



THE HYMN SOCIETY IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

Ken Nafziger honored as Fellow by The Hymn Society

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dallas, Texas. Ken Nafziger has been honored by The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada (THS) at its Annual Conference in Dallas, Texas, July 17, 2019 by being named a Fellow of The Hymn Society. This award, the highest honor given by the organization, was conferred because of Nafziger's work as a conductor, educator, hymnal editor, and practitioner of church music.

Born in Archbold, Ohio, Nafziger studied at Goshen College (BA) and the University of Oregon (DMA) and worked as a post-doctoral conducting student with Helmuth Rilling in Stuttgart, Germany. He is Professor Emeritus of Music at Eastern Mennonite University where he led the EMU Chamber Singers and taught courses in conducting, world music, worship and music, and interdisciplinary humanities studies. Nafziger is the artistic director and conductor of the Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival (since 1993, Harrisonburg, Virginia) and of Winchester Musica Viva (a chamber choir in Winchester, Virginia). He has made numerous trips to Cuba, where he was a guest orchestral and choral conductor, taught masterclasses and workshops, participated with musical colleagues on a number of joint projects, and led performance tours with Winchester Musica Viva, and twice the EMU Chamber Singers. Nafziger was awarded the 2015 Circle of Excellence in the Arts Award, "for outstanding accomplishments and sustained contributions in the arts, improving the cultural vitality of the Shenandoah Valley." The award was given by the Forbes Center for the Performing Arts, the Valley Arts Council, and the College of Visual and Performing Arts at James Madison University.

In addition to his teaching and conducting career, Nafziger has been active animating congregational singing and song leadership through workshops, writing, and hymn editing. He was music editor of *Hymnal: A Worship Book* (1992), editor of its accompaniment handbook and assistant to the editor its two supplements, *Sing the Journey* (2005) and *Sing the Story* (2007). These Mennonite collections are well-known for their accessibility and celebration of music from around the world. He co-authored *Singing, a Mennonite Voice* with Marlene Kropf (Herald Press, 2001). Equally at home on the concert stage and leading singing in community, Nafziger is known for his artistic excellence, his mentoring, and his kind attendance to emerging artists, church musicians, and scholars.

Speaking of his friend and colleague, hymnwriter Adam Tice said that his support for recent Mennonite hymnal projects "has meant the world to us." Benjamin Bergey, music editor of the upcoming Mennonite hymnal, says "Ken's contributions as an educator, editor, and scholar have been wide-reaching ecumenically, as well as transformational within the Mennonite Church. More than that, Ken's heart for congregational song has brought so many people closer to God, and he has been one of my most important and influential mentors."

Founded in 1922, The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada is an ecumenical organization of people who are passionate about hymns and congregational song. We recognize the importance of the people's song in worship and want to assure its vitality in the future. The Hymn Society community, open to all, is made up of scholars, church musicians, poets, composers, choir directors, choir members, clergy, worship planners, song leaders, music publishers, music educators, and people who love to sing. We believe that the holy act of singing together shapes faith, heals brokenness, transforms lives, and renews peace. Our mission, therefore, is to encourage, promote, and enliven congregational song.

For further information about The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada, contact J Michael McMahon, Executive Director, 5 Thomas Circle, NW, Washington, DC 20005, or call 800-THE-HYMN.

www.thehymnsociety.org.