

May 11, 2016

For immediate release

For further information call 651-698-8871

Macalester Plymouth United Church in Saint Paul, Minnesota, announces the twenty-first annual international contest for English language hymn writers. It is our understanding that hymns can motivate the church to be more actively involved in social reform, a vital part of its ministry. It carries a prize of \$500.00 for the winning entry. **Our 2016 contest will be a search for a hymn that welcomes individuals of all ages to share and connect as people of God at the communion table.** The uniting of Christians as individuals and groups with each other and with Jesus Christ is a foundational element of communion. For many, the experience of communion can inspire the sharing or exchanging of thoughts and feelings, especially when the exchange is on a mental or spiritual level. During communion, we remember what Jesus did to disrupt his life. By participating in communion we are given the opportunity to reflect and consider how we might disrupt our lives in both small and great ways. The 2016 winning hymn will embrace language singable for all ages, without deliberate oversimplification of intellectual content, and focus on the connection people may share at the communion table.

This contest is part of a continuing memorial to Macalester Plymouth church member A.A. "Al" Heckman, widely known as Minnesota's "Dean of Philanthropy." One of the first men in the nation to earn a graduate degree in social work, he went on to create many private and public partnerships to help the needy. He was a pioneer in the establishment of integrated social services at the city, county, and state levels, and served on the boards of many philanthropic foundations. His life was an inspiration to those seeking to integrate Christian faith with social action.

This is a search for new texts. We strongly encourage the use of familiar meters that may be sung to familiar tunes, but if you have an original tune for your text, it is certainly welcome. New music for the winning hymn may also be sought in the future. Hymns previously published or currently entered in other contests should not be submitted. It is certainly permissible, however, to have a local congregation or other group sample your hymn before submitting it.

Macalester Plymouth United Church, a member of both the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the United Church of Christ, is a liberal and inclusive church with a history of active involvement in contemporary social issues. We suggest avoiding archaic language (e.g. "Which were, and art, and evermore shall be") and non-inclusive language (e.g. "O brother man, fold to thy heart thy brother").

There is a \$5.00 administrative fee for each hymn submitted, and checks should be made payable to "Macalester Plymouth United Church" with "Hymn Contest" noted in the memo field. Entrants should provide four copies of each hymn with copyright information clearly printed on the document. Please provide a cover letter with your name, address, e-mail address, telephone number, and the title of your entry/entries. All entries will be acknowledged within two weeks of receipt.

All entries must be postmarked by December 31, 2016. The judges will arrive at their decision by March 15, 2017. Their decision is final. The winning hymn will be announced after the winners have been notified. Only one winning entry is anticipated, but the judges may decide to split the prize if submissions merit such action. The judges also reserve the right not to select any hymn as the winner. Each entrant will receive notification of the contest winner and a copy of the winning hymn.

Copyright for the winning hymn will be retained by the author, but the author agrees to permit the use of this hymn by Macalester Plymouth United Church in perpetuity. Churches of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area (Presbyterian Church, USA), and churches of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ shall be permitted to use the winning hymn(s) for one year (March of 2016 through February of 2017).

Please send entries and correspondence to:

Hymn Contest

Macalester Plymouth United Church

1658 Lincoln Avenue

Saint Paul, MN 55105

E-mail: office@macalester-plymouth.org

Website: www.macalester-plymouth.org