

Alto Christian Reformed Church Statement on Music and Worship

The music of the Church exists to serve the dialogue between God and His people. God has gifted the Church with music to strengthen our prayer to and praise of Him.

The music must therefore contain God's word to us and our response to Him. And since the Church worships corporately, as a Covenant Community, the emphasis must be on the communal rather than on the individual.

Each Lord's Day we join with the "holy catholic church" and the angels to worship God. We feel it is imperative that the music we use be music that resonates with the Covenant Community and is not in antithesis to their worship.

For that reason, Alto CRC has chosen to sing both psalms and hymns that have a proven track record. They have "withstood the test of time." We reject the cavalier attitude of some who have determined to discard the hymns of the past for a more "contemporary" approach to worship. This "out with the old and in with the new" attitude is shortsighted. It also shows disrespect for our Christian heritage.

Rather in Alto we will continue to appreciate the hymns passed down to us from our forefathers in the faith. Much of what we sing has been part of the history of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Surely, much of our tradition is indebted to the Psalmists. Recognizing the Psalms as God-given in the text of Scripture, we accordingly have maintained the Psalter Hymnal as an important resource for our worship.

Secondarily, we in Alto have come to appreciate the riches found in hymns from outside the Psalms. Therefore we have chosen Zondervan Corporation's, Praise, to supplement our Psalter Hymnal.

This does not preclude the Church from choosing hymns from outside of the two texts. However, any additional songs should be considered for "sing-ability" before being added to the worship experience. For the sake of order, it is also important for worship leaders to consider multi-generational factors. In other words, worship leaders must exercise great care when selecting new hymns so that they will not interfere with the Churches' *sense* of worship.

Following the worship, the Covenant Community as a whole can help us evaluate newly introduced hymns.

We also maintain that a hymn functions best in worship when the gathered congregation joins voices in singing the text. It is then that the Body of Christ is engaged in corporate prayer to and praise of God. Therefore, the congregation will be involved in the singing of most of our hymns, with only occasional opportunities for special music or performances. (Also, attempting to sing-along to a hymn performed by an individual or a group with peculiar renditions or nuances can frustrate worship, consequently careful oversight will accompany those circumstances.)

Alto CRC believes this approach to music and worship will enable us to bring greater glory to God. We are committed to respecting the "root" of the tree while simultaneously smelling the occasional new "blossoms."