



In loving memory of Susan Palo Cherwien (1953–2021),
whose gifts continue
to put song in our throats,
give melody and memory to our faith,
instill long-lasting insights in our souls of a loving, caring God.
Forever.



PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Because finely crafted hymn texts have a poetic imagery of their own, Susan Palo Cherwien's hymns appear in text form in the first section of this volume. To enable their use by congregations, the hymns are also presented with music, beginning on page 42.

In addition to several widely used tunes, a number of new tunes by noted composers are included in this collection. Some of these were commissioned along with the texts for particular occasions; in other cases, the author wrote a text with a particular tune in mind; in still other instances, where no suitable existing tune could be found, a composer was invited to contribute a new one. These are not intended to be exclusive pairings, however. Composers are invited to let these hymn texts inspire other melodies and musical settings for assembly, soloist, or choir.

See also Susan Palo Cherwien's previous collections of hymns, published by Augsburg Fortress:

- *O Blessed Spring*
- *Come, Beloved of the Maker*
- *Peace, Be Still*



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A RADIANT CHOIR HAS PIERCED THE NIGHT

A radiant choir has pierced the night,
The darkness has been riven:
God's Word has entered human form
Consorting earth and heaven;
No transient thought, no fleeting birth—
This life sings out to all the earth
That God does dwell among us.

The trembling earth, the trembling sky,
The heavens themselves were shaken,
For God, the God of peace, had come
The human heart to waken;
The angel host could not restrain
Their voices from a sweet refrain:
"To you, to you, glad tidings!"

Behold how God has loved the world
And all things low and common;
The Word is born in low estate
Our sacredness to summon.
And who, then, is the first to hear
The holy angels' song of cheer?
Poor shepherds on a hillside.

How utterly God disregards
The halls of hard and haughty!
How utterly God overthrows
The powerful and lofty!
Behold how humble, earthy things
Become the place where glory springs:
God's peaceable uprising.



ALL THE WAYS OF GOD ARE JUSTICE

All the ways of God are justice;
God stands not unfeeling by,
But God hears the trampled people,
Hears the world's bewildered cry.
Greatly moved and greatly troubled,
Not far-off, but gently near,
God, the God of all compassion,
Speaks and waits for us to hear.

Hear, O people, God is speaking;
In God's image were we made:
Tender hearts and hands for healing,
Minds to solve, evolve, create.
Written on our hearts is justice,
Written on our brows, God's law:
Acting justly, loving mercy,
Walking humbly with our God.

All the ways of God are justice;
Shall we stand unfeeling by?
Do we hear the trampled people,
Hear the world's bewildered cry?
Prayers and sacrifices fester
Without love and love's increase;
Lead the suffering ones to solace,
Lead the warring ones to peace.



GOD HAS BEGUN A WORK IN US

God has begun a work in us
By love, by will, by Word;
We are not yet what we shall be,
But we shall live assured:
God's Word has borne us from our birth
That here we may become
An image of this loving God—
We are a work begun.

This life therefore is not yet whole,
But healing forth shall flow;
This world therefore is not yet just,
But righteousness shall grow;
Like leaven stirred into the meal,
The Spirit's work is done,
As gently God's new bread takes form—
We are a work begun.

This life therefore is not yet rest,
But toil of heart and mind;
This heart therefore is not yet pure,
But slow and sure refined;
Not yet the faces full unveiled,
Not yet the race well-run,
But we are walking on the road—
We are a work begun.

A RADIANT CHOIR HAS PIERCED THE NIGHT

1 A ra - diant choir has pierced the night,
 2 The trem - bling earth, the trem - bling sky,
 3 Be - hold how God has loved the world
 4 How ut - ter - ly God dis - re - gards
 5 So let us deep - ly take to heart

the dark - ness has been riv - en: God's Word has
 the heav'ns them - selves were shak - en, for God, the
 and all things low and com - mon; the Word is
 the halls of hard and haugh - ty! How ut - ter -
 this won - der up - on won - ders, that we may

en - tered hu - man form con - sort - ing
 God of peace, had come the hu - man
 born in low es - tate our sa - cred -
 ly God o - ver - throws the pow - er -
 make this birth our own and Christ be

ALL THE WAYS OF GOD ARE JUSTICE

1 All the ways of God are jus - tice;
 2 Hear, O peo - ple, God is speak - ing;
 3 All the ways of God are jus - tice;
 4 May we glo - ry not in wis - dom,

God stands not un - feel - ing by,
 in God's im - age were we made:
 shall we stand un - feel - ing by?
 may we glo - ry not in wealth,

but God hears the tram - pled peo - ple,
 ten - der hearts and hands for heal - ing,
 Do we hear the tram - pled peo - ple,
 but in liv - ing lives of mer - cy,

hears the world's be - wil - dered cry.
 minds to solve, e - volve, cre - ate.
 hear the world's be - wil - dered cry?
 lov - ing neigh - bor as one - self.

FROM THE FIRST WORD OF CREATION

1 From the first word of cre - a - tion, as the works of
 2 Christ has shown us God's com - pas - sion: from the heart of
 3 Cir - cling us, the Spir - it beck - ons, call - ing us with
 4 Ring us round with ho - ly un - ion; pierce us through with

God un - fold, God's de - sire is toward the man - y—
 God all rise; each u - nique and each be - lov - ed,
 sigh - ing deep, that all join with those re - joic - ing,
 gold - en fire; bind our guard - ed hearts to - geth - er;

var - ied flock and var - ied fold— bound to - geth - er
 yet to - geth - er in - ter - twined; wo - ven in a
 that all mourn with those who weep; and, re - fin - ing
 with your love our lives in - spire, that, O God, in

by God's pres - ence like a strand of wo - ven gold.
 seam - less gar - ment by the crim - son love of Christ.
 us from hard - ness, healed and whole our hearts will keep.
 you a - bid - ing, we em - bod - y your de - sire.

TENDER-HEARTED GOD

1 Ten - der - heart - ed God, Par - ent of the worlds, pour - ing out your -
 2 O - ver - flow - ing Fount, Christ ere time be - gan, lov - ing, you en -
 3 Dove of sound and flame, dwell - ing - place of peace, sing - ing hope and
 4 Dream of God's de - light, in this earth - ly sphere: all cre - a - tion

self in lov - ing grace, you made all that is
 clothed your - self with earth; set - ting pow'r a - side,
 heal - ing to our hearts, lov - ing, you in - still,
 thriv - ing from God's love— laugh - ter, love, and light

good and ver - y good, and up - hold it in your kind em - brace.
 stretch - ing out your hands, you em - brace the suf - f'ring of the world.
 ev - er you em - brace, and your touch new life to us im - parts.
 o - ver - com - ing fear, in the hands of ten - der - heart - ed God.



BACKGROUND OF THE TEXTS

This information was assembled from correspondence with persons involved in the commission, mostly through emails. Every attempt was made for accuracy, although apologies if some of the information provided here does not reflect the entire story.

—David Cherwien

A radiant choir has pierced the night

Greg Aune, director of choral activities at Gustavus Adolphus College, commissioned this text for the 2017 *Christmas in Christ Chapel* program. As it was the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, Susan stated: “I have set a portion of Martin Luther’s 1521 Sermon for Christmas Day in verse using a basic form like Luther’s for the poetry. I drew from a lovely 1905 translation. Luther begins the sermon by quoting from Haggai 2:6-7, so I used that text as well. Luther waffles between present and past tenses and so did I, to portray the ‘now’ aspect of Incarnation.” The tune VOM HIMMEL NEU by Robert Buckley Farlee was commissioned at the same time.

July 30, 2017

8.7.8.7.8.8.7 (bar form)

Based on Martin Luther’s 1521 Sermon for Christmas Day, “The Story of the Birth of Jesus; and the Angels’ Song,” paragraphs 1–44 in *Wartburg Church Postil* (WA 10:1, 58–95), English translation by the Rev. George H. Trabert, 1905.

All the ways of God are justice

Cantor Jeffrey R. Pannebaker and the Rev. Connie A. Miller, on behalf of Saint Luke Lutheran Church and School, Silver Spring, Maryland, contacted Susan about writing a text in honor of the Rev. Dr. Paul Wee. Susan stated: “To honor Paul Wee, I focused on the concept of justice, especially drawing on the prophets. The opening line is from Deuteronomy 32:4—“All God’s ways are justice.” The tune FORGOTTEN LUTHER was composed by Pannebaker for the occasion of its presentation to Rev. Wee as a part of a symposium held at Saint Luke titled “Forgotten Luther,” after which the tune is named.

August 9, 2019

8.7.8.7.D trochaic

Based on Deuteronomy 32:2-4; Micah 6:8; Jeremiah 9:23-24; and 1 Corinthians 13:1-3