

How to Make a Hymnal

The lifespan of a hymnal is about the same as that of a good roof—about 20 years. After two decades, both begin to show their age.

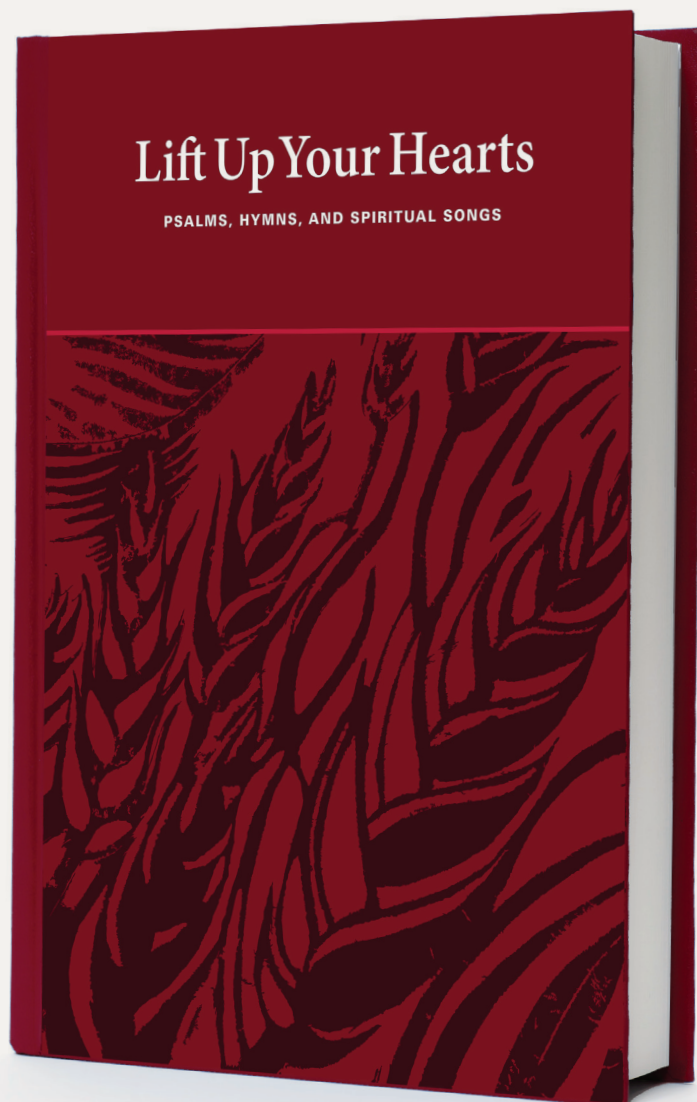
The gray *Psalter Hymnal*, published in 1987, is 25 years old. An entire generation of kids has grown up since it was released. In those 25 years, the world and the church—and especially the church’s music—have changed dramatically.

In 2013, Faith Alive will release a new hymnal called *Lift Up Your Hearts: Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs*. The introduction of a new hymnal is always somewhat historic, but this hymnal has an added dimension: it will be the first hymnal ever to serve both the Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Church in America (see sidebar). “Our hope is that churches from other denominations will also find that its breadth and depth of song choices will meet their worship needs,” says Joyce Berger, Faith Alive’s music and worship editor and head of the editorial committee for the new hymnal.

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Why a bi-denominational hymnal?

Following an agreement formed after the closing of the Reformed Church in America’s publishing ministry, Faith Alive became the resource provider for both the CRC and the RCA. Also, the synods of the CRC and RCA have encouraged their churches to find ways in which to work collaboratively. As denominational siblings, it makes sense for us to work together wherever possible.

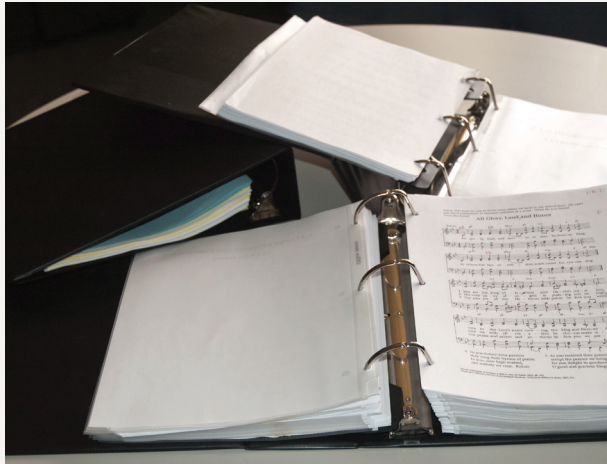
You add.
God multiplies.

are involved. There are questions of theology and musicality to be discussed. There's a balance to be found between old favorites and new songs, between Western tunes and songs of the global church.

The production of a hymnal takes about ten years from start to finish. Planning for the 2013 release of *Lift Up Your Hearts* (LUYH, or "Loo-yah," as it's affectionately pronounced), began in 2003 with some initial conversations and research, though the first official meetings of the editorial committee were not held until 2008.

An 80-member advisory committee from the CRC and the RCA provided a link between churches and Faith Alive. Their role was to communicate to the editorial committee which songs would best help their congregations worship God. They also provided feedback on many other questions, especially questions about word and tune choices. Though not a decision-making body, this group's opinions and perspectives influenced the editorial committee's decisions.

The 13-member editorial committee for LUYH includes five CRC representatives, five RCA representatives, and three staff members from Faith Alive. Their first task was to listen to the advisory committee and the churches. Based on the advisory committee's wisdom, the editorial committee chose the songs for the hymnal, decided which tunes would



Huge binders hold the songs under consideration for inclusion in *Lift Up Your Hearts*: the CRC and RCA's new hymnal.

accompany them, and organized them into helpful groupings.

LUYH's editorial committee began its work with a roster of 3,000 songs under consideration. They pared those down to about 800, based on theological and musical criteria, while keeping in mind a balance of genres and content and anticipating the pastoral needs of this and future generations.

After songs are chosen for a hymnal, they're edited, typeset, and copyedited. Permission is sought from copyright holders for the publisher to reproduce the music and lyrics. Graphic designers lay out each page. Proofreaders ferret out stray typos or other errors. Finally, the completed manuscript is sent to the printer.

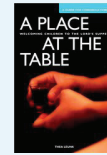
LUYH is scheduled to roll off the presses in the spring of 2013. Electronic versions of the hymnal will also be available at that time. ■

—Sandy Swartzentruber

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Thea Nyhoff Leunk

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M. Craig Barnes

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Cornelius Plantinga, Jr.

These thought-provoking devotional readings help teens and young adults live into the basics of the Christian faith expressed in the Reformed/Presbyterian tradition. A strong foundation for a small group study or a mentoring program.



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