



Beverly Howard Honored as Fellow of The Hymn Society

Beverly Ann Howard was born in New Kensington, Pennsylvania, to parents who were active church members. Her mother played piano and sang hymns, so a young Beverly was introduced to her future career as a church musician, hymnologist, editor of a scholarly journal, member of a hymnal committee, and organist. Beverly received degrees from the University of Oklahoma (BM, 1973, MM, 1974) in organ performance, and from the University of North Texas (DMA, 1986) in organ performance, harpsichord, and music theory. For forty years she served as organist for two congregations in Riverside, California: First Christian Church (1977-88) and Calvary Presbyterian Church (1988-2017). Beverly worked as a professor at California Baptist University (1977-2017) and chaired the Division of Fine Arts (1990-96). The university recognized her in 2005 with the Trustees Distinguished Professor Award. She joined with trumpeter Larry Johansen to form *Ventus Musicus*, a duo dedicated to performing 20th-century literature for trumpet and organ. They performed concerts and workshops throughout the United States, premiering new works at conferences of the International Trumpet Guild.

As a university professor, Beverly's strong interest in pedagogy and writing came together in her passion for hymnology. This led to teaching courses in hymnology and music in worship. Numerous publications followed in scholarly journals, magazines, and books, such as *Hymns and Hymnody: Historical and Theological Introductions*; *The Changing World Religion Map*; *Presbyterians Today*; and *Call to Worship: Liturgy, Preaching, Music, and the Arts*. Beverly has also contributed entries to the *Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology*, and columns for the online *Baptist News Global*. She is a contributor to the third revised edition of *Sing with Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Hymnology*, published as *Sing with Understanding: An Introduction to the Theology of Christian Congregational Song* (2022).

Beverly participated as a committee member on two hymnals: *Celebrating Grace: Hymnal for Baptist Worship* (Macon, Georgia, 2010) and *Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal* (Louisville, Kentucky, 2013). To both committees she

brought her unique blend of scholarship and practical experience in local congregations. In support of the development of *Glory to God*, Beverly supplied articles for *Presbyterians Today* and *Leader Reader*. With Mary Louise Bringle, FHS, she co-authored a series of Advent and Lent studies for *The Thoughtful Christian*. In 2023 she contributed hymn selections for the Presbyterian Church (USA) journal *Call to Worship: Worship Aids for the Revised Common Lectionary: Advent 2023 through Reign of Christ 2024*.

The Hymn Society Conference in San Diego (1995) was Beverly's first time to attend one of our conferences in person, and, like most of us, she was immediately "hooked" and her service to the Society began soon thereafter. She was a member of the Editorial Advisory Board for our journal, *The Hymn*, from 1998-2001 and again in 2009. From 2001-2002 she wrote the Hymn Performance column, and was named Editor of *The Hymn*, serving two terms from 2003-2008. As Editor, she served as Ex-Officio member of the Executive Committee during those years. Beverly has also presented several sectionals at our annual conferences and served as organist for two conference festivals in Berkeley, California, and Redlands, California. She has contributed two feature articles in *The Hymn* (now *Journal of Congregational Song*), and is currently a contributing editor for book and media reviews.

Beverly names three projects which are her "absolute favorite, fulfilling accomplishments which supersede all others!!!"

- Editor of *The Hymn: A Journal of Congregational Song*
- Member of the Presbyterian Committee on Congregational Song which developed *Glory to God*
- Collaborating author on *Sing with Understanding: Introduction to Theology in Christian Congregational Song*

She commented further, "In addition to forming lasting relationships with incredible people, all three of these projects assisted my own growth in hymnology/theology and offered contributions to the church-at-large."

Beverly retired to Fort Worth, Texas, in 2017, where she remains active at First Presbyterian Church. That congregation recently ordained her a Ruling Elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA), seeing in her what those of us in The Hymn Society have seen, namely her leadership skills, her ability to work with others, and her quick scholarly mind. We celebrate Beverly's many gifts to our Society, and we look forward to continuing to benefit from her presence among us.

Submitted by David Eicher, FHS