

Our Favorite Hymns

What are your favorite hymns? Why do you love them? Did you first hear them at a special time in your life? Were they part of your faith journey?

I love a lot of hymns, all for different reasons. Are Ye Able was the first hymn that I memorized, and I would sing it with my sister-in-law in church. Now my favorite hymn is "Here I am Lord," To me, this is a hymn calling us to service. Something I have heard often in my 73 years as an active member of the United Methodist Church. No, I have not always been a faithful servant and answered the call. I had excuses, too busy, not interested, raising children, and working mainly. Then when the voice would not stop, I found that time could be made. I wanted to be a Stephen Minister, but I worked crazy hours but decided to try it and in the three years, I took the classes, work never interfered, I prayed and somehow always had a day assignment on Thursdays except for one meeting and someone called and wanted to trade with me because they needed an evening assignment. It always worked out; I was amazed. I wanted to take a morning class during lent one year. I always was able to make it. I wanted to go on the walk to Emmaus but couldn't and received a phone call from the Pastor that someone had paid for it and a friend had volunteered to stay with my husband then suffering from Alzheimer's. They would stay the three days I needed. I was amazed at the generosity of dear friends. I was able to let go of my sorrows and turn my imperfections over to God because of the generosity of friends. One year when I was not serving on a committee, I became an usher and took a Sunday morning class and signed up for Communion. We can always find a way to serve and learn, sometimes in small ways and sometimes in larger ways. At Christmas my favorite Christmas hymn is "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day." And "O Holy Night" I love the words in I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day because they were written during a terrible time in America and call us to be a better people. The words of Peace on Earth Goodwill to Men give me hope for a better country. The words were written by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in 1863. O Come All Ye Faithful reminds me of a time in our country where God was spoken about in our schools. We had to learn the Latin translation in our Latin class in 1951 and 1952 and I recall that class singing Adeste Fideles in class. Loud and with meaning. People think that Amazing Grace would have meaning to me because of what God has done in my life and while I love the hymns my favorite version is "Amazing Grace, My chains are gone, I've been set free. My Lord, my God has ransomed me." At Easter my favorite hymn is "Christ the Lord is Risen Today." I love to read the stories behind the hymns, the reasons the authors wrote them. Some of the authors were going through desperate times in their lives and the words brought them comfort and the truth of God's love in our lives.

Ephesians 5:19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Many of the Psalms were written to be joined with Harp, Lute and Lyre.

Psalm 23 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures, he leads me by still waters. He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Grace Epperson