

Beyond Worship: Musical Resources for the Matthew 25 Congregation

As the PC(USA) changes and adapts to the needs of the 21st Century, the [Matthew 25](#) initiative encourages churches to engage in meaningful transformation that renews and reinvigorates the Presbyterian witness for the future. As has been discussed in previous Quicksheet resource on “Using Music as the Basis of Faith Formation,” the church’s lyrical theology, expressed in the songs and hymns of faith, shapes the church’s outlook, theological insight, and future actions. So, it only stands to reason that the music of faith has an important role to play in the various charges of the Matthew 25 initiative.

Music can and should play a role in the life of the community beyond the common worship of the church body. As Don Saliers notes in a chapter in *Practicing the Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*: “[singing our faith], far from being an ornament or decoration to Christian worship and the life of faith, is intrinsic to worship and faith experience... where people sing of God, an embodied theology— a way of living and thinking about life in relationship to God— is formed and expressed.” With this in mind, congregational leaders should consider ways to incorporate music into the various ministry activities focused on congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty as a way to embody the words and focuses of the initiative.

While [Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal](#) provides several resources around the themes of justice and reconciliation (see hymn numbers 749–774 among others), leaders may wish to draw on some of the following resources that incorporate songs for different uses and on different themes. It may be helpful for leaders to consult other Quicksheets for ideas related to performance practices, different ways to incorporate music outside of worship, and ways to adapt music for specific congregational contexts. Additionally, the workshops, webinars, and other resources provided by the [Presbyterian Association of Musicians](#) may also help support musicians and non-musicians alike in their partnership to create a musical environment that supports the broader work of the church.

RESOURCES FOR CREATING A NEW MUSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- [Songs for the Holy Other: Hymns Affirming the LGBTQIA2S+](#). The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada. Free download.
 - This free collection of hymns addresses the ways in which churches continue to “build walls making ‘out’ and in” or “boundaries of ‘us’ and them,” of ‘normal’ and ‘other.’” Featuring new words to many familiar tunes and texts by some of the leading hymn writers of today, this resource helps to bridge the gap of inclusion in traditional hymnody.
- [Songs in Times of Crisis](#). The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada. Free download.
 - “When tragedy strikes, we often find ourselves at a loss for words to express our sorrow, rage, and helplessness. When a community needs to gather, congregational song can be a powerful

force to help us express what we cannot articulate ourselves. It can be a healing, unifying force.”
This collection provides a set of music available for uniquely challenging times.

- [*Prophetic Hymns and Songs on Race, Unity, and Peace*](#). Curated list from The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada. Free download.
 - This list provides insights into hymns (many available in *Glory to God* or in other easily obtainable resources) for use on the themes of race, unity, and peace. A collection of both familiar and new hymns, it challenges leaders to think beyond their normal repertoire.
- *Justice Choir Songbook*. Justicechoir.org. Free download.
 - “Our mission is to further social and environmental justice movements by engaging communities in singing together.”
- Resources from the organization [Music That Makes Community](#).
- The “New Topics in Music” volume of the [Call to Worship: Liturgy, Music, Preaching, and the Arts](#) journal (Volume 55.3) provides numerous insightful articles on these subjects and more that are useful for musicians and non-musicians.

Writer: Dr. Joshua Taylor, Certified Church Musician
Presbyterian Association of Musicians: <https://www.presbymusic.org/>
Office of Christian Formation: www.pcusa.org/formation

January 2022



Office of Christian
Formation



PRESBYTERIAN
ASSOCIATION OF
MUSICIANS