

**Calvin Institute of Christian Worship/Faith Alive**  
**Psalter**  
**“Wish List”**

The guidelines for the psalm collection are found at <http://www.crcna.org/pages/hymnal.cfm>. Please read them before submitting your material. All submissions can be sent via email to [hymnal@crcna.org](mailto:hymnal@crcna.org) or by post to the attention of:

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Some of you have inquired about what the specific psalm needs are for the psalter so we thought we would share with all of you the following wish list. Since we are hoping to include multiple settings of each psalm most of these wished for compositions are in addition to what we have already found and are eager to include.

\*Psalm 2\* Looking for a scripted text with multiple refrains that can be used for different seasons (e.g. Epiphany, Transfiguration, Easter, Justice, Sovereignty of God). For examples of existing scripted texts, see Hal Hopson’s work in *Psalms and Canticles for Singing* or Calvin Seerveld’s rendition in *Voicing the Psalms*. Think in terms of how Psalm 2 is quoted in the New Testament.

\*Psalm 7\* Looking for a setting in any form or genre. Particularly interested in a setting that traces the turns in the psalm.

\*Psalm 9/10\* Setting of these psalms as a unit which deals with the relationship of God as Sovereign with the plight of the vulnerable and the poor.

\*Psalm 14\* Perhaps a Romans 3 (see vv. 10, 23-24) pairing with Psalm 14. Perhaps Psalm 14:3 and 7 could provide refrain material.

\*Psalm 21\* Perhaps a new metrical versification. A setting could find inspiration from a Handel “Coronation anthem” with an eye toward an Easter context. Verses 8-12 could be conflated into a single stanza.

\*Psalm 35\* Looking for a setting of Psalm 35 that points to its liturgical use. Perhaps a new text of lament and/or confession for the ills of slander and gossip. Perhaps a sequence could be achieved:

- portion of the psalm [lament] with refrain
- composed prayer[s]

Options:

A (prayer for those slandered)  
Righteous God, we prayer for your servant(s) (N.) who endure(s) slander...

B (confession)  
Righteous God, we often are idle witnesses, and sometimes we conceive of and profit from deceitful words...

\*Psalm 57\* We are looking for a new tune (6.6.8.6) to carry this text by Michael Parry:

Be gracious to me, Lord  
and hold my spirit fast,  
that I may shelter by your side  
until the storm is past.

Though snares are set for me,  
yet I will sleep in peace,  
for I have asked the care of God  
whose love shall never cease.

My soul, awake and sing—  
such boundless love recall,  
exalt God's name above the skies,  
God's glory over all!

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\*Psalm 64\* Open to any fresh approach to this psalm in any genre.

\*Psalm 68\* We are interested in a new versification of verses 19-35 to the tune of Genevan 68, set in 4 stanzas, give or take. The meter of this majestic psalm melody is 887 887 D, but you would do well to compose text with both the melody and meter in mind. The concept that we are working with is beginning with a dramatic reading of Psalm 68:1-18 (or portions thereof), perhaps with an optional sung refrain appropriate for Easter or Ascension. (A possible refrain text, sung to the opening melody of Genevan 68:

Lift up your voices, shout and sing!  
Hail! The procession of your King:  
The Lord of hosts is risen!)

This spoken reading then breaks into song at verse 19 “Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up . . . .” The versification should be able to either follow the dramatic reading, or stand alone. Visualize the procession of all lands in the train of the God who arises in awesome power . . . . We think the Genevan melody captures this, but that a fresh metrical setting beginning at verse 19 may better convey this.

\*Psalm 77\* Here is another Genevan melody that we'd like to retain but we think it could be fused with more modern sounds. (To hear a Dutch group render this tune in a contemporary band idiom, see the video of Psalm Project at <http://www.bethel.nl/mediaspeler/2010/05/concert-the-psalm-project/>. The entire video may be of interest to you. You'll find the melody in question beginning at 13:33. On the video this is Psalm 86, but the melody is the same as Genevan 77.) Perhaps a fresh approach to the versification of this psalm might help this melody and psalm take root.

\*Psalm 85\* Perhaps a new metrical setting to the tune Une Jeune Pucelle (often appears in hymnals with the text: ‘Twas in the Moon of Wintertime’). Psalm 80 is set as a responsive reading with a sung refrain to Une Jeune Pucelle in the collection Sing! A New Creation. (#100) For the hymnal project we'd like to retain responsive reading/refrain the setting of Psalm 80, but perhaps set this beside a metrical setting of Psalm 85 making full use of the melody.

\*Psalm 87\* Create a “Eugene Peterson-esque” paraphrase of the psalm for scripted reading that can be framed by a musical refrain. The music should be in a distinctly global voice. Celebrate in this interpretation of Psalm 87 the naming of the nations—these are born in the city of God. Keep in mind possible liturgical uses, e.g. a Pentecost setting, or world-wide communion Sunday.

\*Psalm 106\* Greatest hits of idolatry! Looking for a setting that ‘contemporizes’ idolatry. E.g., one could go verse by verse from the historical to today. Take the cue from verse 6—we have sinned just as our ancestors have sinned.

\*Psalm 107\* Create a reading with a double [sung?] refrain.

A Then they cried out . . .

B Let us give thanks . . .

The reading weaves in and out of these two refrain.

\*Psalm 124\* Across the spectrum of Reformed churches there are many congregations which begin worship with the speaking of Psalm 124 verse 8: “Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.” This is the last verse in the psalm and often gets buried in our metrical settings. Consider the melody of Genevan 124 (#124 in the Psalter Hymnal, #236 in the Presbyterian Hymnal). Could we have a new metrical version of this psalm which places the ‘votum’ (“Our help . . .”) as stanza 1, a sort of preamble to the psalm? Perhaps just this stanza could be set in such a way that is responsive, leader singing a portion and congregation responding. Imagine a congregation that will use this single stanza on a regular basis for the beginning of worship. This preamble verse, perhaps set in italics on the page, could be followed by a metrical setting of the psalm as a whole. Think in terms of Isaac Watts’ setting of Psalm 98 “Joy to the World, the Lord is Come.” Watts pulls the heart of the psalm to the front. The setting does not follow the ‘order’ of the verses as they appear in the Psalm, but through reordering captures a true sense of the psalm.

\*Psalm 132\* What if this psalm appeared in the Advent or Christmas section of a hymnal opposite the carol “Once in Royal David’s City?” Consider versifying this psalm to the tune Irby (87 87 77) through the lens of the incarnation. “One of your descendents I will put on your throne.”

\*Psalm 146\* Isaac Watts’ setting of Psalm 146 appears in many denominational hymnals: “I’ll Praise My Maker While I’ve Breath.” (Presbyterian Hymnal #253) Is anyone else troubled by some of the potentially dualistic language that ensues? E.g., “and when my voice is lost in death, praise shall employ my nobler powers.” Would anyone be interested in a reworking of Watts? Or a completely fresh approach to Psalm 146, perhaps keeping the opening line: “I’ll Praise My Maker”?

\*Psalm 150\* Genevan 150 is a fantastic tune that we’d like to include in our Psalter. (See Psalter Hymnal #150) We are open to a fresh versification to match this melody.

Martin Tel, editor  
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and John Witvliet