

Music Blurbs for 8-25-19

News and Notes: This week Jeanne Lehning will provide our musical offering with two Appalachian hymns played on the mountain dulcimer. We will sing “Lord of the Dance,” “Just as I am,” and “Rejoice, ye pure in heart.”

Sunday bulletins

8:00 Service: *by Newton Lewis*

In the Victorian era, some of the most popular hymns were “invalid hymns” and many of those were written by Charlotte Elliott, author of the text of “Just as I am.” The Hymnal Companion says that “This deeply personal text is the statement of the very profound faith of its author, an invalid woman who lived a very secluded life.” The text originally appeared in her *Invalid’s Hymn Book* (Dublin 1836). Her hymnal was a great success and over the course of various editions she contributed 112 hymns. This hymn text has been in almost every English speaking hymnal since and been translated into many European languages. Her brother the Rev. V.H. Elliott said about this hymn, “In the course of a long ministry, I hope I have been permitted to see some fruit of my labors; but I feel far more has been done by a single hymn of my sister’s.” The text first appeared in an Episcopal publication in the Episcopal Church’s 1865 hymn collection *Additional Hymns*.

The tune was written by William Bradbury (1816-1878). While the tune first appeared in one of his collections in 1849, it first was paired with Charlotte Elliott’s text in Bradbury’s 1860 collection *Eclectic Tune Book*. The text and tune together have been a much-loved hymn for over 150 years. One of Bradbury’s other famous tunes was used for “Jesus loves me.”

10:30 Service: *by Jeanne Lehning*

Today’s music features two traditional American hymn tunes. BEACH SPRING is attributed to B. F. White, a singing school teacher in Atlanta. It first appeared in *The Sacred Harp*, a shape note songbook published in Philadelphia in 1844. Among the many texts that have been sung to it are two modern ones: “Lord Whose Love Through Humble Service” (1961), and “Wash, O God, Our Sons and Daughters” (1987).

The other tune is RESIGNATION, whose composer is unknown. Its provenance is traced to southern Appalachia, and its first publication was in the *Southern Harmony Hymnal* of 1835. Despite the somewhat depressing connotation of its name, the tune is beautiful, and we know it as “My shepherd will supply my need.” This adaptation of the beloved 23rd psalm was written by Isaac Watts, considered by many to be the father of English hymnody, and it was included in his collection from 1719.

The Appalachian or mountain dulcimer (not related to hammered dulcimer) as its name suggests, is also native to that region, and is regarded as one of the earliest American instruments. It is derived from a combination of the Greek “dulce” meaning sweet, and Latin “melos,” or song. Although the instrument’s origin is somewhat obscure, it was most likely an adaptation of a fretted zither brought to America by early German settlers. The structure probably was modified to accommodate the more rapid playing style of the fiddle, another prominent instrument in traditional music of that area.