

CMI Returns to NPM

CMI Returned to the Pacific Northwest in Summer 2025

For the first time since Covid, CMI held a workshop in Portland, OR on July 31 combined with Dr. Charlotte Kroeker's workshops on August 1 at the NPM-on-the Road event. Thanks to Greg Homza, Dr. Paul Klemme, and Kyla Rosenberger for leading exciting sessions on 7/31!

Photo: NPM attendee Christian Young chats with Dr. Kroeker



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Giving options at www.churchmusicinstitute.org/donate

2025 Congregational Song Course



Full Class for Summer 2025!

Twelve seminary- and clergy/musician scholars attended the 2025 “Congregational Song” course June 12-20. Faculty members Drs. James Abbington, Zebulon Highben, Don Horisberger, Don Saliers, and Lynn Trapp taught in their specialized areas of expertise, coordinated by Dr. Kroeker. Attendees spanned the U.S. from Washington to Virginia and included Fr. Felix Alabi from Nigeria. The ecumenical representation of attendees and faculty gave rich insights into the multiple streams that contribute to the denominational collections of song. A mix of clergy and musicians (including two trained in both music and theology) gave perspective to the two important roles needed for planning and implementing transcendent music in worship. Maddy Hall contributes excerpts from her book review as an example of the requirements for graduate credit. Congratulations to a superb class!

Excerpts *HOLY THINGS: A LITURGICAL THEOLOGY* by Gordon Lathrop, reviewed by Madeleine Hall, candidate for ordination as a Disciples of Christ Minister, in the 2025 graduate class.

When Christians gather to worship, they engage in two thousand years’ worth of sacred meaning found in ordinary things. The average church-goer may not be in regular, explicit conversation about the nature of Christian worship, but through their participation they contribute to this tradition of discovering meaning. *Holy Things* is a work of “secondary liturgical theology,” responding to and reflecting upon the primary objects and elements that make up Christian liturgy. *Holy Things* builds upon the work of Alexander Schmemmann (Introduction to Liturgical Theology) and Susanne K. Langer (Philosophy in a New Key). Lathrop positions *Holy Things* within the tradition of analyzing the Christian ordo by emphasizing the many juxtapositions present in Christian worship. Meaning and reflection arise from the primary element of juxtaposition itself. *Holy Things* brims with rich questions that empower communities to rediscover and reexamine the primary liturgical theology at work in their gatherings. Just as Robert Mann claims, “The theology of the Christian faith is told through hymns,” Lathrop demonstrates how a trove of Christian theology dwells within the ordo.

After [a] thorough introduction, *Holy Things* dives into the most basic elements of Christian worship as an invitation for the reader into the work of liturgical theology. This middle section examines physical things (bread, wine, font), intangible things (time and structure), and the ways in which communities access them.

Excerpt Continued on Page 4

Eulogy and Tribute to Hal Hopson

August 16, 2025, University Presbyterian Church, Austin, TX – Dr. Charlotte Kroeker

Martha, the Hopson family, and all gathered here today and online, whose hearts are grieving.

When driving from Enid to Oklahoma City University for a master's degree, I saw a reader-board in front of a bank in the small town of Okarche that said, "Success in life is doing what you really want to do and making a living doing it." Others may say, "Where your talents and the needs of the world cross, there lies your vocation." This is Hal.

Hal Hopson had a clear calling and made a living for his family fulfilling that calling. He is a model for Fred Pratt Green's text – "How clear is our vocation, Lord, when once we heed your call to live according to your word and daily learn, refreshed, restored, that you are Lord of all and will not let us fall." Hal set this text to REPTON in 1996. Hal's calling was the same as his life's professional work.

Hal was a lifelong learner, looking for inspiration from the best musicians, composers, text writers, clergy, and liturgists. Among the CMI Hopson archives are his files of hymn tunes, texts, programs, and compositions, all organized to reference when needed. Music from widely divergent sources informed his composition. Hal's love of Russian choral music can be heard in "Prayer of Thankful Praise" sung at the Shenandoah Christian Camp on a YouTube recording. Watch and be inspired!

Hal was a listener: to music, ideas, congregations. He addressed needs and seized opportunities to minister wherever he found them.

Hal could write melody, one of the hardest tasks for any composer. MERLE'S TUNE is an example. His music could have simple elegance without being simplistic.

Hal was a craftsman. He knew the techniques of writing music well.

Hal was a musician who thought theologically. He understood the importance of good texts and developed the ability to edit and write theologically, liturgically, and Biblically faithful words to accompany his music.

Hal continued his work throughout his life. As he and Martha were around other retirees, Hal chuckled about a task to write for a choir of 3 basses and 5 handbell ringers!

Hal smiled a lot. The pictures we have seen since his death reflect more than posing for a photo. He lived with joy.

Hal was a prolific composer. Jubilate Music Group states Hal published over 3,000 works that comprise almost every musical genre in church music. MorningStar Music says Hal published with more than 36 publishers. In the CMI library are 681 original choral pieces, 392 arranged choral works, and 365 texts, the latter often adapted from Scripture and fine poetry. The CMI organ library holds an additional 414 organ pieces.

Hal is in the stream of fine composers like J.S. Bach who wrote to the glory of God and in service to church. Hal revered and learned from many composers from centuries past. Perhaps none of these composers, however, functioned in a broader scope than or with the versatility of Hal Hopson.



CMI Meyerson Festival 2019
Dallas, TX

Allow me to remind you of the many genres of music Hal has left us:

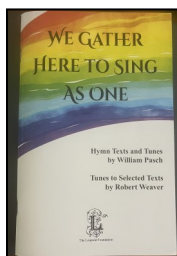
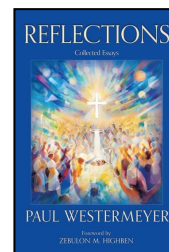
- Descants — Introits and benedictions — Acclamations — Canticles — Magnificat and Nunc Dimmitis
- Communion songs to be sung while processing — Many, many Psalm settings
- Edition of *Psalms & Canticles for Singing*, perhaps the best cross-denominational responsorial psalmody collection available
- Concertatos for congregational singing — Music for instruments, including piano
- *Creative Musician Series for congregations, handbells, choirs, organists, pianists, instrumentalists*
- Hymn festivals & Cantatas — 100+ Ways to Improve Congregational Singing
- Anthologies of hymn tunes and psalms — Accessible arrangements of multi-movement major works

All of these works, with thanks to Hal and Martha for their generosity, are available online and in hard copy at the Church Music Institute, a responsibility we hold sacrosanct, and a library we want to share.

Up until the week prior to death, Hal was arranging the Spanish text and melody: "When we are living, it is in Christ Jesus, and when we're dying, it is in the Lord. Both in our living and in our dying we belong to God." The faith, servanthood, and work of Hal Hopson is not only a gift from God but also a responsibility to those who have walked with him personally or through his publications. Now it is up to us to be stewards of this enormous gift. Thanks be to God for Hal Hopson.

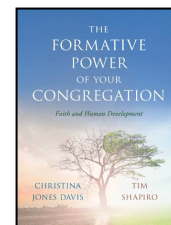
NEW PUBLICATIONS OF NOTE

Westermeyer, Paul. *Reflections: Collected Essays*, with Foreword by Zebulon Highben. Published by MorningStar Music in partnership with the Center for Church Music, Concordia University Chicago, 2024. A collection of short essays on the broad range of topics of church music. Written for congregations, clergy and musicians, topics are easily identified to inform anyone who cares about the music of worship. The wisdom of Westermeyer prevails through all.



Pasch, William and Weaver, Robert. *We Gather Here to Sing as One: Hymn Texts and Tunes by Pasch and Tunes to Selected Texts by Weaver*. Published by The Leupold Foundation, 2025. Forty-five new texts and three tunes by Pasch, musician and English professor, and seven new tunes by Weaver, a musician and math/computer science professor. Both members of this team are thoroughly steeped in the theology and music practice of worship. Indexed by topic, Scriptural source, meter, and tune, with notes on texts.

Davis, Christina Jones and Shapiro, Tim. *The Formative Power of Your Congregation: Faith and Human Development*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2024. Includes information about the power of music as a formative spiritual force and its effect on formation of communities of worship.



Excerpt from Page 2 Continued:

The third part of *Holy Things* is a resource for liturgical theology in action. Lathrop's collection of questions and reflections challenges the reader to imagine beyond their community's current liturgical practices and to consider how the things of Christian worship might cultivate a clearer sense of God's character. For Lathrop, the challenge of Christian liturgy is to preserve the mystery of faith despite the cultural forces that entice communities toward certainty. The claims of Christian liturgy are not ones of unmoving certainty, but rather of newness and mystery found in simplicity, juxtaposition, and tension. It is this mystery that speaks to the community as they worship, and its depths are waiting for those who would join Lathrop in the work of liturgical theology. *Holy Things* paves the way for that journey.

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Let's Connect!

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CMI is a proud partner of the American Choral Directors Association, the American Guild of Organists, the National Association of Pastoral Musicians, and the American Federation Pueri Cantores.



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