

Statement To Be Read for Moravian Music Sunday 2025

An argument has been made that perhaps every Sunday is Moravian Music Sunday and on a certain level that is true. Imagine a service without a liturgy, without hymns, anthems, or a benediction. The message of the service might remain, but all the color would be gone. The qualities that make us who we are would disappear. From the earliest years of the church, music has been used by the Moravians to spread God's message, to build community, and to praise the beauty and glory of God.

This year, we are celebrating the 200th birthdays of Georg Friedrich Hellström and Henri Marc Hermann Woldemar Voullaire. As composers working in the 19th century, they represent a period of Moravian music that is often overlooked in favor of the earlier "Golden Age" of the 18th century. For that reason, we are using today as an opportunity to celebrate the rich musical tradition of 19th century Moravians. Born over a century after the founding of Herrnhut in 1722, Hellström and Voullaire, along with their contemporaries, had to navigate a church and a world in constant flux. With new technologies upending and reshaping their reality, these composers sought to reflect the beauty and steadfast nature of God in a dynamic world. They also embraced a new musical aesthetic (known today as "Romanticism") that prized emotional expression above all else, thereby ushering in a new style of musical worship. At a time when our own world seems to be rapidly changing, we can find some comfort in listening to the sounds of earlier Moravians who also recognized that through it all, God's love remains eternal.

Moravian Music Sunday offers the opportunity to celebrate the joy of music and its importance in the lives of so many Moravians over the centuries. We are reminded today of the importance of our musical heritage and the beauty and comfort it has provided us for generations. The Moravian Music Foundation is an interprovincial agency of the Moravian Church in America, Northern and Southern Provinces. It preserves, shares, and celebrates Moravian music through publications and recordings, workshops and events, educational outreach, and Moravian Music Festivals. The Foundation is the custodian of this legacy, but as Moravians, this music is your inheritance. While we enjoy and cherish our music, we must also protect it for those who have yet to come. Visit the Foundation's website – www.MoravianMusic.org – for more information, and please contact the Foundation's office in Bethlehem or Winston-Salem if the staff can serve you or this congregation.

Sing to the Lord a new song, for God has done marvelous things!