

March 9, 2015

For immediate release

For further information call 651-698-8871

Macalester Plymouth United Church in Saint Paul, Minnesota, announces the twentieth annual international contest for English language hymn writers. It is our understanding that hymns can motivate the church to be more actively involved in social reform, a vital part of its ministry. It carries a prize of \$500.00 for the winning entry. **Our 2015 contest will be a search for a hymn that celebrates language of love, inclusiveness, commitment, and the love God has for the union of all people regardless of gender.** From the beginning of Genesis, human beings are described as having a need for relationship. This need for relationship is rooted in a deeper understanding of love and a need for commitment to a loving partner. Marriage has been compared to the relationship between Christ and the church, and while the language used is opposite-sex, the core principles apply just as well to same-sex couples. The winning hymn for this year's contest will acknowledge God's love for all and celebrate the ability for all people to be in a loving relationship no matter what gender they may be.

This contest is part of a continuing memorial to Macalester Plymouth church member A.A. "Al" Heckman, widely known as Minnesota's "Dean of Philanthropy." One of the first men in the nation to earn a graduate degree in social work, he went on to create many private and public partnerships to help the needy. He was a pioneer in the establishment of integrated social services at the city, county, and state levels, and served on the boards of many philanthropic foundations. His life was an inspiration to those seeking to integrate Christian faith with social action.

This is a search for new texts. We strongly encourage the use of familiar meters that may be sung to familiar tunes, but if you have an original tune for your text, it is certainly welcome. New music for the winning hymn may also be sought in the future. Hymns previously published or currently entered in other contests should not be submitted. It is certainly permissible, however, to have a local congregation or other group sample your hymn before submitting it.

Macalester Plymouth United Church, a member of both the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the United Church of Christ, is a liberal and inclusive church with a history of active involvement in contemporary social issues. We suggest avoiding archaic language (e.g. "Which were, and art, and evermore shall be") and non-inclusive language (e.g. "O brother man, fold to thy heart thy brother").

There is a \$5.00 administrative fee for each hymn submitted, and checks should be made payable to "Macalester Plymouth United Church" with "Hymn Contest" noted in the memo field. Entrants should provide one copy of each hymn with copyright information clearly printed on the document. Please provide a cover letter with your name, address, e-mail address, telephone number, and the title of your entry/entries. All entries will be acknowledged within two weeks of receipt.

All entries must be postmarked by December 31, 2015. The judges will arrive at their decision by February 15, 2016 and their decision is final. The winning hymn will be announced after the winners have been notified. Only one winning entry is anticipated, but the judges may decide to split the prize if submissions merit such action. The judges also reserve the right not to select any hymn as the winner. Each entrant will receive notification of the contest winner and a copy of the winning hymn.

Copyright for the winning hymn will be retained by the author, but the author agrees to permit the use of this hymn by Macalester Plymouth United Church in perpetuity. Churches of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area (Presbyterian Church, USA), and churches of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ shall be permitted to use the winning hymn(s) for one year (March of 2016 through February of 2017).

Please send entries and correspondence to:

**Hymn Contest**  
**Macalester Plymouth United Church**  
**1658 Lincoln Avenue**  
**Saint Paul, MN 55105**  
**E-mail: [office@macalester-plymouth.org](mailto:office@macalester-plymouth.org)**