The People’s Psalter

Hal H. Hopson

The People’s Psalter is a responsorial psalm collection that makes exclusive use of folk tunes and folk-like melodies. It is noteworthy that all the psalms appointed in the Three-Year Lectionary are included in this book and that the spirit of each psalm text is matched with a folk tune of the same import. These psalms, with the use of global songs from around the world, provide a valuable alternative to the rich tradition of responsorial psalmody that only makes use of psalm tones.

Some unique features of The People’s Psalter are:

• The message of the psalm texts, by their metrical literary structure, is direct and clear to the congregation.

• The texts are from a wide variety of metrical settings that range from the seventeenth-century English poet John Milton to present day poets.

• The melodies are drawn from over 25 countries around the world.

• The settings are easily learned by the cantor.

• The refrains have an eloquent simplicity that makes them both comfortable and meaningful to the congregation.

• The keyboard accompaniments are interesting and indigenous to each melody.

• There are a variety of accompaniments that make creative use of piano, organ, various orchestral instruments, handbells, and percussion.

• Some of the didactic psalms, such as Psalm 119, are uniquely set with the verses being recited by a reader to keyboard accompaniment, and the refrains sung as usual by the congregation.

• Because of the metrical structure of these psalm settings, this collection offers opportunity for creative use of unison children’s voices and/or adult choirs, and cantors of all ages.

Reproducible Congregational Refrains, for use in the worship service folder, are included. Reproducible parts for instrumentalists are included as well.
Psalm 1

Refrain: Hal H. Hopson
Verses: The Psalter, 1912

Flowing, but unhurried (♩ = ca. 88)

Refrain

Happy are they who love the law of the Lord.

Verses

1. The one is blest who, fearing God, Walks not where sinners meet. Who
2. How blest the one who in God’s law Finds goodness and delight. And
3. That one is nourished like a tree Set by the river’s side: Its
4. The wicked, like the driven chaff, Are swept from off the land: They
5. The Lord will guard the righteous well, Their way to God is known: The

Refrain

does not stand with wicked ones, And shuns the scorners’ seat.
meditates upon that law With gladness day and night.
leaf is green, its fruit is sure; The works of such abide.
shall not gather with the just, Nor at the judgment stand.
way of sinners, far from God, Shall surely be overthrown.


Verses text: The Psalter, 1912 alt. (PD).


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Refrains for Psalms 1 and 2

Reproducible Congregational Part

Psalm 1

Hal H. Hopson

Refrain

Happy are they who love the law of the Lord.


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Psalm 2

Hal H. Hopson

Refrain

God is the Lord, the Lord of heav’n and earth.


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