



Jacque Browning Jones Honored as Fellow by The Hymn Society

Jacque Browning Jones wanted to sing more hymns so she started a group at her parish, Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, New York. She organized group sings into themes with the church musician as accompanist. When he introduced the group to meter in hymns, Jacque decided to try to write something in a specific meter. Now, years later when she has a text in mind, she says there is one line that sets the meter and thus suggests an existing tune that she may choose. Jacque Jones is a published hymnwriter, a winner of multiple hymn searches, a commissioned author, a former Hymn Society treasurer and president, and, finally, one of the newest Fellows of The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada (THS).

Jones credits her fine arts degree in theater from The University of Texas at Austin with giving her the keen sense of rhythm and voice for her biblical storytelling preference in the hymns she writes. As a trained theatrical director and choreographer, she understands the shape and pace of poetic timing. In this social justice hymn, witness the power of giving the voice of a homeless stranger to the congregation:

Hear this from a homeless stranger,
nameless face in shadowed crowd,
makeshift bed and scant possessions,
nothing here to make me proud.
It's so easy to ignore me,
hasten steps and hurry by:
better not to glimpse my struggle,
better not to hear my sigh.

Songs Unchanged, Yet Ever-Changing: 50 Hymn Texts by Jacque B. Jones,
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A varied professional background in government, business, and technical writing has given Jones a unique perspective as a self-identified non-musician who has nevertheless collaborated with composers Ben Brody, Richard Clemmitt, Sandra T. Ford, and Marc Stockert. Those who have influenced her text writing are Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley, and THS hymnwriters John Core, Mary Louise Bringle, FHS, and Amanda Husberg. At GIA Publications, she has worked with Randy Sensmeier and Adam Tice and her hymns have appeared in both volumes of *Assembled for Song* (2011, 2018) and in *Worship*, 4th edition (2011). In addition to her own volume of hymn texts noted above there are two anthems with her texts, set to music by Richard Clemmitt and Mark Stockert. Her work is also represented in the Mennonite hymnal *Voices Together* (2020), the Presbyterian hymnal *Glory to God* (2013), the Congregational *Hymns for a Pilgrim People* (2007), and the Plymouth Church supplement to *Hymns of Truth and Light*.

Now, as an established hymnwriter, Jones is some-times asked to critique the work of others. Again, her background as a theatrical director has ingrained the difficult necessity of drawing out someone's own skill rather than suggesting a quick fix for a textual challenge.

More extensive information on Jones may be found in *The Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology* at <https://hymnology.hymnsam.co.uk>.

This information was prepared by Marilyn Haskel 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.