

GLORY TO GOD
**Hymns and Songs
for Children and Families**

Suggestions for Pastors and Worship Leaders

Below are some suggestions to help you incorporate songs from *Glory to God—Hymns and Songs for Children and Families: Singing Faith All Day Long* into worship.

Track Listing

Number in *Glory to God*

1 Come into God’s Presence

#413

Concepts: When we gather for worship, we recognize that we are in God’s presence. Sung praise is a natural, biblical response to God’s presence.

Scripture references: Ps. 100:2; Luke 2:14

Suggestions for use:

- Consider asking the children’s choir to use this as a processional at the start of worship. This could be done in a canon-style along with a youth or adult choir.
- Consider using a soloist or choir to sing the first measure of each verse, with the congregation singing the remainder of the verse as an introit or sung call to worship. Feel free to use any or all of the verses as appropriate to the particular worship service and liturgical season.

Hymn background (From *Glory to God—A Companion*, ed. Carl P. Daw Jr.):

This short worship chorus may well have been created extemporaneously during worship in the 1960s, perhaps in response to the reading of Psalm 100:2b: “Come into his presence with singing.” The song initially circulated orally, then began to appear in print in the 1970s. The first printed source to replace the possessive pronoun with “God’s” seems to have been [*Sing! A New Creation* (Grand Rapids, 2001)].

Because each stanza begins the same way, four-syllable phrases may be created to tailor the song to a particular occasion or theme. Even less festive wordings, such as “Have mercy, Lord” or “Give us your peace,” can be effectively incorporated.

2 Spoken Good Morning Prayer

Suggestion for use:

Consider using as a call to worship, with a child, a man, and a woman speaking the first three lines and then the congregation joining together on the fourth line.

3 God Is Here Today

#411

Concepts: God’s presence surrounds us and is trustworthy. God hears our praise.

Scripture references: Deut. 31:6; Ps. 139:7–12; Heb. 13:8

Suggestions for use:

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- Consider using as a sung invitation to prayer (prayer for illumination or prayers of the people).
- If your congregation sings an opening set of songs, use this as the final piece as a transition to prayer or other liturgy.

Hymn background (From *Glory to God—A Companion*, ed. Carl P. Daw Jr.):

The translator first encountered this song at a conference in Nicaragua in 1991. Although it was popular in numerous Latin American countries, no one there was certain of its origins. Stories circulated, for example, that it had originated in a Mexican jail. Later it was identified as the work of an Argentinian who lives in Florida. That identification used in the early printings of *GtG* has also been found mistaken, though it now seems likely that the true author/composer has been located in Zaragoza, Spain.

In 1979 he was part of a singing group of young Christians eager to improve the world. They sang at events such as the Festival of Contemporary Religious Music in Zaragoza, and this song was one of the pieces they sang. It proved to be the most popular item in their repertoire, but they had no expectation that its popularity would continue. So around 1981 they made about three hundred cassette recordings of it as a souvenir to share with family and friends. They did not do any advertising, but that cassette became a word-of-mouth hit, being handed around from one person to another.

In 1990 Father Carmelo Erdozain, one of the leading Spanish composers of church music, included this song on a compilation of religious music from Spain. At that time he advised Gacias that he should register it with the Sociedad General de Autores y Editores (General Society of Authors and Publishers), which he did. Being part of that collection further increased the popularity of this song, which has now gone around the world.

What appears here is actually the refrain of a longer song, but it holds the essence of the song's message. Much of its strength comes from the attention to many senses: the breathing of air, the sight of the rising sun, the hearing of the song itself. Each is a different way of apprehending the presence of God.

Neither the original Spanish nor the English translation is rhymed, but the Spanish sings more smoothly because of its recurring vowels, less fricative consonants, and elisions between words.

4 Lord of All Hopefulness (verse 1)

#683

Concept: As we begin each day, we remember the hope, joy, and trust that we have in God.

Scripture references: Ps. 59:16; 90:14; 143:8

Suggestions for use:

- Consider using this verse as a sung prayer or response at Morning Prayer services.
- Consider also as a brief verse to sing as part of opening devotions for morning meetings or classes.

Hymn background (From *Glory to God—A Companion*, ed. Carl P. Daw Jr.):

When [*Songs of Praise*] was enlarged in 1931, one of the freshest additions was this 10.11.11.12 text, whose comprehensiveness is signaled by its title, "All-Day Hymn." The shape of the daily cycle is carefully sketched out by key words in every stanza's third and fourth lines: "waking"/"break of the

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day," "labors"/"noon of the day," "homing"/"eve of the day," "sleeping"/"end of the day." Each such time of day is correlated with a prayer for a specific gift, and true to the collect formula for constructing a prayer, each stanza opens with attributes of Christ related to the gift to be requested in these petitions: "hopefulness" and "joy" prepare for "bliss"; "eagerness" and "faith," for "strength"; "kindliness" and "grace," for "love"; and "gentleness" and "calm," for "peace." These attributes are, in turn, reinforced by a related narrative element in the second line.

Two aspects of this text warrant special attention. The first of these is the emphasis on Christ's earthly life and ministry, which is so notably missing in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, both of which move directly from birth to crucifixion. Consequently, much hymnody has followed the same pattern. The second feature here that was startling in its day was the use of modern second-person pronouns. It will perhaps help to put this language in perspective to recognize that biblical translations continued to retain archaic pronouns for addressing all three Persons of the Trinity until the NRSV appeared more than a half century later.

In its eagerness to portray an immanent and approachable Christ, however, this text runs the risk of neglecting what Dietrich Bonhoeffer has aptly called "the cost of discipleship." When considered in the context of its intended singers in schools and colleges, this partial portrayal is perhaps understandable. The greater problem comes with adults who cannot let go of a nostalgic attitude and who treat religion as entirely a matter of comfort, with no attention to its challenges and obligations.

Because the same rhyme is used in the second couplet of every stanza, the rhyme scheme becomes *aaxx*, and the text as a whole takes on a litany quality through the recurrent elements. Similarly, the invariable phrases of the opening line ("Lord of all . . . , Lord of all . . . ") intensify the formulaic structure and the challenge of bringing the second line to a plausible rhyme word. In many ways, it is remarkable that the matrix of constant phrases is not more obtrusive.

5 Spoken Verse: For the Beauty of the Earth

#14

Concepts: God's creation includes time, space, geography, and humanity. God's creation is beautiful. Our response to the wonder of God's creation is grateful praise.

Scripture references: Gen. 1:1-2-4a; Ps. 107:21

Suggestions for use:

Introduction:

- Rather than playing a musical introduction of the hymn, use this spoken verse as the introduction.
- The style of the introduction could be altered according to the musical style in which the hymn will be sung.

Song:

- This hymn works well as an opening hymn throughout the year.
- Consider using this hymn on Sundays in which worship may be focusing on the environment.
- Consider using this hymn at outdoor worship services.

Hymn background (From *Glory to God—A Companion*, ed. Carl P. Daw Jr.):

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Numerous commentators have confidently reported that this hymn was written one spring day when the author was inspired by the view from a hilltop near his native town of Bath, England. It is certainly possible to be stirred by such a prospect, but it would be a mistake to classify this text as merely a celebration of natural beauty. A better clue to its real intention can be gained by noticing the title of the volume where it was first published. Its eucharistic orientation is further evident from its original title, “The Sacrifice of Praise,” and the original refrain, “Christ our God, to Thee we raise / This our Sacrifice of Praise.” This recurring phrase echoes a portion of the post-Communion prayer in the 1662 BCP beseeching God “mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.” That language, in turn, draws on Jeremiah 33:11 and Hebrews 13:15.

Except for the refrain, the first four stanzas here are substantially original, though Pierpoint was more repetitious than hymnal editors like. So his repeated use of “beauty” in 1.2 and 2.1 has usually been emended to the “glory” and “wonder” found here or to other alternatives. In 3.2 Pierpoint wrote “brain’s” but approved its change to “mind’s” as early as the English Presbyterian *Hymns and Psalms for Divine Worship* (London, 1867).

Most of the variant stanza printed here as the fifth dates to at least 1872, when it appeared in the *Vestry Hymn and Tune Book*, ed. Adoniram Judson Gordon (Boston, 1872). In 5.2 “the world” seems to be a frequent 20th-century emendation. The original stanza read:

For each perfect Gift of Thine
To our race so freely given
Graces human and Divine,
Flowers of earth and buds of Heaven:

Then followed three more stanzas seldom reprinted now. One was devoted to the church (a version of this was used as the fifth stanza in [*The Presbyterian Hymnal: Hymns, Psalms, and Spiritual Songs*]), and the other two listed categories of holy people such as martyrs, prophets, confessors, and the Virgin Mary.

6 God of Great and God of Small

#19

Concepts: God is God of all. No part of creation or our lives is outside of God’s presence and love. Our response is praise.

Scripture references: Ps. 24:1; Gal. 3:26–28

Suggestions for use:

- Consider using verse 1 as a sung response to the offering (in place of a doxology).
- This song works well as an opening song in worship. Perhaps have soloists or choir sing the verses and the congregation sing the refrain.

Hymn background (From *Glory to God—A Companion*, ed. Carl P. Daw Jr.):

This text demonstrates the cumulative power of a deceptively simple formula such as “God of . . .” when enough opposites are brought together. It is also a reminder of Jesus’ teaching that being childlikeness is

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a characteristic of those who wish to live under God's reign. Like several other texts that began life as anthems before becoming used as hymns (see no. 529, for example), these unadorned lines fill a congregation's need for memorable hymns in simple language with deep significance.

In many cases, a simple couplet pattern like this can prove a detriment to the text, but it works well here because the rhymes feel like pegs that help to bring order to a random collection of attributes. It is significant, in fact, that the text assembles attributes rather than assertions: all these qualities are addressed to God rather than simply being about God.

7 Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow #608, 607, 605, 609

Concepts: God is the source of all blessing, and praise is our joyful response. We experience God in the Trinity, named here in expansive language (God, Creator, Christ, Word, Holy Spirit, Three in One).

Scripture references: Matt. 28:19; Eph. 1:3–4, 13–14

Suggestions for use:

- If using the traditional doxology text that is masculine (God, Him), consider using this text to expand language for God.
- Consider using in other moments in the liturgy in which a doxological text is appropriate (Response to Confession and Assurance of Pardon; following the reading of Scripture; Response to the Sermon).

Hymn background (From *Glory to God—A Companion*, ed. Carl P. Daw Jr.):

This nongendered adaptation of the familiar Thomas Ken doxology text at no. 606 was written in 1988 for use at Harvey Browne Memorial Presbyterian Church in Louisville, Kentucky, where the author [Neil Weatherhogg] was then pastor and head of staff. No. 609 is Brian Wren's expansion of the Thomas Ken text.

8 Spoken Mid-day Prayer

Suggestion for use:

This prayer is well suited for retreat or camp worship settings as a prayer of thanksgiving.

9 I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me #700

Concepts: All our life is to be lived in joyful service to God. There is no place in our daily experiences and interactions where we can't be instruments of God's love and work in the world.

Scripture reference: Col. 1:10

Suggestions for use:

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- Use as a final sending song in worship.
- Verse 1, by itself, works well as a sung response to the charge and benediction at the end of worship.

Hymn background (From *Glory to God—A Companion*, ed. Carl P. Daw Jr.):

In the usual collections there is no example of an African American spiritual with this opening line. The closest incipit comes from [Mary Allen Grissom, *The Negro Sings a New Heaven* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1930)], where there is one beginning “I wanta live so God can use me” [Grissom, 62-63]. It is easy enough to recognize how either version could have been heard or remembered the other way, and both versions record how informal speech patterns are actually heard. Both examples generate additional stanzas by altering the verb that falls on the first accented note. All four of the verbs used here also appear in the Grissom version, though in a different order: “live,” “walk,” “pray,” “sing,” “work,” “preach.”

One significant difference is that the refrain in the even-numbered lines of the Grissom example is “Victorious in this land.” That is not a line that occurs in the KJV Bible, but it could well be a condensed version of the promise to Joshua as he led the Israelites into the land of Canaan. Given the identification African Americans felt with the exodus narrative, it is understandable that they would cherish the promise of an eventual happy outcome. In fact, many spirituals use the “crossing the Jordan” motif as a celebration of release from a burdensome life (and as a covert encouragement to seek freedom by crossing the Ohio River). So it seems likely that “Victorious in the land” is an older reading than “anywhere, Lord, anytime,” a possible substitution for a line that no longer carried meaning.

In both versions the phrase “so God can use me” remains firmly in place, and that is a remarkable statement of intention. This hope of being of use to God’s purposes does not seek a personal reward or praise or credit. It is a selfless offering of oneself, not a self-centered promotion of oneself.

10 Lord of All Hopefulness (verse 2: Eagerness)

#683

Concepts: As part of a song that speaks to Christ with us in each moment of the day, this verse highlights Christ’s presence in our daily labor.

Scripture references: Ps. 104:23; Prov. 12:14; 1 Cor. 15:58

Suggestion for use:

Consider using this verse as an act of self-offering at a Mid-Day Prayer service.

Hymn background (From *Glory to God—A Companion*, ed. Carl P. Daw Jr.): See Track 4.

11 HOLY MANNA (tune only)

#24

Suggestions for use:

- Consider using this tune for accessibility and ease in singing.
- Consider using this tune (8.7.8.7.D) as an alternate to a more familiar tune to change the experience of singing a familiar text.

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12 Jesus Loves Me!

#188

Concepts: The Bible tells of Jesus' love for all, especially children. God loves us all as a people, and God loves us all very personally as well.

Scripture references: Mark 9:36–37; Luke 9:47–48

Suggestions for use:

- Consider using as an invitation or response as children gather for a children's sermon.
- On children's Sabbath, consider using as a sung prayer for illumination.

Hymn background (From *Glory to God—A Companion*, ed. Carl P. Daw Jr.):

This familiar song made its first appearance in a novel coauthored by two sisters, identified on the title page only by reference to their respective earlier works. The song is woven into the story at the point where an ill little boy, Johnny Fax, is being soothed by his Sunday School teacher, John Linden. While being rocked in Linden's arms, Johnny asks him to sing, and the teacher responds with these four stanzas:

Jesus loves me—this I know,
For the Bible tells me so ;
Little ones to him belong,—
They are weak, but he is strong.

Jesus loves me, he who died
Heaven's gate to open wide;
He will wash away my sin,
Let his little child come in.

Jesus loves me—loves me still,
Though I'm very weak and ill;
From his shining throne on high
Comes to watch me where I lie.

Jesus loves me,—he will stay
Close beside me all the way.
Then his little child will take
Up to heaven for his dear sake.

Readers of this novel would have needed to supply some 7.7.7.7 tune from memory, for none is specified, and there was no refrain yet. That addition was created by the composer of the tune published two years later.

Throughout the 19th century, collections of Sunday School music often printed all four of Warner's stanzas, but the latter three seldom appeared without some degree of revision. For the

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hymnal jointly prepared by the Anglican Church of Canada and the United Church of Canada one of the hymnal committee members revised Warner's first stanza and wrote two new stanzas, the stronger of which appears here as stanza 2. This additional stanza has the virtue of being connected to an identifiable instance of how Jesus welcomed children (Matt. 19:13–15 // Mark 10:13–16 // Luke 18:15–17).

Although the assurance of Christ's love is indeed appropriate for one of the first songs a child is likely to learn, the second line of the first stanza is somewhat problematic because it syntactically elevates the authority of the Bible over the experience of that love (which is why the Canadians revised "for" to "and"). The reiteration of biblical authority in the refrain is slightly less troubling because no causal connection is asserted, but its terminal placement gives it decided emphasis.

13 Listen to the Word That God Has Spoken/YISRAEL V'ORAITA

#455

Concepts: God speaks to us in the reading and hearing of Scripture. God has been speaking since creation and through the history of God's people. We are called to listen and learn. God will help us understand.

Scripture references: Deut. 5:1; Ps. 119:105

Suggestions for use:

- Consider using as a sung prayer for illumination.
- Consider using as a sung response to the reading of Scripture.

Hymn background (From *Glory to God—A Companion*, ed. Carl P. Daw Jr.):

Both this text and music seem to have been collected by John Bell during a visit to Canada. In addition to using them in this hymnal [*Church Hymnary*] (which he edited), he later included them in one of the Iona Community's collections, *We Walk His Way: Shorter Songs for Worship* (Chicago, 2008).

This text, like the music with it, is intended to be overlaid, as happens with the singing of a round. That is why all four clauses begin with "listen" (and why three of them begin "listen to the"). A text about listening, after all, should have something to listen for as well as something to listen to. In addition to these shared initial sounds, there is the more familiar element, rhyme. Here it occurs in alternate lines (*abcb*), and that delayed closure is another encouragement to keep listening.

The only alterations in the text are the substitutions of "that" for "which" in lines 1 and 3, both because they sing better and because this is understood to be better usage.

14 God Is So Good/Know That God Is Good

#658, 659

Concepts: God's loving care for us is to be both affirmed and celebrated. God's goodness is both personal and communal.

Scripture references: Ps. 100:5; Ps. 135:3

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Suggestions for use:

- Consider using as a sung response to the prayers of the people.
- Consider using as a sung benediction or as a response to the benediction.

Hymn background (From *Glory to God—A Companion*, ed. Carl P. Daw Jr.): (#658)

This chorus celebrating God’s providential care seems to have developed during the early 1970s. (A version with different stanzas was published in *Let’s Just Praise the Lord*, comp. Bill and Gloria Gaither [Nashville, 1974].) In earlier versions third-person male pronouns were often used for clauses other than the first one, and additional stanzas were frequently published or improvised.

Biblical precedents for these statements abound. The first stanza, for example, can be connected with Psalms: 34:8, 100:5, 135:3, 145:9, as well as Lamentations 3:25 and Nahum 1:7. The second stanza comes from 1 Peter 5:7. The love of God mentioned in the third stanza is perhaps best known from John 3:16, but it is also mentioned in Ephesians 2:4, 2 Thessalonians 2:16, and 1 John 4:10–11. Reprising the first stanza as the fourth provides a sense of fulfillment at any time, but it is especially useful as a signal of closure if additional stanzas have been improvised.

(#659): This brief anonymous text seems to have originated in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and its language should have been identified as Swahili rather than as Shona (an error in *CH4*, which was used as copy for *Glory to God*). This sort of affirmation is frequent in the Psalms (34:8; 73:1; 100:5; 135:3; 145:9) as well as in other parts of the Hebrew Scriptures (Jeremiah 33:11; Lamentations 3:25; Nahum 1:7).

The differences in languages result in an odd emphasis in the English translation here. Because Swahili requires five syllables to communicate what is said in English in three syllables, the added two syllables “know that” receive more prominence than they need.

15 May the God of Hope Go with Us

#765

Concepts: Our response to God’s transforming love is to work for the transformation of the world. God accompanies, inspires, and empowers us as we live out our discipleship.

Scripture reference: Rom. 15:13

Suggestions for use:

- Consider using as the final hymn/song in worship.
- Encourage singing in English, Spanish, or both. God hears and understands all languages!

Hymn background (From *Glory to God—A Companion*, ed. Carl P. Daw Jr.):

Because the Spanish and English texts originate with the same person, it is not possible to say which came first. It is noticeable, however, that the two versions differ from each other in tone. Even someone who does not read Spanish can see the exclamation marks around the first Spanish phrase, which translates as “God of hope, give us joy and peace!” The Spanish text is a direct prayer to God rather than the indirect expression of the English text, which seems to be more concerned with raising the spirits of the singers. Because these two orientations are complementary rather than contradictory, both

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languages need to be sung.

The text has many affinities with Romans 15:13.

16 Lord of All Hopefulness (verse 3: Kindliness)

#683

Concepts: God's love embraces us and welcomes us. God's love is grace experienced. At the end of the day, recalling God's grace and remembering God's embrace is a helpful spiritual exercise.

Scripture references: Ps. 4:8; Ps. 139:9–10; Luke 15:20–24

Suggestions for use:

- Consider using as a part of evening prayer services.
- Consider using in the Service for the Lord's Day as either a sung invitation or sung response to the prayer of confession.

Hymn background (From *Glory to God—A Companion*, ed. Carl P. Daw Jr.): See Track 4.

17 Spoken Table Blessing

Suggestion for use:

Consider using at congregational meals.

18 Taste and See

#520

Concepts: In the sacrament of Holy Communion, we experience (taste and see) God's goodness. Having experienced God's goodness (grace), we invite and encourage others to experience God.

Scripture references: Psalm 34.1-6, 8.

Suggestions for use:

- Consider using this song as an invitation to the Lord's Supper.
- Consider singing this song during the receiving of the sacrament. (Soloists or choir(s) singing the verses, congregation singing the refrain.)

Hymn background (From *Glory to God—A Companion*, ed. Carl P. Daw Jr.):

This adaptation of Psalm 34 was created in 1982 to honor the Rev. Paul Rehling, pastor of St. Agnes Catholic Church in Cincinnati, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his ordination. Originally self-published by the composer, it was soon taken over by GIA and has been used widely. In the present version the following changes have been made from the original: 1.2 "Praise" for "His praise"; 1.4 "God" for "He"; 2.2 "God's" for "His"; 2.3 "the Lord, who" for "the Lord and He"; 2.4 "I was set free" for "he set me free"; 3.3 "the Lord" for "God"; 3.4 "God" for "Him."

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The refrain comes from Psalm 34:8a, and the stanzas are loosely based on Psalm 34:1, 3–4, 8–9. There is no attempt here to create a memorable literary text; the emphasis is on simplicity, with some effort to approximate a psalm-like succession of parallels.

Even in this abbreviated form it is possible to discern here some of the characteristics of Psalm 34. As the first stanza (based on the opening verse) indicates, this psalm is usually classified as a song of thanksgiving. At the same time it exhibits several features of a Wisdom psalm: it is structured as an acrostic on the letters of the Hebrew alphabet (though one letter is absent); it invites the hearers' attention; it draws on the psalmist's experience; and it concludes with a summary statement on God's providential care.

In Christian use, this psalm has long had eucharistic associations, primarily because of the verse that is used here for a refrain. In its succinctness it articulates the importance of being receptive to God's gifts in order to comprehend God's goodness.

19 Spoken Verse: All God's Children/Be Still and Know That I Am God

Concepts: Quiet reflection/contemplation can lead to experiences of God. Stillness opens up space for us to trust (know) God.

Scripture references: 1 Kgs. 19:11–13; Ps. 46:10a

Suggestions for use:

Introduction:

- Consider using as a call to worship.
- Consider using as a prayer for illumination.
- Consider using as an introduction to singing *Be Still and Know That I Am God*.

Song:

- Consider singing as an invitation to prayer. (Very effectively sung in canon, as well.)
- Consider using as a sung prayer refrain alternating with spoken prayers/intercessions as well as periods of silent prayer.

Hymn background (From *Glory to God—A Companion*, ed. Carl P. Daw Jr.):

These eight monosyllables quoted from Psalm 46:10a are both challenging and inviting. They embody the simplicity and durability of a stone worn smooth by water, and they take the time, the patience, and the persistence of an endless stream to apprehend and live into. In the midst of our busyness they remind us of the deep, neglected, and inexhaustible truth we need to ground us and to nourish us.

20 PICARDY (tune only)

#347

Suggestion for use:

Consider using this tune (8.7.8.7.8.7) as an alternate to a more familiar tune to change the experience of singing a familiar text, especially in the season of Lent or during Holy Week.

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21 Lord of All Hopefulness (verse 4: Gentleness) #683

Concepts: In Christ we find true contentment, peace, and wholeness. As we end the day and prepare to sleep, we cover ourselves in the peace of Christ.

Scripture reference: Psalm 4:8

Suggestions for use:

- Consider using this verse in services of Evening Prayer or Prayer at the End of Day.
- Consider using this verse in evening Services for Healing and Wholeness.

Hymn background (From *Glory to God—A Companion*, ed. Carl P. Daw Jr.): See Track 4.

22 Spoken Evening Prayer

Suggestions for use:

- Consider using at Evening Prayer services.
- Use at retreats and conferences and lock-ins as a bedtime prayer.

23 God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me #543

Concepts: Living as Christ's disciples means we have accompaniment on the journey. God, the Creator, is the power and strength upholding us. Christ is behind, before, above, and beneath us. The saints surround us. We are not alone.

Scripture references: Ps. 24:1; Ps. 139:5; Heb. 12:1

Suggestions for use:

- This song is well suited as the final song/hymn in worship.
- Consider using one or more verses as a sung benediction.
- Consider singing the last line of the song for a sung prayer refrain or as a sung recurring part of a call to worship litany.

Hymn background (From *Glory to God—A Companion*, ed. Carl P. Daw Jr.):

This text was written around 2003 when the author was in the midst of a theology and the arts degree at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. When it came time to decide on a thesis, he chose to create a new song cycle made up of original community songs built around the traditional order of worship. For the piece to be sung following Communion, he recalled the text of the St. Patrick's Breastplate prayer that he had encountered several years earlier. He was attracted to the imagery and

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inherent mysticism in the language and appreciated the earth-based Celtic sensibilities in the poetry.

Although he customarily uses a “we” voice in songs for a community, he was aware that the *lorica* tradition of St. Patrick’s Breastplate represents an individual’s prayer (see the discussion at no. 6 [in *Glory to God*). Even though the original prayer is solitary, he hoped that the elements of creation and tradition coming to immerse the singers like a great cloud of witnesses would move them from a sense of individuality to a communal awareness.

A careful comparison will reveal the many echoes here of the traditional St. Patrick text, giving the new text a sense of connection and continuity. The sparseness of the unrhymed language adds to the sense that this is the sung prayer of someone on the move, someone engaged and active.