



Mark Miller was honored as Fellow of The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada during a dinner held on Wednesday, July 17, during the Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia.

Mark Miller is many things to many people. For choral directors, he is a classically trained musician and composer of popular anthems. For church musicians, he is a seemingly endless font of excellent and singable choral and congregational songs in styles that range from classical to gospel to contemporary praise and worship (and often

a daring blend of all!). For his students, he is an energetic and inspirational teacher. For choir members and lay people in the church, he is a tireless worship and workshop leader who has travelled the world enlivening congregational song. For those who have been marginalized, particularly (but not limited to) the LGBTQ+ community, he has been a tireless advocate for drawing an ever-widening circle of welcome through song and deed. For his friends and colleagues, as his frequent collaborator Lindy Thompson attests, he is “a beneficent force of nature—one that facilitates growth and healing and wholeness among all the people who encounter his music or his loving, welcoming presence.” Mark Miller is many things to many people.

Mark grew up in a family of Methodist ministers (father, grandfather, brother, and cousin!) and has been an active lay and worship leader in the United Methodist Church in multiple roles and contexts. He earned his Bachelor of Arts (Music) from Yale in 1989 and a Master of Music (Organ Performance) two years later from The Julliard School. He went on to hold music ministry positions at both Riverside Church (1999-2001) and Marble Collegiate Church (2002-07) in New York City. Since 1994, he has worked at Drew Theological School and is currently the Professor of Church Music, Director of Chapel, and Composer in Residence. He is also a Lecturer in Sacred Music at the Yale Institute of Sacred Music and Divinity School, a position he has held since 2006. If this weren't enough to keep him busy, Mark serves as the Music Minister at Christ Church in Summit, New Jersey and continues to travel extensively as a highly sought after clinician, worship leader, and preacher.

Mark's choral anthems have been published by a vast array of publishing houses—Abingdon, Hal Leonard, Choristers Guild, Hinshaw, and GIA—and sung by choirs around the world. To note just one prominent example, his choral and orchestral piece “Let Justice Roll” was performed at Carnegie Hall in 2019 as part of a Juneteenth celebration. In the particular field of congregational song, many of his songs and hymnic collaborations have been included in denominational hymnals and song collections including DRAW THE CIRCLE/“Draw the Circle Wide” (text: Gordon Light), WELCOME/“Let's Walk Together for a While” (text: Laurie Zelman), and BROKEN WALLS/“Christ Has Broken Down the Walls.” His 2022 collection, *Revolution of the Heart*, was published by GIA in 2022 and includes original songs and collaborations with textwriters including Lindy Thompson, Laurie Zelman, Adam Tice, Ruth Duck, Thomas Troeger, and John Thornburg.

As these few titles suggest, Mark's music shows his unwavering belief in the power of song to form community across difference and to play an essential role in creating a more just and inclusive society in the light of Christ's reign. Placing himself at the intersection of different communities, traditions, and musical styles, Mark is a bridgebuilder not simply for the sake of mutual understanding, but also deep personal and social transformation. As Mark's collaborator and fellow 2024 FHS honoree Adam Tice describes, “Mark bridges divides,

bringing both joy and holy discomfort. He's not afraid to invite people to sing together in ways that expand our dreams of what God's community can and should be. That can be scary for those entrenched in their own particular vision—but Mark composes, sings, and leads with such joy that joining in the song becomes practically inevitable. The Holy Spirit dwells in those spaces, and so does Mark.”

This same blend of tradition and style gives his work a unique fingerprint. As Lindy Thompson explains, “His compositions are as distinctive as he is and easily recognizable as coming from his creative spirit, and they can convey such joy and such sorrow and such outrage and such peace.” Further, the songs he writes are pastorally necessary, bringing before God the deepest the most pressing needs and desires, despairs and delights of contemporary society. “Mark Miller,” the Rev. Otis Moss III sums up, “composer, minister, professor, and musical griot, is carrying on the tradition of creating New World hymns for a nation hungry for songs that speak to the head, heart, and crisis of modern living.”

Mark has also been an active member of The Hymn Society, leading hymn festivals, morning prayer, and sectionals at several Annual Conferences with his trademark skill, passion, and boundless joy.

Mark has indeed been many things to many people, and we all are beneficiaries of these gifts so faithfully and exuberantly given. For all these many gifts offered for God's glory and neighbor's good, Mark Miller has been named a Fellow of the Hymn Society.

Submitted by David Bjorlin, Assistant Professor of Worship, North Park University