



Moravian Music Sunday 2017

Theme: 25 Moravian Music Festivals!

Music Suggestions

This year we are offering a wide variety of musical selections for you to consider for Moravian Music Sunday. For any of these that you choose to use, feel free to print the information about them in your bulletin or newsletter; knowing something about the piece's composition can be enlightening to your congregation and inspire them to pay closer attention to both text and music.

The anthem suggestions for 2017 are chosen to celebrate the role of Moravian Music Festivals in presenting music from earlier centuries in first modern performances, as well as newly-written music. (For any anthems in the Moravian Star Anthem Series, an organ part is available in a lower key.)

Several of the anthems listed below are in the Music Lending Libraries managed by the Moravian Music Foundation. Be sure to take advantage of this – you pay only the postage, and you're responsible to return the music to us soon after you use it. *There are limited copies of some numbers – make your "reservations" early!* Contact the Winston-Salem office (info@moravianmusic.org) for all except the one that says "Northern Province Lending Library" – for that one, contact the Bethlehem office (gwyn@moravianmusic.org).

This is a lot of information, about the pieces and about the composers. You're very welcome to print any of it in your bulletin or even the newsletter where you describe what you're doing for Moravian Music Sunday! And do share the biographies with your choir members; it helps to know something about the composer.

Older Moravian Music Re-Introduced at Moravian Music Festivals

Johann Friedrich Peter is the composer of two anthems we're recommending this year for Moravian Music Sunday.

Abide in Me (three-part arrangement in *Come Then, Come, O Flock of Jesus: Moravian Anthems for the Smaller Choir*), received its first modern performance at the 1996 Moravian Music Festival. All three voices (SAB) move together, and the range is modest. The anthem is quite short, so you may wish to add a repeat, from the end to measure 8.

Christ Our Shepherd Faithful Is (Hinshaw Music 1521; available in Lending Library): This SATB anthem with keyboard received its first modern performance at the 1996 Moravian Music Festival. All the parts move together, making it rhythmically quite straightforward to learn; the keyboard part is more florid but still of moderate difficulty. The text is a hymn, and was translated into English by Moravian composer Johann Christian Bechler. The soprano part goes to the high G on each verse, with one quick A at the end; if your sopranos find this challenging it's easy to substitute a lower note from the harmony.

Johann Friedrich Peter (1746-1813) was born in Heerendijk, Holland, to German Moravian parents. He was educated in Holland and Germany, and, with his brother Simon, came to America in 1770. Peter appears to have begun composing very shortly after his arrival in the new world. He served the Pennsylvania Moravians in Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Lititz, and was sent to Salem, North Carolina, in 1780. There, among other duties, he assumed the position of music director for the community. In 1786 he married Catharina Leinbach, a leading soprano in the church choir. Under Peter's energetic and capable leadership a musical tradition was established in Salem which benefited the community long after his departure in 1790. He afterwards served Moravians in Graceham, Maryland; Hope, New Jersey; and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, where he was clerk, secretary, and organist at the Central Church. J. F. Peter's many works have earned him the reputation of being the most gifted of Moravian composers in America. His six string quintets, written in Salem and dated 1789, are the earliest known chamber music written in this country. He died in Bethlehem on July 13, 1813, almost literally at the organ bench, shortly after playing for a children's service.

Johann Christian Geisler, *The Fruit of the Spirit*, received its first modern performance at the 1974 Moravian Music Festival. For four-part choir, with flute solo and keyboard, the anthem is available in a new edition in the Moravian Star Anthem Series through the Moravian Music Foundation. A three-part version, in a lower key but still using flute, is included in *Come Then Come, O Flock of Jesus: Moravian Anthems for the Smaller Choir*.

Johann Christian Geisler (1729-1815) was born in Töppliwoda, Silesia, and learned to play the organ and harp at an early age. At sixteen he was instrumental in starting a trombone choir for the Gnadenfrei congregation in Silesia. He knew Gregor and other leading Moravian musicians of the period and may have been a teacher of Johannes Herbst. His first wife was a harpist, and it is perhaps no accident that thirteen of his anthems utilize that instrument. Geisler served as minister to several congregations in Europe and became a member of the Unity Elders Conference, the Moravian Church's chief governing board. He began to compose in 1760 and by 1805 had written approximately 300 musical works. Although he never visited America, most of his pieces found their way into Moravian collections here. He died in Berthelsdorf, near Herrnhut, on April 14, 1815.

David Moritz Michael is the composer of three lovely and accessible works appropriate for this year's Moravian Music Sunday.

Hallelujah, the Savior Lives is a jubilant Easter anthem – and remember, Moravian Music Sunday falls within the Easter season! It was edited by Karolý Köpe, who was director of the Moravian Music Foundation from 1984-1990, and received its first modern performance at the 1987 Moravian Music Festival. (Yes, we did recommend this one for last year's Moravian Music Sunday as well; if your choir learned it then, do it again!) This is a longer anthem, lasting about 4 minutes, and may be challenging for a small choir – but well worth the effort it will take, and one that will stay in the ears and hearts of choir singers and congregation alike. (*Copies available in the Lending Library.*)

I Love to Dwell in Spirit is a well-loved soprano or tenor solo which was first performed at the Moravian Music Festival in 1955. The Moravian Music Foundation has a new edition, with the same notes but a more literal translation, *My Soul Knows Purest Pleasure*. This is available upon request as a pdf file (contact our office at info@moravianmusic.org to request your copy.)

Children, Close by Jesus Stay is a new edition and translation of the beloved *Hearken! Stay Close to Jesus Christ*, which was first performed at the Moravian Music Festival of 1957. This new edition is published in the Moravian Star Anthem Series, available from the Moravian Music Foundation; and a

three-part, lower-key arrangement is included in *Come Then, Come, O Flock of Jesus: Moravian Anthems for the Smaller Choir*.

David Moritz Michael (1751-1827) was born in Kühnhausen (near Erfurt in Thuringia), Germany, and did not become a Moravian until he was thirty years old. He taught in the Moravian school at Niesky and came to America in 1795. His official church position was as a worker with the young men of the congregations in Nazareth and Bethlehem, but his contributions to the musical life of the settlements were great. He revitalized the Bethlehem *Collegium musicum* and conducted the performance of Haydn's *Creation* which may have been its American premiere. He is well known as a composer of wind ensembles, especially his fourteen *Parthien* and the two "Water Music" suites written for excursions on the Lehigh River. His other works include seventeen anthems for four-part choir (SATB or SSAB) with accompaniment by strings and organ (and in some cases winds), two soprano solos with string accompaniment, two duets for sopranos with string accompaniment, and an eleven-movement setting of *Psalms 103*. Johann Friedrich Peter also attributed four songs with piano accompaniment to Michael in his personal manuscript copybook. Michael may well have written more such short and relatively simple works, but they have not yet been identified. He returned to Germany in 1815 and died in Neuwied, Germany, on February 26, 1827.

Johann Christian Bechler, *Hallelujah, Praise, Honor* received its first modern performance at the 1990 Moravian Music Festival. This is a jubilant anthem of praise to Christ, the Lamb of God, and of rejoicing in the joy which comes to us through his grace and fellowship. It is published by Hinshaw Music Company, and copies are available in the Lending Library.

Johann Christian Bechler (1784-1857) was born on the Baltic island of Oesel (modern Saaremaa), where his father was a Moravian minister. He was educated at Moravian schools in Niesky and Barby, Germany. Music was his favorite subject, and he says that he devoted every moment of time left by other duties, to the acquisition of the various branches of this charming art with the greatest delight, learning to sing, to play various stringed instruments, but more particularly the piano and the organ. At the completion of his studies he taught organ at Barby and in 1806 accepted a call to America, where he became one of the first professors at Moravian Theological Seminary. His interest in music continued, and he composed many choral and liturgical pieces. He served as minister to the Moravian congregations of Philadelphia, Staten Island, Lititz, Pennsylvania, and Salem, North Carolina. In 1836, shortly after his consecration as bishop, he went to serve the congregation in Sarepta, Russia. In 1849 he retired to Herrnhut, the center of the Moravian Church in Germany, and died there on April 18, 1857.

Christian David Jaeschke, *The Lord Be Mindful of You* received its first modern performance at the 2006 Moravian Music Festival. This is a very serene anthem, very appropriate for a benediction. It is published in the Moravian Star Anthem Series.

Christian David Jaeschke (1755-1827) came from one of the early Czech immigrant families who renewed the old *Unitas Fratrum* under the patronage of Count Zinzendorf. He was born in Herrnhut. He served as a teacher and organist at Ebersdorf and later as copyist of the *Gemein-Nachrichten* in Barby. He served as organist and choirmaster at Herrnhut for forty years, from 1786 to 1826, composing many anthems and vocal solos. C. F. Hasse, writing in 1829, calls him a "musical Genius" and laments that his works had not become more widely known. Jaeschke died in Herrnhut in 1827 after an illness of a year and a half.

Johannes Herbst, *None Among Us* was first performed at the 1999 Moravian Music Festival and has become a “new favorite”. The text is from Romans 14:7-8, reminding us that our life is in Christ. Copies available in the Lending Library.

Johannes Herbst (1735-1812) was born at Kempten, Swabia, and joined the Moravian Church in 1748. He first served the church as bookkeeper and teacher, and especially as an organist, before coming to America in 1785 to be a pastor in Lancaster and Lititz, Pennsylvania. In his spare time he was a prolific composer, producing over 100 anthems and 200 sacred songs. He was also an avid copier of other composers’ music, and his personal collection of over 1000 anthems and many larger works is a source of incalculable value for the study of Moravian music. He was consecrated a bishop in Lititz on May 12, 1811, two days before leaving to take up new work in Salem, North Carolina. He brought his precious music collection with him, but served only a few months before his death there on January 15, 1812. He is buried in God’s Acre in Salem.

Newly-Composed Music Premiered at Moravian Music Festivals

Moravian Music Festivals have been the occasion of a number of premiere performances. We suggest here only a few, which are readily available.

Robert Starer, *Fantasy on a Moravian Hymn*, was commissioned for the 1990 Moravian Music Festival in memory of Thor M. Johnson, the conductor of the first eleven Music Festivals. Starer was acquainted with Thor Johnson, and it was Thor Johnson who presented the premiere of Starer’s first piano concerto in Cincinnati in 1956; so it’s appropriate that he was asked to compose this work in Brother Johnson’s memory. The anthem is based on the beloved hymn *Jesus Makes My Heart Rejoice*. Published by Hinshaw Music; copies available in the Lending Library.

Alice Parker, *Harmonious Herbst* - this is a five-movement mini-cantata based on Johannes Herbst’s *Hymns to be Sung at the Pianoforte*. It was commissioned for the 1992 Moravian Music Festival. Each movement stands on its own, so your choir could learn just one or two, or all five and intersperse them throughout the service! Published by Hinshaw Music; copies available in the Northern Province Lending Library (contact the Northern Province office, gwyn@moravianmusic.org, to reserve your copies).

Brian Henkelmann, *Go Therefore*, was composed in memory of the Rev. Dr. Albert H. Frank, and received its premiere performance at the 2009 Moravian Music Festival. It is a rather challenging piece, both in terms of rhythm and voicing (soprano and baritone solos; SATB choir in which each voice part divides, resulting in 8 parts). If your choir can handle something a bit challenging and very exciting, this is the piece for you! Published in the Moravian Star Anthem Series.