



For Immediate Release
July 16, 2020

GRACIA MARIE GRINDAL HONORED AS FELLOW OF THE HYMN SOCIETY

Gracia Marie Grindal has been honored by The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada (THS) during its all-digital Annual Conference on July 16 by being named a Fellow of The Hymn Society (FHS). This award, the highest honor given by the organization, was conferred because of her work as hymnwriter, translator, teacher, and writer.

Born into a Norwegian American Lutheran family in Powers Lake, North Dakota, Grindal attended school in Oregon and studied at Augsburg College, Minneapolis (BA 1965), with summer jobs as an editorial assistant for Augsburg Fortress Press. At the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville she completed a Master of Fine Arts in poetry (1969); followed by an MA in theology and history at Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul (1983).

Her teaching career started at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, where she was professor of English, creative writing, and poet-in-residence (1968–84). Professor and students published their hymns in *Singing the Story* (1983). The texts reflected her primary focus on writing hymns from the Bible.

She subsequently taught pastoral theology, ministry, and communication, and in 1992 was appointed professor of rhetoric, at Luther Seminary (St. Paul, Minnesota, 1984–2013). She initiated a series of Reformation hymn festivals and “Singing the Faith,” services for Reformation Day based on Luther’s Catechism. She served on the hymn-text committee of the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship for the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978), on the language/theology sub-committee for the *United Methodist Hymnal* (1989), on the ecumenical committee of the American Lutheran Church and of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and on the Task Force for the Study of Ministry in the ELCA. Her hymns are included in hymnals in the United States, Canada, and around the world. She edited *Wellwoman*, a newsletter for the Lutheran Women’s Caucus, and *The Rose* magazine. She served on the Editorial Advisory Board for *The Hymn* (1987–1989), as well as writing the “Hymn Interpretation” column and other articles for this journal.

Her publications include poetry, *Pulpit Rock* (1976) and *Sketches Against the Dark* (1982), *A Revelry of Harvest: New and Selected Poems* (2002), *The Sword of Eden: Eve and Mary Speak* (2018); song translations, *Scandinavian Folk-songs* (1986); practical theology, *Speaking of God* (1986); a biography, with co-author John Jansen, of *Lina Sandell: The Story of Her Hymns* (2001); and *Preaching from Home: The Stories of Seven Lutheran Women Hymn Writers* (2011). Her hymnic publications include *Lessons in Hymnwriting; We are One in Christ; Hymns, Paraphrases, and Translations* (1996); *Hymns of Grace* (2002); a series of hymns on the Revised Common Lectionary published by Wayne Leupold Editions: *A Treasury of Faith: A B C*

Hymns on the Revised Common Lectionary (Gospel texts, 2006, 2008, 2009), *Old Testament Series A B C* (2012), *Epistle Series* (2015); *Hymns and Spiritual Songs from the North: Nordic Christians Sing their Faith* (2012); and *ReClaim: Lutheran Hymnal for Church and Home* (2013).

Grindal concluded her Hymn Society monograph on *Lessons in Hymnwriting*: “Happy writing, and God’s blessings on all of your efforts in the future! Maybe this could be an age of great renaissance of hymns as people turn again to the Word and find it to be richer than they had ever thought. Wouldn’t that be wonderful?”

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. 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.

This information is provided by J. Michael McMahon, Executive Director of The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada, 5 Thomas Circle, NW, 4th floor, Washington, DC 20005-4153. For more information, please contact Dr. McMahon at mike@thehymnsociety.org or 800-843-8966.