

Music Blurbs for 8-4-19

News and Notes

This week we will sing “God of grace and God of glory,” as well as “One bread, one body” (10:30). Lori Minasian and Cheryl Stafford will sing a beautiful early French Impressionist setting of the “Ave verum” text by Gabriel Faure.

Sunday Bulletins

The text of today’s closing hymn “God of grace and God of glory” was written by Harry Emerson Fosdick, a preacher of international acclaim. He wrote the text during the summer of 1930 while at his summer home in Boothbay Harbor, Maine. It was sung that fall for the opening of Riverside Church in New York City. He had intended for the words to be sung to the tune *Regent Square* (“Angels from the realms of glory”). Perhaps as early as 1935 the Methodists coupled the words with the tune that we use today, *Cwm Rhondda*. The author was not particularly happy when that happened and wrote about “my hymn’s divorce from *Regent Square* and remarriage to *Cwm Rhondda*. The Methodists did it! And both here and abroad they are being followed.”

The tune, *Cwm Rhondda* is the Welsh name for the Rhondda Valley. It was composed in 1903 by John Hughes for a Baptist *Cymanfa Ganu* or Singing Festival. In Welsh it has been connected to many texts and in English to “Guide me, O thou great Jehovah.” For years its inclusion in hymnals was resisted so it appeared in pamphlets, but its popularity won the day and the hymn is now in most denominational hymnals. In fact it was so popular it was even used in the soundtrack to the 1941 Best Picture of the Year, *How Green Was My Valley*, which takes place in a Welsh coal mining valley.