

## Sing Praises - May 29, 2022

The parallel accounts of the last supper in Mark and Matthew tell us that Jesus and the disciples sang a hymn before heading to the Mount of Olives. Romans 15:9 is an eschatological writing that borrows the Davidic type from Psalm 18:49 in depicting Christ as leading the Gentiles in song. So if we are looking for our example in the singing of hymns, we need look no further than Jesus Christ.

For me singing praises is a joyful experience that emerges as a natural response to the sense of awe and wonder that emerges in worship. Singing praises restores my soul and brings me peace.

When the *Community of Christ Sings* hymnal was introduced in 2013, I attended the Peace Colloquy where it was introduced at the Temple in Independence. It was entirely appropriate that *Community of Christ Sings* was introduced at a Peace Colloquy because its pages are filled with lyrics (set to beautiful music) that gives voice to Community of Christ's theology of peace.

During the pandemic, our ability to sing praises together was significantly challenged. While technology like Zoom provided a good foundation for people to take turns in sharing things like prayers, scripture readings and sermons. The coordinated timing needed for singing in unison or harmony was simply not possible. This caused the church to go in search of recorded hymns with vocals that could be played during online worship services.

YouTube soon emerged as a place where hymns could be uploaded and shared between congregations. As the keeper of the Lamoni Heartland Mission Center's YouTube channel, I started a "playlist" of vocal performances of *Community of Christ Sings* hymns that were recorded by church members. Adapting the vocal recordings from the Community of Christ Sings USB to a new more visual format on YouTube provided me an opportunity to Sing Praises through Community of Christ Sings once again. Our speaker today, Joey Williams, has done more to capture and record the hymnody of our global Community of Christ family than anyone else. Thanks to the efforts of Joey and the entire amazing team that led the creation of Community of Christ Sings, we have what may be the most theologically deep and diverse hymnal in all of Christendom. As we "Sing Praises" through Community of Christ Sings we are able to proclaim an identity of peace that both transcends and unifies cultures. I will be forever grateful for my opportunity to Sing Praises and Sing Peace through Community of Christ Sings.