

The Moravian Music Foundation

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February, 2023

To: Pastors and Musicians

From: Bruce Earnest, DMA, Executive Director
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Subject: Moravian Music Sunday: May 7, 2023

Recognizing that music is a means of proclaiming the Gospel, we celebrate Moravian Music Sunday on the fifth Sunday of Easter, which, in 2023, is **May 7**. This year we celebrate the 300th birthday of Christian Gregor (1723–1801), considered by many to be the father of Moravian music.

Born in Silesia in 1723, Gregor joined the Moravian Church at the age of seventeen. Serving as an organist and minister, he dedicated his life to the service of the church. His duties as a church administrator brought him to the settlements in Pennsylvania and North Carolina in 1770–1772. Eventually, he was consecrated as a bishop in 1789. Today he is remembered for having helped develop liturgical practice as well as introducing concerted anthems and arias into the service. In addition to his several hundred compositions, he is also responsible for editing the hymnal of 1778 and chorale book of 1784, both of which became seminal works in the standardization, preservation, and transmission of Moravian music-making.

The anniversary of Gregor’s birth allows us to remember the individuals who built the musical tradition that we enjoy today. His musical contributions serve as a link to the past, but also a reminder of the long reach of our church and the countless footsteps we follow as members of this global community. As we celebrate the life and work of this remarkable musician, may we be called to remember that it is our responsibility to uphold our traditions and ensure we preserve them for the future.

WORSHIP PLANNING

Materials designed to assist your worship planning team in the preparation for Moravian Music Sunday are available on the Moravian Music Foundation’s website (www.MoravianMusic.org/moravian-music-sunday). We’ll be happy to send you a “hard copy” upon your request. We offer a proposed order of worship, a bulletin insert, and a statement

which may be read as part of your Moravian Music Sunday celebration. The full-page size order of worship includes some notes and suggestions you may want to consider for the sermon.

Of course, you may include more music than is listed in the order of worship! We encourage you to make use of all of the musicians in your congregation, from children through adults. Although we are celebrating the music of a composer born three centuries ago, we are all part of a living tradition. As Gregor was moved all those years ago to compose music celebrating his faith, we encourage congregations to also consider including any new music written by members and friends; if you ask soon, someone may be inspired to write a hymn text or music based upon the themes of the service (if they do, please share it with us!).

Two versions of the order of worship are provided on the website. The “full page size” is scaled for an 8 ½ x 11 inch page, and the text is allowed to flow as it will, without attention to page breaks; this is for those who want to “cut and paste” it into your own bulletin format. The “half-sheet formatted” file is print-ready and set up for copying back-to-back to create an insert which may be used alone or within your bulletin.

Please let us know what you have done with your celebration; we like to share ideas with others and learn from your experience.

Lastly, this does not have to take place on May 7 and does not have to happen or be limited to Sunday morning worship; you may be creative and celebrate whenever it is convenient for you!