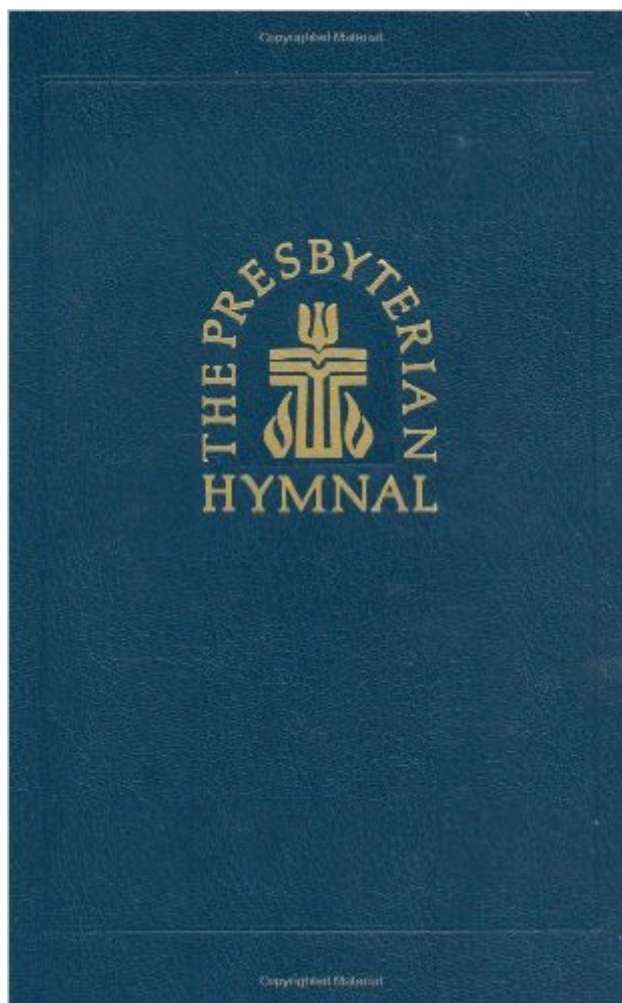


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# The Presbyterian Hymnal: Hymns, Psalms, And Spiritual Songs



## Synopsis

This exceptional hymnal features more than six hundred hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs in contemporary language that is both familiar and inclusive. The selections are arranged according to the seasons and festivals of the Christian year, theological topics, and specific occasions for worship. A complete set of indexes is included.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The hymnal is a decent resource, but isn't extremely useful in determining the original reading of various hymns. The older texts have been altered to reflect contemporary concerns of feminist theology, even in removing certain references to God being Father (for one example, see "Great Is Thy Faithfulness," #276, footnote). The hymns are not mangled as a general rule, but I see the irritating "alt." designation next to more older texts than not. The type is clear and the musical settings are sound, so if egalitarian/feminist theology doesn't bother you, this is a fine hymnal.

We understand that the Presbyterian Church is at the start of making a new hymnal (due to debut in 2014) to replace this one. Their theory is that every generation needs a new hymnal and if you look at the preceding hymnals (the blue or green hymnal of 1933, the maroon hymnal of 1955 and the ill-fated *Worshipbook* of the 70s), you see their point. Even so, this one gets most things right and will be hard to beat. The second half of the 20th century experienced what has been called the Hymn Explosion, and many of the best hymns of that time are represented in this book which is still

called the "new" hymnal in most Presbyterian churches. There are some works that were hard to introduce to congregations that are now among their most beloved hymns represented: Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ, Here I Am Lord, etc. Fred Pratt Green, Timothy Dudley-Smith, Jane Parker Huber and Hal Hopson are all represented here, as well they ought to be. There are also some under-utilized gems in it as well, songs like "Come O Spirit" (for Pentecost) and "God Bless Your Church" (for an anniversary) that have also found their way into other denominational hymnals. All in all it is a great hymnal for expanding the congregations "Favorites" repertoire without being too jarring. Linda Jo McKim and company did yeoman's work in creating it. The layout is according to the liturgical year. The indexes are thorough and easy to use. The print is clear; the size is comfortable to hold while singing. There is a non-denominational version of this hymnal available too, from the publisher, for non-Presbyterian congregations who find it to their liking.

This is a great hymnal that I grew up with, but didn't understand until now that I'm older. It has many songs by writers who were following God as old as the 1500's. Though old I hope these songs are not just lost in vain tradition, but people would really pour out their heart to God as the writers did.

I was there in church in 1992 when they unpacked the (then) new PRESBYTERIAN HYMNAL: HYMNS, PSALMS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS (pew edition). I have tried over the last 21 years to warm up to the hymnal, but while I admit it has its uses it has never become a favorite of mine. Despite the fact that the hymnal has 564 entries (not counting Service Music), it has never felt that full to me. One reason is that a number of the hymns are based on foreign sources -- Chinese in particular -- that never caught on; but I think an even stronger reason is that so many of the good old tunes are used, and re-used, and re-re-used, sometimes to the point of absurdity. In at least seven instances the same tune is used for four different hymns, which to me is overkill. The wonderful tune FOREST GREEN, for example, is quite correctly used as one setting for "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and for "All Beautiful the March of Days," but also for two other lyric settings of lesser import. The lesser-revered CAITHNESS is used for two different Psalms settings (why?) as well as for two additional hymns. ABERYSTWYTH furnishes the tune for two classics: "Jesus, Lover of My Soul" and "Watchman, Tell Us of the Night," but also for two more hymns I've never heard sung in any church. Nor is there any need for four different hymns set to the tune ES FLOG EIN KLEIN WALDVOEGELEIN. These two tendencies -- foreign tunes that stayed foreign and overuse of the same tune for too many multiple applications -- cut down on the usefulness of the PRESBYTERIAN HYMNAL and diminished its impact. While this is going on, while one might say

the Anglo-Britannic import of the old tunes its stretched to the max, there are a great many more familiar hymns in the American mold that are not to be found here. They include "Standing on the Promises," "Rock of Ages," "It Is Well With My Soul," "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day," "In Remembrance of Me," "We've A Story to Tell to the Nations," or anything based on BROTHER JAMES'S AIR (the 23rd Psalm, among others). While some of these may be a little on the low-church side, I have known Presbyterian congregations to enjoy them as much as Methodists or Baptists do. I really cannot find it in my heart to give this PRESBYTERIAN HYMNAL more than four stars, and a low four stars at that. The situation is further complicated by the fact that it is in its last full year of current-hymnal status. Later in 2013 the Presbyterians will release the new GLORY TO GOD hymnal, which is expected to become the standard pew hymnal for Presbyterian Church (USA) congregations. I can't imagine a Presbyterian congregation wanting to adopt this 1992 volume at this late date; for general home use one of the better private-market hymnals like WORSHIP AND REJOICE or the CELEBRATING GRACE HYMNAL would probably be more useful.

I bought this for a relative because I know she likes music and plays the piano. These are the traditional songs I heard and sang in church over the years. I recommend buying this if you like church hymns. They are uplifting and have the anointing of the Holy Spirit on them.

The hymnal is in perfect condition. I was really delighted to receive it and see that. Am enjoying hymns when I am saying my prayers and finding so many that I like to sing at church but don't know more than first one or two lines. Thanks again.

I didn't notice that I ordered "Large Print Edition". And indeed, I got large print letters, and NO NOTES! Useless purchase. I bought this book only because I wanted to learn how Psalms could be sung, but ended up with the text which I already have in the Bible, and no notes.

The hymnal arrived, and it lived up to expectations in all ways except one. The image provided was not that of the product I purchased. The hymnal I received was stamped on the outside with the name of a church in Arizona. The hymnal has a dedication inside of it, to that church in the name of a loved one. I have attempted to contact the church by mail and e-mail. I haven't received a response yet, but I stand ready to ship it to them if they request it back. I feel slightly like I bought "stolen" goods, though I know there is probably a much more innocent explanation. Needless to

say, I won't do this again.

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