CHORUS AUSTIN

Saturday, October 21, 2023, 4:00 p.m.

Hear Our Prayer

Chorus Austin Symphonic Choir
& Chamber Ensemble
Ryan Heller, Conductor

St. Martin's Lutheran Church
Austin, Texas

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SING-IT YOURSELF MESSIAH

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FEB. 9-10, 2024

with the Austin Symphony Orchestra

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MAY 11, 2024

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WWW.CHORUSAUSTIN.ORG

FROM THE CONDUCTOR

Greetings friends,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to *Hear Our Prayer*, the opening concert of Chorus Austin's 59th season, and my 15th year with this wonderful organization. We are honored to have you with us as we journey together this evening. In crafting our time, I wanted to bring together the ensembles of Chorus Austin; you will be hearing from our Chamber Ensemble and Symphonic Choir, as well as sharing the power and beauty of their combined voices.

As you most likely know, this concert experience is centered on the theme of prayer. I was inspired to create such a program after having several conversations (sometimes heated) with a dear friend who was bothered by hearing "I'll pray for you," or "thoughts and prayers" after difficult events. When I finally said: "How can it be bad for you to be held up in love, light, and peace, even by someone with whom you might not agree?" some change began to take place.

As I continued to reflect on the idea of prayer on a more global level, it occurred to me that no matter the practice, religious or otherwise, many of the concepts and elements were the same: a quiet space, quiet mind, breathing, focused energy, mindfulness, gratitude, and love" all seem to be universal when in a time and place of prayer, zen, meditation...whatever name may be given. As Thich Nhat Hanh said:

"When love and compassion are present in us, and we send them outward, then that is truly prayer. In sending love outward, we may notice a change in our own heart. That prayer has already begun to have a result inside us."

Tonight is equal parts exploration, celebration, and indeed, a time of reflection, mediation, and prayer if you so choose. As part of our time together, I am thrilled to share with you the winning pieces of this year's Composer Competition. Ben Kaye-Skinner's *Sing Unto God* is a joyful reimagining of Psalm 108, and Aurélien Hallopeau's *Sub tuum praesidium* takes the oldest known prayer to the Virgin Mary and gives it a contemporary musical approach with evocative harmony and spiraling polyphony, suggesting the ascending of the prayer heavenwards.

I know that in these often turbulent times, when many forces seek to divide us, it is easy to think we are more different than we actually are. It is our hope that tonight will serve as an anchor, reminding us that we are truly more alike than not. Whatever faith system you may take part of, or none at all, the energy of prayer can indeed be shared. I am reminded of an interview with various faith leaders I heard several years back, after the terrible tragedy that took place at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL; they said, among other things, that prayer (in whatever name it is given): can be a powerful grounding force, a reminder to reflect on others and to acknowledge their suffering, to reflect on hard truths, and that prayer and action can feed off one another...indeed, it is only when we allow stillness that we may be shown how to best act, and that we are, each of us, answers to prayers.

I am honored to share this journey with you and thank you for joining us. I also wish to express my appreciation to each musician with whom I have the honor of co-creating. These generous souls truly make our world a better place, and it is my hope that you feel you have shared in their light, joy, and love.

May you know peace,
May you know love,
May you have sun and rain.

May you know happiness,
May you spread joy and loving kindness,
May you delight in your own divinity.

May you honor your light,
And with every breath,
Honor the power you hold
to change the world.

Shine Bright,

Ryan Heller

RYAN HELLER

Chorus Austin Artistic Director and Conductor

Described as exciting, dynamic and charismatic, Ryan Heller leads the award-winning Chorus Austin as conductor and artistic director, having joined Austin's vibrant classical music scene in 2009.

Mr. Heller and Chorus Austin were honored in 2013 as winner of the national Chorus America/ASCAP Alice Parker Award, given to recognize a chorus for programming recently composed music. The group also was twice a national finalist for the prestigious American Prize under Mr. Heller's guidance. In 2012, Chorus Austin was named one of the Top 10 Classical Musical Treasures by Robert Faires of the Austin Chronicle. KMFA Classical 89.5 radio placed Chorus Austin as one of the Top 10 Classical Highlights of 2016 for its performance of the newly commissioned work The Contemplations of Hafiz. And in April 2017 Chorus America and the American Composers Forum awarded Chorus Austin and composer Joshua Fishbein the Dale Warland Singers Commission Award.

In 2008, Ryan Heller was nominated for a Portland, OR, Music Award as "Outstanding Classical Musician." He has led ensembles across the United States with appearances at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center and Chicago's Symphony Hall. He has toured internationally in Italy, Germany, Estonia, Sweden and in China where he led combined choirs from Texas at the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing and at the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai. Most recently he guided Chorus Austin singers in a July 2016 concert tour through Scandinavia and the Baltic region.

He served as Co-founder, Conductor, and Artistic Director of the Portland Vocal Consort, one of Portland, Oregon's premier professional choirs, and spent a decade as the Conductor/ Artistic Director of the Southwest Washington Symphony. In 2001, he co-founded the Columbia Chorale of Oregon, which he led until 2010. From 2003-2018 he was the Director of the internationally acclaimed Pride of Portland Chorus; Today, in addition to leading Chorus Austin, he is the Director of the award winning Alamo Metro Chorus in San Antonio.

Mr. Heller has been music director of a wide variety of productions throughout the West Coast, including the world premiere of the opera The Canticle of the Black Madonna in Portland. Other productions include Brigadoon, Pirates of Penzance, H.M.S. Pinafore, Sweeney Todd, Annie, Company and Into the Woods. As an active performer, he has appeared and/or recorded with groups such as Austin's REVEL, Portland Opera, William Hall Master Chorale, Choral Cross-Ties, Portland Baroque Orchestra, Capella Romana, Lakewood Theater Company and the Broadway Rose Theater Company.

Ryan Heller is in frequent demand as a conductor, singer and coach. He has been hailed by critics and called "exciting, charismatic and intelligent – a young conductor to keep our eyes on." Mr. Heller is thrilled to mark his 15th season leading Chorus Austin as the group continues with its 59th season. For this artist, it is about making great music with an outstanding ensemble and sharing it with Austin and the Central Texas community.

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ABOUT CHORUS AUSTIN

Through its commitment to excellence, Chorus Austin creates passionate musical experiences that inspire community.

A rich tradition of great choral music and modern musical innovations mark Chorus Austin, a non-profit community-based organization under the guidance of Artistic Director and Conductor Ryan Heller. Chorus Austin hosts a full season of six or more concerts annually, including large-scale productions by its 180-voice Symphonic Chorus and more intimate concerts by its Chamber Ensemble.

This season, Chorus Austin celebrates 59 years of continuously providing the best in choral music to the Austin and Central Texas community. Founded as the Austin Civic Chorus as part of Austin's City Parks and Recreation Department, "for all Austin-area residents who like to sing," the group quickly incorporated as an independent organization. In 1999, the acclaimed Handel-Haydn Society joined with Austin Civic Chorus under the umbrella of Chorus Austin.

A distinct part of the Chorus Austin history is encouraging new music. The group has commissioned a variety of new works, including the award-winning The Unutterable by internationally respected composer Robert Kyr. During the 2015-2016 season, Chorus Austin premiered two commissioned works: On a Winter's Eve by West Coast composer Karen Thomas, and The Contemplations of Hafiz, a major, multi-movement composition for chorus, orchestra and soloists by acclaimed Austin composer Donald Grantham. In 2014, Chorus Austin initiated its Young Composers Competition, showcasing works by rising young artists, and in 2023 garnered the organization's first ever grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in support of the Tenth Anniversary of the concert sharing the work of these composers, Southwest Voices.

Over the decades, as one of the oldest continuously performing music organizations in the area, Chorus Austin has amassed awards, accolades and invitations, both nationally and on a local level. The group was honored in 2013 as winner of the national Chorus America/ASCAP Alice Parker Award for programming recently composed music. The group also was twice a national finalist for the prestigious American Prize. KMFA Classical 89.5 radio placed Chorus Austin as one of the Top 10 Classical Highlights of 2016 for its performance of the newly commissioned work The Contemplations of Hafiz. And in April 2017 Chorus America and the American Composers Forum awarded Chorus Austin and composer Joshua Fishbein the Dale Warland Singers Commission Award. Beyond the notes, Chorus Austin cares deeply for its community. Their commitment to equity and diversity was honored by the City of Austin this year by being awarded one of the city's first ever ELEVATE grants.

Conspirare Christmas

Mon, December 4, 2023 7:30pm
Long Center for the Performing Arts

Conspirare Christmas reinvents the traditional holiday concert with songs of hope, courage and love. Isaac Cates & Ordained, the dynamic Kansas City Gospel choir known for their unique blending of sacred and secular choral sounds with modern Gospel, return for an encore collaboration that will have you on your feet!

Tickets at conspirare.org

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CHORUS AUSTIN

Acknowledgements

Chorus Austin thanks the following individuals and organizations for helping make our performances possible by providing services, rehearsal spaces, and performance spaces.

David Utterback
Mr. Utterback is a member of the piano faculty of Southwestern University in Georgetown, TX. He is the rehearsal pianist for the Symphonic Chorus and Chamber Ensemble.

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7050 Village Center Drive, Austin TX
www.nwhillsumc.org

St. Martin's Evangelical Lutheran Church
606 W 15th Street, Austin TX
www.stmartins.org

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
8134 Mesa Drive, Austin TX
www.stmattsaustin.org

Chorus Austin
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Michael Follis, *Assistant Conductor*
David Utterback, *Pianist*
Gregory Eaton, *Organist*
Andrew Dobos, *Percussion*

HEAR OUR PRAYER

Program

Hear my prayer, O Lord	Henry Purcell
Lamnatseach binginot mizmor shir	Salamone Rossi
Oseh Shalom	Ben Steinberg
Blessed Be	Melanie DeMore
Sioux Prayer	Joan Szymko
Adinu	Sufi Melody Arr. Shireen Abu-Khader and André de Quadros
A Prayer *Runner up in Chorus Austin's 2023 Young Composer's Competition*	Riley Ferretti
Mantra	arr. Ethan Sperry
A Prayer	Ken Burton
Sub tuum praesidium *Winner, Chorus Austin's 2023 Young Composer's Competition*	Aurélien Hallopeau
Sing Unto God *Winner, Chorus Austin's 2023 Composer's Competition (Open Division)*	Ben Kaye-Skinner

-INTERMISSION-

Jai Bhavani	arr. Ethan Sperry
Caritas Habundat in Omnia *Honorable Mention in Chorus Austin's 2023 Composer's Competition (Open Division)*	Suzette Emberton
Geistliches Lied	Johannes Brahms
Coronation Kyrie *Michael Follis, Baritone*	Paul Mealor
Blagosloví, dushé moyá, Ghóspoda	M. Ippolitov-Ivanov
Verleih uns Frieden	Felix Mendelssohn
Down in the River to Pray	Traditional Arr. Mark Liversidge
Requiem	Eliza Gilkyson Arr. Craig Hella Johnson
A Unified Prayer	B.E. Boykin

SYMPHONIC CHORUS

SOPRANOS

Cassandra Beato
Donna K. Bostick
Elizabeth Bruton
Katy Chang
Stephanie Coffey
Jacqueline Coleman
Holly W. Collins
Emma deGraaf
Rebekah Dykhuis
Gretchen Ellison
Angela Fleming
Janet Forman
Courtney Foss
Grace Frazor
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Lauren Frank
Kristen Golby
Krystal "Winter" Green
Cynthia Hager
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Liz Hight
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Chorus Austin would like to thank our patrons who provided financial support during the 2022-2023 Season. Donors who gave between August 1, 2022 and July 31, 2023 will each receive the Thank You gifts listed below in our Circles of Support and will be acknowledged in our concert programs during the 2023-2024 Season. The Circles of Support and donor recognition gifts will continue through the 2023-2024 Season for new gifts. Supporters who give at the Orchestra level or above will receive invitations to special events including: our pre-season celebration, post-concert receptions, and more.

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2023 Young Composers Division Winner
Aurélien Hallopeau

Born in 1995, Aurélien Hallopeau is a French composer who currently mainly writes for choir, while keeping composing for other instruments. He also sings as a baritone in the chamber choir Ensemble vocal Évohé, directed by Fruzsina Szuromi.

Some of Aurélien Hallopeau's choral works have been awarded prizes and premiered during international composition competitions, such as Petit Bestiaire ("1st Prize" of Eufonia-Bordeaux's 2021 composition competition, France), and Gaudeat iuventus ("Best composition by a young composer" of the 2° Concurso de Composición Coral Cármina Nova, Spain). In January 2023, Analemme -a composition for choir, vibraphone and tubular bells setting scientific texts about the phenomenon of equinox- also received a prize during FestyVocal festival's composition competition, France.

Aurélien Hallopeau's compositions are as well regularly performed in Switzerland, such as in Geneva's Cathedral in April 2022, with Surge amica mea, et veni -a choral piece commissioned by Ensemble vocal Évohé- and in Geneva's Temple de la Madeleine in November 2022, with professional vocal ensemble L'Horizon Chimérique, conducted by Benoît Dubu. Other works were premiered in London, UK, as part of the London Festival of Contemporary Church Music, and of pianist Maria Marchant's 7 notes in 7 days at 7pm project.

Composer's notes for Sub tuum praesidium:

Using a variety of textures and tempi, Sub tuum praesidium, images the words of the oldest prayer to the Virgin Mary, resulting in a reflective and contemplative atmosphere. Several ascending scales are used to suggest that the prayer is rising to heaven.

2023 Open Composers Division Winner

Ben Kaye-Skinner

Ben Kaye-Skinner is a Nebraska-based composer, performer, and educator. Composing and improvising since age 7, Ben was able to flourish under many mentors who encouraged his creative work. He graduated with a degree in music education from Doane College and went on to teach for 14 years at Fillmore Central Public Schools in Geneva, Nebraska before stepping down to work on his MFA in Music Composition at Vermont College of Fine Arts.

His first work for wind ensemble was premiered in 2006 at age 19, and since then he has composed dozens of works for wind groups of all ages and instrumentations, as well as extensive custom arranging for high school bands and choirs for bands across Nebraska. Other credits include writing for and conducting the orchestra of the Colonel Mustard Amateur Attic Theatre and numerous instrumental performances, most often as a pianist.

The winning composition is a setting of Psalm 108, which was originally written while hand-washing dishes in January of 2009 and edited in 2022. A dishwasher was acquired in June of 2009 and since then his choral output has been far outpaced by instrumental works. Is it a coincidence? We may never know...

Composer's Notes for Sing Unto God:

I very clearly remember the evening I got the idea for this song: the first house I rented after college did not have a dishwasher (which is a terrible thing for a bachelor), so when I ran out of counter space I knew I had to do dishes. One January evening as I was washing dishes, a repetitive idea popped into my head and would not leave: "Sing unto God, unto Sing! Sing!"

After I finished up, I went into my office to start writing and got the idea down, then grabbed a bible to find some text to match so there would be more than three words in the song and found Psalm 108. After I found that scripture, the rest of the piece came very quickly and was finished the next night on January 23, 2009.

TEXTS + TRANSLATIONS

Hear my prayer, O Lord (Psalm 102)

Hear my prayer, O Lord,

And let my crying come unto Thee

Lamnatseach binginot mizmor shir (Psalm 67)

א לַמְנַצֵּחַ בִּנְגִינֹת, מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר.ב	1 For the Leader; with string-music. A Psalm, a Song.
ב אֱלֹהִים, יְחָנֵּנוּ וִיבָרְכֵנוּ; יָאֵר פָּנָיו סֶלָה. אִתָּנוּ	2 God be gracious unto us, and bless us; may He cause His face to shine toward us; Selah
ג, לָדַעַת בָּאָרֶץ דַּרְכֶּךָ; בְּכָל-גּוֹיִם יְשׁוּעָתֶךָ.	3 That Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy salvation among all nations.
ד יוֹדוּךָ עַמִּים אֱלֹהִים: יוֹדוּךָ, עַמִּים כֻּלָּם.	4 Let the peoples give thanks unto Thee, O God; let the peoples give thanks unto Thee, all of them.
ה יִשְׂמְחוּ וִירַנְּנוּ, לְאֻמִּים כִּי-תִשְׁפֹּט עַמִּים מִישֹׁר; וּלְאֻמִּים, בָּאָרֶץ תַּנְחֵם סֶלָה.	5 O let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for Thou wilt judge the peoples with equity, and lead the nations upon earth. Selah
ו יוֹדוּךָ עַמִּים אֱלֹהִים: יוֹדוּךָ, עַמִּים כֻּלָּם.	6 Let the peoples give thanks unto Thee, O God; let the peoples give thanks unto Thee, all of them.
ז אֶרֶץ, נָתְנָה יְבוּלָהּ; יְבָרְכֵנוּ, אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵינוּ.	7 The earth hath yielded her increase; may God, our own God, bless us.
ח יְבָרְכֵנוּ אֱלֹהִים; וְיִירְאוּ אוֹתוֹ, כָּל-אַפְסֵי-אָרֶץ.	8 May God bless us; and let all the ends of the earth fear Him.

Oseh Shalom

עושה שלום במרומיו
May the one who creates peace to on high,
הוא יעשה שלום עלינו
bring peace to us

ועל כל עם ישראל
and to all Israel.

ואמרו, אמרו אמן
And we say: Amen

Blessed Be!

Melanie DeMore

Blessed Be!
Blest, Be, Blessed Be the Living Tree.
Blessed Be the Tree of Life
that grows within you and me.
Steady and true,
Rooted in love.
Shelter and peace
Below and above.
Sing to the sky,
Rise from the earth.
Seasons come round again,
Death to rebirth
Blessed Be the Tree of Life
that grows within you and me.

Sioux Prayer

Traditional Lakota

Oh our Father the Sky, hear us and make us strong.

Oh our Mother the Earth, hear us and give us support.

Oh Spirit of the East, send us your wisdom.

Oh Spirit of the South, may we tread your path of life.

Oh Spirit of the West, may we always be ready for the long journey.

Oh Spirit of the North, purify us with your cleansing winds.

Adinu

Based on a poem by Ibn ʻArabī

Adinu bidinil hubbi
Anna tawaj-jahat raka'ibuh
fal hubbub dini wa imani.

I follow the religion of love
wherever love is found
for love is my religion and my faith.

Qudduus, qudduus, qudduus
anta alrabbul lllah
assama ʻul wal ard
mamlun'atani bi majdikal ath'i

Holy, holy, holy,
you are the Lord God.
Heaven and earth
are full of your great glory.

A Prayer

Sara Teasdale

Until I lose my soul and lie
Blind to the beauty of the earth,
Deaf though shouting wind goes by,
Dumb in a storm of mirth;

Until my heart is quenched at length
And I have left the land of men,
Oh, let me love with all my strength,
Careless if I am loved again.

Mantra

Buddham Sharanam Gachami,
Sangham Sharanam Gachami,
Dhamam Sharanam Gachami

I take shelter in the Bhuddah,
I take shelter in Monastery,
I take shelter in Righteousness.

A Prayer

Paul Laurence Dunbar

O Lord, the hard-won miles
Have worn my stumbling feet:
Oh, soothe me with thy smiles,
And make my life complete.

The thorns were thick and keen
Where'er I trembling trod;
The way was long between
My wounded feet and God.

Where healing waters flow
Do thou my footsteps lead.
My heart is aching so;
Thy gracious balm I need.

Sub tuum praesidium

Sub tuum praesídium confúgimus,
Sancta Dei génitrix.
Nostras deprecatiónes ne despícias
in necessitátibus,
sed a períclis cunctis
líbera nos semper,
Virgo gloriósa et benedícta.
Amen

Beneath your mercy, we take refuge,
O Holy Mother of God;
Do not despise our prayers
in time of trouble,
but deliver us always
from all dangers,
O Glorious and Blessed Virgin.
Amen

Sing Unto God

Ben Kaye-Skinner,
based on Psalm 108

Sing unto God unto sing
Sing unto God unto sing

Sing unto the Lord, our god,
whose glory lives in sweet
beautiful song!

Sing unto the Lord,
Unto the Lord who is the God
of song,
Sing him praises!

My heart is steadfast, O God;
I will sing and make music with
all my soul.

Awake!
Awake the harp and lyre!
I will praise you, O Lord among
the nations.

I will sing of You among the
peoples,
be exalted, O God, above the
heavens,
and let your glory be over all
the earth.

Praise to the Lord of all the
nations.
I will praise you, O Lord among
the nations.

I shout in triumph:
Sing unto God!

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Jai Bhavani

Sanskrit Prayer

Jai Durghe, jagidhambhey bhavani,	Long live Durga, all encompassing Goddess,
Sakal' emangal' harani dayaanni.	Destroy all bad events and please be merciful to all.

Caritas Habundat in Omnia

Hildegard von Bingen

Caritas habundat in omnia, de imis excellentissima super sidera, Atque amantissima in omnia, quia summo Regi osculum pacis dedit.	Love abounds in all things, From the depths to the highest stars, And most beloved of all, For to the highest King she gave the kiss of peace.

Geistliches Lied

Paul Fleming

Laß dich nur nichts nicht dauren Mit Trauern, Sei stille, Wie Gott es fügt, So sei vergnügt Mein Wille!	Let nothing ever grieve you, Be at peace; Whatever God ordains, Accept it gladly, my soul!
Was willst du heute sorgen Auf morgen? Der Eine steht allem für; Der gibt auch dir das Deine.	Why do you want to worry today About tomorrow? The one who commands all, Also gives to you that which is yours.
Sei nur in allem Handel Ohn Wandel, Steh feste; Was Gott beschleußt, Das ist und heißt das Beste. Amen.	In all you do Be not inconstant, stand firmly; Whatever God ordains is and signifies the best. Amen.

Coronation Kyrie

Arglwydd trugarha,
Crist, Trugarha,
Arglwydd trugarha.

Lord have mercy,
Christ have mercy,
Lord have mercy.

Blagosloví, dushé moyá, Ghóspoda

From the *Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*

Благослови, душе моя, Господа,
благословен еси, Господи.
Благослови, душе моя, Господа,
и вся внутренняя моя, Имя
Святое Его.
Благослови, душе моя, Господа,
и не забывай всех воздаяний
Его,
очищающаго вся беззакония
твоя,
исцеляющаго вся недуги твоя,
избавляющаго от истления
живот твой;
венчающаго тя милостию и
щедротами.

Bless the Lord, O my soul. Blessed art Thou, O Lord.
Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name.
Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits;

Who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies.

Verleih uns Frieden

Martin Luther

Verleih uns Frieden gnädiglich,
Herr Gott, zu unsern Zeiten.
Es ist doch ja kein andrer nicht,
der für uns könnte streiten,
denn du, unser Gott, alleine.

Mercifully grant us peace,
Lord God, in our times.
There is indeed no other
Who could fight for us
Than you, our God, alone.

Down in the River to Pray

As I went down in the river to pray,
studying about that good ol' way
and who shall wear the starry crown
good Lord, show me the way!

O sisters, let's go down
let's go down, come on down,
O sisters, let's go down,
down in the river to pray.

As I went down in the river to pray,
studying about that good ol' way
and who shall wear the robe and crown
good Lord, show me the way!

O brothers, let's go down
let's go down, come on down,
O brothers, let's go down,
down in the river to pray.

Requiem

Eliza Gilkyson

Mother Mary, full of grace, awaken
all our homes are gone, our loved ones taken
taken by the sea

mother Mary, calm our fears, have mercy
drowning in a sea of tears, have mercy
hear our mournful plea
our world has been shaken, we wander our homelands forsaken

in the dark night of the soul
bring some comfort to us all,
o mother Mary come and carry us in your embrace,
that our sorrows may be faced

Mary, fill the glass to overflowing
illuminate the path where we are going
have mercy on us all
in fun'ral fires burning each flame to your myst'ry returning

in the dark night of the soul
your shattered dreamers, make them whole,
o mother Mary find us where we've fallen out of grace,
lead us to a higher place

in the dark night of the soul
our broken hearts you can make whole,
o mother Mary come and carry us in your embrace,
let us see your gentle face, Mary

A Unified Prayer

B.E. Boykin

May Peace follow you, quiet your heart
May Hope follow you, be your light

May Love follow you, hold you in its hand
Until we meet again.
Amen.

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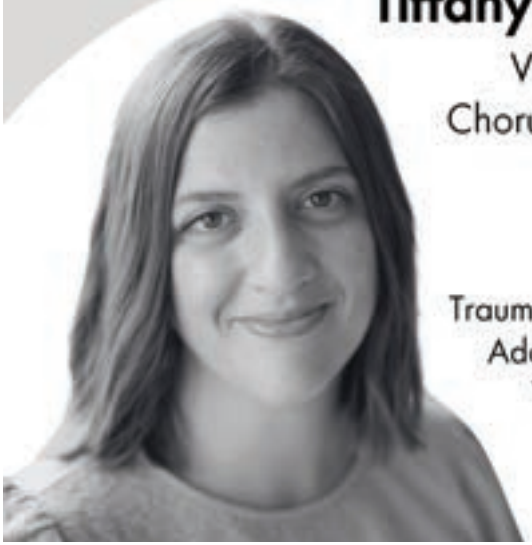

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