

Musical Meditation for March 22

Fourth Sunday in Lent –

Bible Reading - Romans 5:8-10

Music Selection: "Hear the Good News of Salvation"

*(tune: NETTLETON, by Robert Robinson). Piano solo arrangement by Robert Wetzler
Original Dakota lyrics by John. B. Renville, translated by Emma Tibbets (Hymn #355):*

1. Hear the good news of salvation: Jesus died to show God's love.
Such great kindness! Such great mercy! Come to us from heaven above.

Refrain

Jesus Christ, how much I love you! Jesus Christ, You save from sin!
How I love you! Look upon me, Love me still and cleanse within.

2. All the sins I have committed To my Savior now I bring.
I bow down with tears of anguish; Christ forgives and so I sing:

Refrain

Thoughts (including some historical content from "A Thrilling Narrative of Indian Captivity: Dispatches from the Dakota War" by Mary Butler Renville)

Many of the hymns we use in our services have interesting histories, and this one is a good example - it has a strong Presbyterian heritage! The tune NETTLETON has been around quite a while as it was first published in 1759 in London as "Come Thou Font of Every Blessing". This is in our hymnbook with updated wording as #356. Planning for our now-cancelled 3/22 church service, Pastor Carl chose hymn #355 - same tune, but with alternative lyrics that reflect the content and message of the Bible reading and his sermon, which was entitled "The Fix". The lyrics in #355 were originally in the Dakota language and were written in 1879 by John B. Renville, who was of Dakota origin, and raised in that culture. His Dakota birth name was Koda Mitawa, which means "My Friend". His father Joseph was the son of a French trapper who had settled in the area, and his mother Tokanne was of the Little Crow line of the Mdewankanton Dakota band. John was baptized as Jean Baptiste Renville in the Presbyterian church founded by missionaries at Lac qui Parle, Minnesota. He married Mary Butler, who was apparently his English teacher at the mission, and he became the first ordained "Sioux" minister. He wrote the hymn lyrics as part of his and his wife's efforts to live with and serve his tribe and share the Good News. The couple endured much in the way of personal hardships and violence during the Dakota Conflict of 1862, they were part of the "Peace Party" that opposed the war. The book referenced above was from Mary Butler's journal of their experiences. It would make a good subject for a movie! The Dakota text of #355 was translated to English in 1955 by Emma Tibbets. Both English and Dakota lyrics are included in our hymnal.

For our prayers, we should consider thanks for the sacrifice of Jesus for our redemption, healing for those affected by the coronavirus around the world, appreciation and support for all who are working to minimize the impact of this, as well as addressing our personal concerns.