



For Immediate Release
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ANDREW DONALDSON HONORED AS FELLOW OF THE HYMN SOCIETY

Andrew James Donaldson has been honored by The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada during its all-digital Annual Conference on July 15 by being named a Fellow of The Hymn Society (FHS). This award, the highest honor given by the organization, was conferred because of his work as a composer, text writer, hymnal editor, translator, church musician, and enlivener of congregational song in local and global Christian communities; and for his service to The Hymn Society.

Andrew Donaldson is the third of seven children born to northern Ontario missionaries. He received a B.A. in French and English studies from Glendon College, York University (1974), and studied classical guitar at the Royal Conservatory of Music, where he received the Associate Diploma (ARCT) in classical guitar performance (1979). As a practicing church musician, Andrew's service is extensive, serving two Presbyterian congregations from 1982–2010 while teaching private guitar and music theory at Toronto-area universities. Knox College, University of Toronto, recognized him with the Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa* (2007), for contributions to congregational song.

Donaldson was on the committee that produced *The Book of Psalms* (1995) for the Presbyterian Church in Canada. He accepted co-editorship, with Donald Anderson, of the denomination's hymnal revision for *The Book of Praise* (1997). This hymnal was a watershed publication that honored the denomination's tradition while broadening the musical structures, theological themes, and compositional styles open to Canadian Presbyterians. Following a workshop on Caribbean, African, and South American music under the auspices of the World Council of Churches in 1988, he integrated global song into his congregational worship practice, aspects of his own compositions, workshops, and the Canadian Presbyterian hymnal. International repertoire was especially evident in the musical selections he prepared for "Hilariter," his ensemble of instrumentalists and singers who offered events within his congregation and other venues in Canada and the USA.

A variety of forms and styles characterizes Donaldson's work ranging from strophic hymns in standard meters to less common song structures with refrains. His songs combine prophetic concerns with liturgical sensibility. His love for folk styles is evident in his work as the transcriber and arranger of songs by Canadian Anglican Bishop Gordon Light from the Common Cup Company, including "She flies on" and "Draw the circle wide." Andrew's developing interest and proficiency in global Christian song led to his appointment as Consultant on

Worship and Spirituality for the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Geneva from 2011–2016. In this capacity, he prepared liturgies, selecting, translating, and arranging congregational song for daily prayer for the WCC Executive and Central Committees. He also organized prayers for large international gatherings, including the International Ecumenical Peace Convention (Kingston, Jamaica, 2011) and the Tenth Assembly of the WCC (Busan, South Korea, 2013). His service with the WCC culminated with editing *Hosanna! Ecumenical Songs for Justice and Peace* (2016), a collection of eighty-six songs, psalms, and prayers on the theme of the WCC's Tenth Assembly. His texts, tunes, and translations appear in several recent Canadian and USA hymnals and collections.

Andrew and his wife, Wendy, are regular participants in The Hymn Society Annual Conferences. He served as the Hymn Society President (2004–2006) and has led numerous sectionals and festivals. Known for his winsome spirit, one often finds him in a supportive servant role behind the scenes, graciously facilitating others' leadership. He particularly enjoys setting the texts of several Hymn Society members, including Richard Leach, Adam Tice, and John Thornburg, FHS. His favorite composition is "We will go out with joy," a co-composed song with his daughter, Hilary Donaldson.

Hymn Society colleague C. Michael Hawn, FHS, recalled first meeting Andrew Donaldson at the 1999 Annual Conference of The Hymn Society in Vancouver, when Donaldson volunteered to play guitar for hymn festivals during that week. Hawn remarked, "At the conclusion of the first festival, I realized that Andrew was much more than another guitar player. I found a new friend in Vancouver and a companion on the journey toward promoting ethnic and cultural diversity in congregational singing."

This information was prepared by C. Michael Hawn, FHS, and is provided for release 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.

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.