

Christian Heritage Class Spring 2020/(Fall 2022)

The class meets about 11:20 following worship-- in the Hospitality Center, lower level.

David Stedman, church historian, is the presenter, and all are welcome.

The theme for autumn is the Music of the Church.

October 16 The Doxology: The Story of Music in the Church “Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost” Music has been part of Christian worship since the early Church, when the first believers sang “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, making melody in their hearts to the LORD” (Ephesians 5:19). From the antiphonal hymns of Roman times, to Gregorian chant, and to congregational singing at the 16th century Reformation, music has formed part of Christian worship. In the 18th century we have Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley, but the most famous hymn to the Trinity was actually written by Thomas Ken, Bishop of Bath and Wells (1637-1711) for the boys of Winchester School to sing and was the closing stanza of the Morning and Evening Hymns of 1674

October 23 and November 6 Some Great Hymns of the Church—and the Stories behind them. We will include **Rock of Ages**—a “Stone of Contention,” **Holy Holy Holy**—A “Tribute to the Trinity,” **All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name**—“The National Anthem of Christendom,” **Lead Kindly Light**—“An Earnest Search for God’s Will,” **It Is Well with my Soul**—Horace Spafford’s response to the drowning of his children, **O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go**—“I trust in your unfailing love,” **Abide With Me**—“Strength from Weakness,” **Jerusalem**—the “National Anthem of the British Commonwealth,” and many others. Many of these well-loved hymns have grown from wonderful and moving faith experiences of their poets or composers.

(October 30 NO CLASS)

November 6 Great Hymns continued

November 13 The Chorister (1): The History of the Church in Britain--through its Music. Choristers have sung in the choirs of England’s cathedrals and other large churches for 1400 hundred years—and continue to do so today. A “choister” today is a loose term describing any group of singers, whatever their ages. Technically the word (**chorista or querista**) referred to a boy with an unbroken voice singing in the choir of a secular (that is, a non-monastic) cathedral or other choral foundation. In the Middle Ages (in obedience to the psalmist’s “Seven times a day will I praise Thee”) both monastic and secular choirs in addition to the sung Eucharistic mass sang the seven non-sacramental offices spread out through the day and night. From four of these offices, at the Reformation, Thomas Cranmer devised the **Anglican service of matins (morning prayer) and evensong (evening prayer)** which have been the heart of the choristers’ work in the Church of England since the 16th century.

November 20 The Chorister (2) A History of the Church in Britain—through its Music: From the English Baroque to the Age of the Hymn. At the Restoration of the British monarchy under Charles II in 1660, the entire musical liturgy of the re-founded Church of England had to be restored. It was restored with music of the “English Baroque.” Charles II had been exposed to the music of the French court, and desired that English court and church music should take its lead from the Continent, from French and Italian music, “rich in florid solos and accompanied as much by strings as by the organ.” There was in 1660 not a single boy in all of England who had been trained in or had experience of English liturgical choral singing during the

Commonwealth period. To fulfill the statutory requirements for the Chapel Royal and all the cathedral choirs and choral foundations, more than 330 choristers had to be identified and trained.

November 27 The Chorister (3) A History of the Church in Britain—through its Music: The 19th and 20th Centuries. Lord Chatham, speaking of the Church of England exclaimed: “We have a Popish Liturgy, Calvinistic articles, and an Arminian clergy!” A problem for the Established State Church—“a church only half reformed”—was the onslaught of “Liberalism” which undermined its very fabric and rationale. There was basically no set theology. The High Church Anglicans were like Catholics and the Low Church Anglicans (“Evangelicals”) like Presbyterians. The Church of England was increasingly seen as irrelevant to a population of toiling people who had been taught that prosperity in THIS world was a sign of election. The Wesleyan Evangelical and “Oxford” Tractarian movements were apparently antithetical but were in fact natural allies in an attempt to restore validity to the Church of England, and both parties added much to the beauty of the British sacred music in the early 19th century. Many of our favorite, most moving hymns, come from this period.

December 4 Amazing Grace The Calvinist John Newton (1725-1807) Rev. John Newton was among the most influential Evangelical Anglicans of his day. He led a long and useful life and was foremost in attempting to end the pernicious slave trade about which he knew only too much. Newton’s two great hymns of the Church are “Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken” which is built around 7 Biblical passages and in its 5 stanzas describes the people of God under the protection of their Savior Jesus and “Amazing Grace” which tells the story of a rescued sinner and rebel. Newton said: “I am a great sinner, but God is a great Savior!”

December 11 and 18 Angels (and Fallen Angels) “Forget not to show love unto strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” –Hebrews 13:2 Christians inherited Jewish understanding of angels, and by the late 4th century Church Fathers agreed that there were different categories of angels. We will explore the lively **angelology** including *nephilim*, fallen angels, watchers, guardians—and the way the “New Age” folk find comfort in “venerating” them.