be" and "It is Well with my Soul.")

Considerations:

1. This hymn has no real shortcomings.
2. The high support from the churches carries some weight.

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose TPH 227 **How Great Thou Art** to the churches.

Step 2: Post-feedback Review

Churches: 37 Accepted: 29 Rejected: 8 (3)

Rejected because of text: 3

Rejected because of melody: 2

Rejected for other reasons: 5

Observations:

1. At least 18 churches responded that the hymn was "well-known" or "loved."
2. In terms of text, it was noted that the opening two stanzas were broadly based on Psalm 8. A question regarding the use of singular pronouns in the text highlights that this hymn was not originally intended for corporate worship. Additionally, 5 churches noted the presence of archaisms and old language and one church (which supported the inclusion of the hymn) did note that there are ten to twelve archaisms, including "thee, thou and art".

3. Regarding melody, a church which supported the hymn did point out that the first half of the melody was rather static, covering only the interval of a fourth (D to G). This would explain the limited range and frequent repetition of melody notes in the first half. In terms of the refrain, the same church noted that at the beginning of the second line, the melody moves down by step and then has an awkward, downward leap of the sixth. Such movement is not only an indication of “breaking the rules for good melody writing” but also “a challenge for singers.” Furthermore, churches commented on the fact that congregations tend not to sing the musical notation as written but add dotted rhythms to the words “Saviour God, to” in the chorus. Some survey responses also acknowledge the challenge of making changes due to copyright. A suggestion was made to have the option of singing the refrain only after the final stanza. A final comment was that as long as we avoid the Elvis Presley rendition, then “it is a good song of praise to God.”

Considerations:

1. Although the frequent comment that it is “well-known” can prompt the question whether the same rigours of testing were applied as to an unknown hymn, the churches seem to desire more hymns that are considered “classic” or “familiar.” In this case, whether the hymn fills a particular void in the hymnary is seemingly of lesser concern. It is clear that the *Book of Praise* contains psalms that speak about God and His creation (eg. Psalms 8, 19, 148).
2. The text does contain a number of archaisms, but due to copyright they cannot be adjusted.
3. Although this is not an exemplary hymn tune due to its challenging melodic characteristics (the low and limited range of opening and the downward leap of the sixth in the refrain), familiarity of congregations with this hymn tune makes it easier to overcome these challenges. Finally, due to copyright, rhythmic changes to the refrain are not possible.
4. Since the refrain begins with the conditional “then” and depends on the foregoing stanza, it is necessary for the refrain to be sung after each stanza. Musically, the refrain concludes with a tonic-note ending of the melody rather than an ending on the mediant (or third) which is less musically conclusive.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt **How Great Thou Art** as an additional hymn for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

HOW SHALL THEY HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

Step 1: Initial Review

TPH 445

Lyrics: Michael Perry, 1980

Tune: *O Jesu*

Copyright: Text Only – 1982 The Jubilate Group (admin Hope Publishing Co., Carol Stream

Tune – Public Domain

CCLI License Cover: Yes

Observations:

1. It is included in 14 hymnals, according to hymnary.org.
2. It was recommended by one church.
3. The TPH includes it in the section, "The Free Offer of the Gospel."
4. The first two lines of the stanza are melodically similar. Over three stanzas, this means that 9 lines have the same tune.
5. This hymn speaks of witness and action to spread the gospel.
6. The hymn poses a lot of questions.
7. It is based on Romans 10.
8. Its copyright is held by the Jubilate Group (administered by Hope Publishing Co.).

Considerations:

1. It is theologically sound.
2. The hymn answers its own questions: send preachers, aid our witness!
3. The melodic pattern of the third line musically resolves the rising 'questioning' tones of the first two lines.
4. This hymn addresses a need in the *Book of Praise* for songs about the mission of the church (compare Hymn 81:2 which names an individual witness; Hymn 84:1).

Initial Recommendation:

1. To propose TPH 445 **How Shall They Hear the Word of God** to the churches.

Step 2: Post-Feedback Review

Churches: 36 Accepted: 15 Rejected: 21 (3)

Rejected because of text: 4

Rejected because of melody: 14

Rejected for other reasons: 7

Observations:

1. The missional emphasis of this hymn, specifically recognized in the Committee's initial observations, was positively recognized by 8 churches (including two in the "no" category).
2. The hymn's reference to Romans 10: 14-15 was observed by five churches in both the "yes" and "no" category.
3. Concerns were raised in light of Guidelines 3 and 4:
 - a. This hymn "does not do justice to this portion of Paul's epistle, but takes the questions out of context and applies them to promote a commitment to personal evangelism."
 - b. A key element of "being called" is missing.
4. The hymn tune garnered the most criticism (even by churches who responded in the "yes" category).
5. Melodic concerns specifically referred to the repetitive melodic structure (lines one and two being identical) and the "abrupt", "interesting" and even "strange quarter-note ending" of the last line as specific examples.

6. General comments about the melody used descriptors like “uninspiring”, “boring and plain”, “not appreciated”, “challenging”, and “unfamiliar.”

Considerations:

1. The “missional” or “gospel” emphasis of this hymn is an area that needs further representation in our hymn section.
2. However, the representatively high number of melodic criticisms, as well as some concerns about the textual representation of the Romans 10 passage weakens the original recommendation.
3. Even with further practice and subsequent familiarity, it seems that this hymn is not one readily embraced by the churches.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 remove TPH 445 **How Shall They Hear the Word of God** from the list of hymns proposed for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

SING PRAISE TO GOD, WHO REIGNS ABOVE

Step 1: Initial review

TPH 214

Lyrics: Johann J. Schutz 1675

Tune: Mit Freuden Zart

Copyright: Public Domain

Observations:

1. It is included in 171 hymnals, according to hymnary.org.
2. It was recommended by one church (no rationale provided).
3. The TPH included it in its section, “The Perfections of God.”
4. Its tune is easy to sing: it is a variation on the Genevan melody of Psalm 138.
5. Its language is straightforward.
6. Do its stanzas flow / follow a good train of thought?

Considerations:

1. Will its similarity to Psalm 138 tune confuse people? It is thought not.
2. Its text moves from providence to salvation to praise.
3. The *Book of Praise* contains hymns of praise across multiple hymn sections.

Initial Recommendation:

To propose TPH 214 **Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above** to the churches.

Step 2: Post-feedback review

Churches: 31 Accepted: 12 Rejected: 19 (3)

Rejected because of text: 4

Rejected because of melody: 9

Rejected for other reasons: 9

Observations:

1. Feedback on the melody of this hymn included many remarks suggesting that the tune is not easy to sing, partly because of large jumps and partly because it was quite similar to the tune of Psalm 138.
2. Feedback on the text of this hymn included some positive remarks suggesting that the wording is Biblical, touching on many “great themes of our faith”, including “God’s power, sovereignty, love, creative work, providence, justice, and mercy; our comfort and salvation.”
3. Feedback on the text also included critical remarks and concerns, including: it says that in stanza 2 that where God rules, all is “just and right”, but not all is right or just in this world; the sentence “What God’s almighty power has made in mercy he is keeping” is clumsy and unclear; the words “By morning glow or evening shade his eye is never sleeping” is pretentious and indirect; that when we are “helpless” (stanza 3) we may need something other than “peace”, and more than “cheer”; in stanza 4, “name” is used both as a noun and as a verb; in stanza 4, the hymn does not indicate what “wondrous story” it is referring to.
4. Feedback on the text included several comments suggesting that most of the thoughts expressed in this hymn are found in the Psalms.
5. It was suggested that contracted words (ev’ry, pow’r) should be expanded.

Considerations:

1. The melody of this hymn is not difficult to sing. Its similarity to Psalm 138 may be confusing at first, but that will be overcome as the hymn becomes more familiar.
2. Some expressions in this hymn may seem unclear at first glance, but upon reflection, their meaning is quite understandable.
3. The expression, “His eye is never sleeping” echoes the thought of Psalm 121:4.
4. “Name” is used both as a noun and as a verb in rapid succession in Scripture as well, for example, in Ephesians 1:21 and in II Timothy 2:19. There is no reason why this should be considered a detriment to this hymn.
5. The contracted words ev’ry (in stanza 1) and pow’r (in stanzas 1 and 2) can be expanded, according to the practice of the *Book of Praise*, without necessitating a change in the music.
6. This hymn does echo themes found in the Psalms, particularly with respect to God’s providence. Some hymns that are currently in the *Book of Praise*, i.e. Hymns 55 and 65, also replicate themes from the Psalms, but that did not disqualify them from inclusion.

Final Recommendation:

That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt TPH 214 **Sing Praise to God, Who Reigns Above** for inclusion in the Book of Praise, changing “ev’ry” in stanza 1 to “every,” and changing “pow’r” in stanzas 1 and 2 to “power”.

SPEAK, O LORD

Step 1 : Initial review

TPH 172

Text: Keith Getty and Stuart Townend 2006

Tune: Keith Getty and Stuart Townend

Copyright: Text and Tune 2006 Thankyou Music (PRS)

CCLI License Cover: yes

Observations:

1. It is included in 11 hymnals, according to hymnary.org.
2. It was recommended by 14 churches.
3. The TPH includes it in its section, “God’s Word and Law.”
4. It is a petition for God to speak through his Word to shape our lives.
5. Its melody has some large drops.

Considerations:

1. It is already well-known, and most people already sing it well.
2. It would be suitable in the liturgy prior to the sermon.
3. The *Book of Praise* has no comparable hymn.

Initial Recommendation:

To propose TPH 172 **Speak, O Lord** to the churches.

Step 2: Post-feedback review

Churches: 37 Accepted: 25 Rejected: 12 (3)

Rejected because of text: 3

Rejected because of melody: 4

Rejected for other reasons: 7

Observations:

1. Feedback on the melody of this hymn ranged from “This is a beautiful melody”, “reverent in tone and pace”, to “not really appropriate for a worship service”, and included suggestions that it is not “deep” enough, does not fit the lyrics, and is not expressive of the Reformed tradition.
2. Feedback on the text of this hymn were alternatively described as suitable as a song at the opening of the service or before the Word is preached, sentimental, Scripturally accurate, problematic (specifically, the line "Help us grasp the heights of your plans for us"), understandable, focussed on the self, and empty. A number of respondents suggested that the song was not suitable for congregational singing. One remarked that the words, “Speak, O Lord” came across more as a command than a prayer.
3. Feedback included this cryptic comment: “Written by Getty and Townend. May be NAR related”.

Considerations:

1. Feedback on the melody of this hymn was obviously quite mixed, even among the “No” votes. No “musical” explanations were given to substantiate the criticisms of this tune.
2. Feedback on the text of this hymn was likewise mixed, even among the “No” votes.
3. The concern with the line “Help us grasp the heights of your plans for us” was based on the assumption that we are asking God to reveal “the secret things” that “belong to the LORD our God” (Deuteronomy 29:29). However, it seems quite evident from the words of the hymn that we are asking God to help us to more fully understand the tremendous promises of the gospel of our salvation.
4. With respect to the concern about the opening words (Speak, O Lord), as though we were commanding the Lord to do something, we might compare these words to the way Elijah spoke, for example, in his prayer in I Kings 18:37: “Answer me, O Lord, answer me.” As far as that goes, we might also compare this plea to the petitions of the Lord’s prayer, which, when misunderstood, might sound like commands.
5. Although a suggestion was made that this hymn could be “NAR (i.e. New Apostolic Reformation) related”, no evidence was provided for this suggestion.

Final Recommendation:

1. That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt TPH 172 **Speak, O Lord** as an additional hymn for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

TAKE MY LIFE AND LET IT BE

Step 1: Initial Review

TPH 538

Lyrics: Frances R. Havergal 1874

Tune: Hendon

Copyright: Public Domain

Observations:

1. According to hymnary.org, this hymn is Included in 1079 hymnals.
2. It was recommended by 19 churches.
3. It is in TPH section: Christian Service
4. It is a familiar, ecumenical hymn, applicable to every believer.
5. The text is biblical; some of the Scriptural links are Isaiah 8:6, Phil 1: 20, Romans 12, Luke 21:2,3.
6. There is repetition in the fourth and fifth line of each stanza, plus repetition in the keyword "Take."
7. The hymn shares its place as fourth most recommended hymn by the churches, with "It is Well with My Soul".

Considerations:

1. The hymn is built on a repeating pattern, but it is not actually repetitive in its specifics; it has movement across the stanzas.
2. Including it would add ecumenicity to the *Book of Praise*.
3. Strong support from the churches carries some weight.
4. This is one of two 'recommended to add' hymns that are prayers for daily walking the Christian life (the other is TPH 488 "May the Mind of Christ My Savior," for which see later). Our *Book of Praise* does not presently have such hymns, and it would be valuable to have some.

Initial Recommendation:

To propose TPH 538 **Take My Life and Let It Be** to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Churches: 36 Accepted: 26 Rejected: 10 (3)

Rejected because of text: 6

Rejected because of melody: 2

Rejected for other reasons: 4

Observations:

1. Feedback included many positive comments from the churches:
 - a. This hymn is well-known and easy to sing, and children know it well.
 - b. It was well-received by the congregation during testing.
 - c. The hymn is scriptural (some links include Isaiah 6, Philippians 1, Rom 12 and Luke 21), and it can be used in various places in the liturgy, including for baptism and profession of faith.
 - d. We don't have many hymns that constitute prayer for practical Christian living and sacrificial service to God's will. This hymn would compensate for this gap in the *Book of Praise*.
2. Feedback included some negatives as well:
 - a. The hymn is "me" focused, and lends itself to drawing on emotional strings.
 - b. The hymn has archaisms (thee, thou, thine, ev'ry, pow'r).

- c. One church proposed an updated version as substitute that would address archaisms and perceived flaws in meaning (e.g. Stanza 1: “days flowing in praise” is not clear; stanza 2: “swift and beautiful feet” is not meaningful; stanza 3: who has “silver and gold” anymore? Do people know what a “mite” is? “intellect” is abstract and should be “mind”). This church stated, “The old opening stanza is familiar to most people, but this does not apply to the rest of the hymn. In many hymnals some stanzas have been dropped or modified. Since it is not a widely recognized classic like “How Great Thou Art,” this is one older hymn in which the SCBP could easily adhere to its own guidelines and follow the example of others in eliminating antiquated language.”
- d. One church objected to the refrain “Take my...” It found the expression unsettling given that it does not seem to suggest a response to God’s call (C.o.D. Ch 3/4 Art. 8). This church also found the line “I pour at thy feet its treasure-store” inaccurate, as the individual’s desire is to do the opposite (C.o. D. Ch. 3/4 Art 3); the grace and regenerating work of the Holy Spirit seems to be lacking. This concern was echoed by one other individual: the hymn “fails to see sanctification as an ongoing progressive work of the Spirit in us throughout this life.”
- e. Two of the churches rejected this hymn as they were not able to test it due to the impact of COVID, and another because it believes no additional songs are needed.

Considerations:

1. While the hymn does speak throughout in the first-person singular, that does not make it individualistic. Apart from the wide use of the first-person singular in many psalms, the apostle Paul also felt free to speak in the first-person singular about his faith and his spiritual life and experience – see e.g. Romans 7:7-25, Galatians 6:14, Philippians 3:2-16. Use of “my” and “I” is also in keeping with the personal language of HC Answer 1.
2. A new scan of hymnary.org confirms that *very* few hymnals have altered the text of this hymn in any way. The inclusion of the hymn in 1079 hymnals on hymnary.org suggests that it is as much or more a classic than “How Great Thou Art,” which is included in 119 hymnals on hymnary.org. It would be difficult to alter the text without disturbing its familiarity to many.
3. The particular expressions criticized in c) above do not strike the Committee as difficult to understand or outdated.
4. While the hymn does not directly refer to the Holy Spirit, the sanctifying work of the Spirit is implied in the supplication that the Lord take and, essentially, remake every element of the person into a new nature/form that acts for God rather than for self.

Final Recommendation:

That Synod Guelph adopt TPH 538 **Take My Life and Let It Be** as an additional hymn for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

THREEFOLD AMEN

Step 1: Initial Review

TPH 575

Lyrics: Anonymous

Tune: Danish

Copyright: Public Domain

Observations:

1. According to hymnary.org, the threefold Amen is included in 705 hymnals.
2. It was recommended by 12 churches.
3. It is in TPH section: Amens.

Considerations:

1. The threefold Amen is already sung in many of our churches. Including it could 'standardize' its use in the churches.
2. If desired, it could be included in a 'liturgical' category of hymns in the *Book of Praise*. Actually, the Amen would be used after the benediction and not in place of a hymn in the service.

Initial Recommendation:

To propose TPH 575 **Amen, Amen, Amen** to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Churches: 33

Accepted: 24

Rejected: 9

Rejected because of text: 0

Rejected because of melody: 1

Rejected for other reasons: 8

Observations:

1. Several churches indicated that they already sing a version of an AMEN put to music.
2. Several churches which rejected the hymn for inclusion did so by stating that an AMEN that is sung does not need synod approval and should not take space as a hymn in the *Book of Praise* (the implied concern was that inclusion might 'bump out' another hymn if a cap of 100 was maintained).
3. One church asked for a musical version with a couple of chords to lead into the singing.
4. A few churches stated they could not test due to COVID restrictions.

Considerations:

1. It is true that singing AMEN does not require synodical approval.
2. If a cap of 100 hymns is maintained, the AMEN is probably not a priority for inclusion.
3. Singing the hymn could indeed benefit from a chordal introduction, but each accompanist could provide one, as with any hymn or psalm.

4. Signalling that singing a three-fold Amen is an acceptable practice within the *Book of Praise* would still be good.

Final Recommendation:

That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt TPH 575 **Threefold Amen** as an additional 'hymn' for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*, as long as it does not count against any cap that may be set.

WHEN I SURVEY THE WONDROUS CROSS

Step 1: Initial Review

TPH 338

Lyrics: Isaac Watts, 1707,1709

Tune: Hamburg

Copyright: Public Domain

Observations:

1. According to hymnary.org, this hymn is included in 1804 hymnals.
2. It was recommended by 17 churches.
3. It is in TPH section: The Passion and Atoning Death of Christ
4. It is a well-known hymn.
5. The text includes metaphors not given in Scripture (e.g. see, from His head/hands/feet, love and sorrow flow mingled down).

Considerations:

1. The text contains imagery we don't typically use, yet the hymn as a whole emphasizes the all-encompassing claim of the cross.

Initial Recommendation:

To propose TPH 338 **When I Survey the Wondrous Cross** to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Churches: 34

Accepted: 25

Rejected: 9

Rejected because of text: 4

Rejected because of melody: 2

Rejected for other reasons: 6

Observations:

1. Feedback included these positive comments:
 - a. The hymn is well-known and easily singable.
 - b. The hymn is suitable for Easter.
 - c. The tune and text fit well together.

- d. The text is scripturally accurate (one reference is Gal. 6:14) and exemplifies reverence for our great and holy God.
2. Feedback included these negative comments:
 - a. The hymn is too much about 'me,' which is not suitable for a corporate worship service; it has too much focus on the redeemed instead of the Redeemer.
 - b. The hymn lacks solid Scriptural references and does not suit a Reformed context.
 - c. The tune is boring.
 - d. One church rejected the hymn but indicated it would approve it if stanza 3 were deleted, because it objected to its opening lines (we cannot be invited to see sorrow and love flow from his head, hands, feet).
 - e. A couple of churches stated they could not test the hymn due to COVID restrictions.

Considerations:

1. While the hymn does speak throughout in the first-person singular, that does not make it individualistic. Apart from the wide use of the first-person singular in many psalms, the apostle Paul also felt free to speak in the first-person singular about his faith and his spiritual life and experience – see e.g. Romans 7:7-25, Galatians 6:14, Philippians 3:2-16. Use of “my” and “I” is also in keeping with the personal language of HC Answer 1.
2. Scripture references include 2 Cor. 11 (Paul’s boasting in Christ); Phil. 3:7-8 (whatever gain I had I count as loss in Christ); Gal 6:14 (boasting in the cross)
3. Most respondents did not indicate any dissatisfaction with the tune.
4. The opening lines of stanza 3 are a poetic expression encouraging us to consider Christ’s shed blood as indicative of both His suffering and His love.

Final Recommendation:

That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt TPH 338 **When I Survey the Wondrous Cross** as an additional hymn for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

WHEN PEACE LIKE A RIVER (IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL)

Step 1: Initial Review

TPH 476

Lyrics: Horatio G. Spafford, 1873

Tune: Ville De Havre

Copyright: Public Domain

Observations:

1. According to hymnary.org, this hymn is included in 440 hymnals.
2. It was recommended by 19 churches.
3. It is in TPH section: Trust and Assurance
4. It is a well-known hymn, sung in many different types of gatherings in our church circles.
5. It is structured as stanzas and refrain, which creates some repetition.
6. There are archaisms in stanza 1.

7. The hymn shares place as fourth most recommended hymn by the churches (with “Take my Life and Let it Be” and “How Great Thou Art”).

Considerations:

1. The text is comparable to portions of Hymns 54, 55, 64, 66, 68, 71, and 83 (themes of trust and comfort amid sorrow). The theme does not therefore fill a gap in the *Book of Praise* but forms a much-loved supplement to it.
2. The hymn is suitable in the liturgy for situations of both grief and hope.
3. It is true that the refrain repeats, but the stanzas have strong movement.
4. The archaism in stanza 1, line 1 is difficult to replace, mainly because the hymn is too well-known to have its first line much altered, but also because it’s challenging to find a suitable three-syllable word to replace “attendeth”. A lengthy search of hymnary.org revealed only one hymnal with an altered first line, with wording we do not recommend (“When peace, like a river, upholds me each day”).
5. The high support from the churches carries some weight.

Initial Recommendation:

To propose TPH 476 **When Peace Like a River (It is Well with My Soul)** to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Churches: 37 Accepted: 31 Rejected: 6(3)

Rejected because of text: 1

Rejected because of melody: 1

Rejected for other reasons: 4

Observations:

1. Feedback included positive comments about the text as expressive of sorrow and suitable for funerals and times of anxiety (comparisons were made to Job’s confession, ‘The Lord gives and the Lord takes away’ and to Paul’s confession of contentment in all circumstances). The text was repeatedly described as well-known, powerful, a favourite, full of blessed assurance, comforting, hopeful, and scriptural.
2. Feedback included statements about the tune as well-received by those who hadn’t sung it before; well-matched to the lyrics; easy to sing; whole-heartedly sung and received; but two churches stated the refrain is problematic for a church that sings unison (although another church welcomed the opportunity for part-singing); another wondered if the hymn is already over-sung; and one comment described the tune as uninspiring and repetitive.
 - a. There were two requests for a fermata at the end of the stanzas.
3. A few churches criticized the archaisms in stanza 1.
4. One church suggested replacing “is” with “was” in stanza 3, to achieve “was nailed to the cross.”
5. Unrepresentative but strongly voiced was a criticism of the text as sentimental, especially in comparison to the Psalms that treat similar themes, as insufficiently attentive to lament as part of sorrow, and as the work of a cult leader who should not be represented in the *Book of Praise*.
6. Two churches stated they could not test the hymn due to pandemic restrictions. Another stated no additions to the *Book of Praise* were necessary.

Considerations:

1. The preponderance of commentary on both text and tune favours inclusion.
 - a. While authorship is worth considering, a text must be assessed on its own merits; this text aligns with Scripture.
 - b. The majority of respondents seemed to appreciate the tune.
2. It is not possible to solve “attendeth” as an archaism (even replacing it with “attends” makes the musical phrase out of keeping with the remaining stanzas). Since “attendeth” must remain, it would be odd to correct the other archaisms. Therefore, it is best to leave the text as is.
3. An action in the past creates the reality of the present; therefore “my sin . . . is nailed to the cross” is an acceptable expression.
4. The hymn has emotional qualities but they are not artificial or manipulative. It could be compared to Psalm 131: both in its repetition and its reference to the quieted soul, the line “it is well with my soul” evokes the lines “like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me.”

Final Recommendation:

That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt TPH 476 **When Peace Like A River (It is Well with My Soul)** as an additional hymn for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

WORSHIP CHRIST, THE RISEN KING

Step 1: Initial Review

TPH 369

Lyrics: Jack Hayford, 1986

Tune: Regent Square

Copyright: 1986 Annamarie Music and New Spring Publishing Co. (however, tune is public domain)

CCLI License cover: Yes

Observations:

1. According to hymnary.org, this hymn is included in 4 hymnals.
2. It was recommended by 1 church.
3. It is in the TPH section: Resurrection.
4. The text is a modern composition, not yet widely known and under copyright.
5. Part of the text overlaps with the hymn “Angels from the Realms of Glory.”
6. The text includes an imaginative feature that the tomb is speaking (stanza 2, 2nd line); also that the earth protests (stanza 1).
7. The tune is already used in Glory be to God the Father (BoP 7); and in Angels from the Realms of Glory (TPH 313, proposed to the churches).

Considerations:

1. That the text is not yet widely known does not mean it is unworthy.
2. The tune is suitable for the text in its triumphant nature, and it does not wear out with repetition (even across multiple hymns that use it).

3. The *Book of Praise* section “Christ has risen” includes four hymns focused on this topic; however, two of them have been recommended for removal by multiple churches and a third by a smaller set of churches. Should that happen, *Worship Christ the Risen King* could be a replacement.

Initial Recommendation:

To propose TPH 369 **Worship Christ, the Risen King** to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Churches: 34

Accepted: 17

Rejected: 17(2)

Rejected because of text: 10

Rejected because of melody: 8

Rejected for other reasons: 7

Observations:

1. Feedback included many remarks on the fact that the tune is already used for two hymns in the *Book of Praise*; some of these remarks were positive (tune is familiar, well-liked, melodic connection between Christmas and Easter is appropriate); more were either hesitant about or opposed to the duplication. However, both types of remarks affirmed the tune itself as beautiful, joyful, good, suitable for the text, etc.
2. Feedback included many positive comments about the text as joyful and suitable for Easter (though one such response expressed concern about archaic language).
 - a. One respondent suggested this hymn should replace Hymn 33.
3. Feedback included criticisms of the text as follows:
 - a. Questionable personification of the grave and earth
 - b. Concern that stanza 2 suggests death and the tomb overcame the Lord, whereas Christ laid down his life of his own accord; also a remark that “Death and I” must be an error, with the intent being “Death and Hell.”
 - c. Concern that stanza 3 does not seem to reflect Biblical language.
 - d. Concern that the line “thoughtful hearts receive with cheer” suggests a person’s reason governs one’s faith, and would be better as “faithful hearts receive with cheer”.
 - e. Concern that “Hell’s minions” is not a clear meaning.
 - f. Other dissatisfactions with the text as insufficiently plain in meaning (e.g. stanza 4, “Doubt may lift its head to murmur”).
 - g. Considered too similar to Hymns 24, 31 and others in the *Book of Praise*.

Considerations:

1. As the text is copyrighted, no changes can be made without permission. As it would not be fitting to ask the author to rewrite entire lines in multiple stanzas, the text should be accepted or rejected as it stands.
2. While some of the textual concerns could be addressed, others are more challenging, and the end result would likely still be that these issues, combined with the triplicate use of the melody, present a concern for many of the churches.
3. If Synod decides to lift the cap of 100 hymns, and none of the present hymns are removed, then this one is not needed to supplement the resurrection theme.

Final Recommendation:

To remove TPH 369 **Worship Christ, The Risen King** as a hymn proposed for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

YET NOT I BUT THROUGH CHRIST IN ME

Step 1: Initial Review

Lyrics: Jonny Robinson, Rich Thompson and Michael Farren

Tune: Jonny Robinson, Rich Thompson and Michael Farren

Copyright: 2018 CityAlight Music, Farren Love and War Publishing, Integrity's Alleluia! Music

CCLI License Cover: Yes

Observations:

1. The hymn confesses that all hope, forgiveness, comfort, salvation etc. are solely thanks to Jesus' ministry.
2. It echoes Psalm 23, Romans 8 and Galatians 2:20 and is theologically sound.
3. The second line of stanza 1 is unclear in meaning and possibly misleading ("There is no more for heaven now to give").
4. The tune for the stanzas was easy to learn, while the refrain was more difficult to learn.
5. The hymn has a repetitive ending and is very long.

Considerations:

1. The context of the line mentioned in Observation 3 conveys that God did not withhold anything when he fully gave the gift of grace in Jesus.
2. The repetitive ending does not necessarily detract from the tune's value overall.
3. The melody is singable with no large jumps.

Initial Recommendation:

To propose **Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me** to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Churches: 35

Accepted: 20

Rejected: 15(3)

Rejected because of text: 4

Rejected because of melody: 8

Rejected for other reasons: 6

Observations:

1. Feedback included many positive comments about this hymn, deemed beautiful, singable, powerful, beloved, wonderful, gospel-centered, and reverent in melodic tone and pace. Several churches responded that it was new to them but readily learned and much appreciated. Even among the churches that responded 'No,' individual responses sometimes disagreed with that response and offered positive comments.

2. Feedback included some moderate reservations about the tune as a little “messy,” with a difficult pickup and undesirable repetition at end, and unsuited to the *Book of Praise*. Feedback also included much stronger opposition to the tune as complicated, pitched too low, designed for emotive effect, plodding, and repetitive, and more suitable for a choir than a congregation.
3. Direct comments on the tune are 9 positive and 14 critical or questioning.
4. Two of the respondents opposed to the tune nevertheless stated the text itself was scriptural. Two others said the text did not add anything to the *Book of Praise*. One suggested the pronouns be changed from ‘I’ to ‘we.’
5. Specific textual criticisms from different individuals within one responding church:
 - a. About the line “There is no more in heaven now to give”: Christ is our Advocate in heaven, so there is indeed still more in heaven for us yet.
 - b. About the line “the night has been won, and I shall overcome, yet not I but through Christ in me”: this line is borderline Arminian/Pelagian, a subtle and dangerous theological teaching. Christ has already overcome (John 16:33), and we are just beneficiaries of this. We don’t overcome anything except through his power, and then the focus should not be on us overcoming at all, but solely on Christ. We contribute nothing to our salvation except the sin that made it necessary (Ezekiel 37:1-14; Ephesians 2:1-10). Christ does not act through us to accomplish his plan of redemption; the only way he acts through us is through his Spirit in our sanctification, and this is only because he has already overcome and conquered death, and has already justified us, not because of some future battle we need to fight or any work we could do to merit or contribute to our own salvation.

Considerations:

1. By far the majority of respondents found the text biblical and beautiful.
2. The Committee considered initially that the context of the line “There is no more in heaven now to give” conveys that God did not withhold anything when he fully gave the gift of grace in Jesus. This context places a certain limit on the meaning of the sentence, such that it does not eliminate Christ’s advocacy in heaven for us now.
3. Scripture has multiple passages that indicate the believer must continue to strive or overcome or conquer sin, of course always through Christ, which the hymn recognizes. Some examples:
 - a. In I John 5:3-5, the apostle John writes: “everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.”
 - b. In Col 1:29, the apostle Paul writes, “To this end I strive with all his energy which so powerfully works in me.”
 - c. In the letters of Christ to churches recorded in Rev 2-3, the repeated closing is as follows: “To him who overcomes” (2:7, 2:17, 2:26, 3:21) “He who overcomes” (2:11)
 - d. In Rev 21:7, the One seated on the throne says, “He who overcomes will inherit all this”
4. The tune is certainly different from what we are used to in the churches. It was designed more for a small-group ensemble than a congregation, a factor that seems to play out in some of the responses from the churches, though far from all. The tune/arrangement seems to require a percussion element to keep the melodic line moving forward (especially the first half) and thus is better suited to piano than organ accompaniment; but none of the feedback specified the instrument used for the testing, so the positive and negative responses cannot be connected to piano or organ. Perhaps the question is: what degree of difference are we willing to add to the *Book of Praise* and for what purpose?

5. The tune does involve a lower-pitch than usual. For some singers, this is a challenge; for others, it is welcome.
6. The repetition at the end can be eliminated, and stanza 4 ended simply as the other stanzas end, per copyright permission received.
7. The committee is seeking copyright permission to set the music as a melodic score for congregational singing, to replace the performance score that was sent to the churches for testing.

Final Recommendation:

That Synod Guelph adopt **Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me** as an additional hymn for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.

YOUR LAW, O GOD, IS OUR DELIGHT

Step 1: Initial Review

Lyrics: Derrick and Debbie Vander Meulen, 2015

Tune: Germany

Copyright: 2016 Derek and Debbie Vander Meulen (text)

CCLI License Cover: No

Observations:

1. The hymn is included in one hymnal (TPH).
2. It was recommended by 3 churches.
3. It is in the TPH section: God's Word and Law.
4. It is based on Psalm 119.
5. It is a modern composition.
6. It has the same tune as TPH 111B, proposed to the churches as an alternate psalm.

Considerations:

1. The hymn could be an alternate selection in the liturgy, in place of Psalm 119.
2. It has multiple uses in the liturgy, with many clear Scriptural connections.
3. The *Book of Praise* section, "With them his covenant he established," has one hymn (Hymn 11) that paraphrases the Ten Commandments, but no hymn that directly connects the Law with Christ's fulfilment, as this one does (distinguishing it from Psalm 119 more 'purely').

Initial Recommendation:

To propose TPH 175 **Your Law, O God, is Our Delight** to the churches.

Step 2: Post Feedback Review

Churches: 34

Accepted: 23

Rejected: 11(4)

Rejected because of text: 3

Rejected because of melody: 4

Rejected for other reasons: 6

Observations:

1. Feedback included many commendations of the hymn, especially the text, though the tune was also noted as suitable for worship and fairly easy to learn.
2. The words “It guides” in stanza 1 were found to be grammatically awkward, because the antecedent is “statutes” rather than “law”; “they guide” would be better.
3. The use of the same tune with the proposed Psalm 111B was noted quite often, mostly without further comment. For a few, this repetition of melody was a detraction.
4. The connection to Psalm 119 was mentioned frequently, both among the ‘accepting’ and ‘rejecting’ responses. Many felt it was an appropriate and beautiful summary of Psalm 119. One response noted that the hymn “adds praise for the Saviour” to its expression of Psalm 119. One indicated it would be a nice alternative to Hymn 11.
5. Four of the ‘rejecting’ churches stated they did not test the hymn or felt no additions were needed for the *Book of Praise*. Of the other seven rejections, three cited redundancy with Psalm 119 as rationale, and four simply said ‘do not add’ or ‘not approved.’

Considerations:

1. The connection the hymn makes between Psalm 119 and Christ as the fulfilment of the law remains a strong consideration for the hymn’s inclusion (see initial Consideration 3), even though only one respondent echoed that reason. This connection to Christ prevents the hymn from being redundant.
2. Many of the responding churches echoed the Committee’s first and second initial considerations that the hymn has multiple uses in the liturgy and complements Psalm 119 well.
3. The choice of “It” rather than “They” in stanza 1 is properly linked, in the Committee’s judgment, with Psalm 119:105, “Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path,” where the law is as singular. Despite some awkwardness due to the intervening noun “statutes,” the singular pronoun is actually preferable.
4. The duplicate use of the tune is not ideal but most churches presented this fact as an observation rather than an objection.

Final Recommendation:

That Synod Guelph 2022 adopt TPH 175 **Your Law, O God, is our Delight** as an additional hymn for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.