



What Does the Word Hymn Mean?

Why do we sing hymns?

So, what does “hymn” mean? Does it refer to a style of music, an era of music, or something else? Let's explore the history and definition of the word.

The word “hymn” has centuries-old European roots that mean generally a song of praise or “ode” to or about a hero or god.



It is not necessarily a religious or sacred word, but it is often used that way. Long before it found its way into the English language, though, the Greeks used it to mean a similar kind of musical “tithe” of praise for someone. This background and definition help us understand what the word means when we see it in Scripture. For example, in Matthew 26 we read that Jesus sang a hymn with his disciples after their Lord's Supper before going out into the Mount of Olives.

While we can only speculate what that song was, we can be certain that it was a praise song to God. We also read in Acts 16, Paul and Silas sang a hymn while in prison, which resulted in them getting miraculously busted out, meaning they were praising God even before he answered their prayers! Similar to the Hebrew psalms they had been singing for generations, Jesus, Paul, Silas, and later the First Church sang songs of praise, celebration, adulation, or *worship* to God.

Eventually, though, many people in the organized Church stopped singing these expressive hymns and focused more on the pre-written “psalms” from Scripture.

What Is the Significance of the Psalms?

Psalms were (and are) beautiful, meaningful, and important (we have a whole book of them in the Bible), but after many years of repeating them, theologians such as Charles Wesley and the non-denominational Isaac Watts began writing new hymns for the church again around the 1700s.

However, history tells us that these new hymns were not initially widely accepted, and Watts, Wesley, and others were not everyone's favored worship leaders at the time. Nevertheless, we today are so thankful for their boldness in writing new songs like “Old Rugged Cross” and “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today” as well as some beloved Christmas carols such as “Joy to the World” and “Hark the Herald Angels Sing.”

God's people in Christian churches eventually followed suit by writing and singing more new hymns across the world. The lyrics of these songs and poems were written down and categorized in songbooks that were understandably titled “hymnals.” Later on, sheet music with vocal melody lines was added to the hymnals, and then even more recently notes for piano and organ or vocal harmonies were added.



I'm not sure how publishers decided which songs to print in these new hymnals, but it is a good thing they were picky because Watts and Wesley wrote nearly 10,000 songs together (and that does not include countless other songwriters). Imagine carrying that book around!

At that point in Church music history, believers had an incredible wealth of songs to choose from in their sleek, hard-back hymnals that varied greatly depending on the publishing company, printing date, denomination, and colour of their cover (red, green, blue, tan, white, to name a few).

Also at this point, most people began to call every song in a hymnal or hymnbook a “hymn,” even if it was not actually a praise song to or about God

Then as if history was repeating itself, around the mid-1900s many churches began moving away from just singing common songs from their hymnals and they started adding newer, different “praise” or “worship” songs into their worship services.

This was due to many factors such as a renewed interest in scriptural psalms, the popularity of other musical genres (like Southern Gospel, Black Gospel, Christian Rock, etc.), the rise of vogue Christian music (thanks to touring musicians like Bill Gaither, Keith Green, and Elvis Presley).

The energetic music sung at revivals and crusades that fuelled church growth (like with Billy Graham and George Beverly Shea), and eventually the re-introduction of staff musicians and worship leaders that were regularly writing and finding new music for their congregations (similar to what Isaac Watts or even the Levitical priests did).



What Is the Purpose of Singing Hymns?

Today, the tapestry of church music is more diverse than ever in history as worship leaders and pastors get to choose from a database at their fingertips of almost limitless songs that span thousands of years. We have a variety of styles, feels, instrumentations, volume, focuses, wordage, and doctrinal leanings... sometimes all in the same service!

While this is wonderful for congregations with a diversity of sub-cultures and preferences, it has sometimes resulted in arguments and even walk-outs based on differences in opinion as well as (as already mentioned) a misunderstanding of the word “hymn.”

So may we not get shipwrecked on the sea of preference, but instead choose to sing songs with the singular, profoundly simple purpose that Paul gives us in Colossians 3 (and again in Ephesians 5).

Let’s sing scriptural Psalms, expressive hymns, and any other kind of “spiritual song” (as Paul calls them) with “thankfulness in our hearts to the Lord.”

Why? Because as the Psalmist tells us in Psalm 98: "for he has done marvellous things."

Read more at ->



Robert Hampshire is a pastor, teacher, writer, and leader. Robert attended North Greenville University in South Carolina for his undergraduate and Liberty University in Virginia for his Masters. He has served as a worship pastor, youth pastor, family pastor, church planter, and Pastor of Worship and Discipleship. He now serves at Calvary Baptist Church in Florence, South Carolina. His life goal is to serve God and His Church by reaching the lost with the gospel, making devoted disciples, equipping and empowering others to go further in their faith



Cheltenham, Mentone &
Black Rock congregations
now

Charman Uniting Church

313 Charman Road,
Cheltenham

You are cordially
invited to attend the

Grand Opening

of our newly Renovated Church buildings
Sunday, 20th September, 2026 at 2pm



The Cheltenham, Mentone and Black Rock congregations joyfully announce the Grand Opening of the newly renovated **Charman Uniting Church** buildings at 313 Charman Road, Cheltenham. We invite all members and friends of our Presbytery community to join us on **Sunday, 20 September 2026 at 2pm** as we celebrate this new chapter in our shared ministry and mission. It will be a wonderful opportunity to give thanks, reconnect, and look forward to the life that will grow in this renewed space.

Note: No 10am service on this day

Nothing new under the sun?

On October 9th 1956 "...more than
350 who attended a "loyalty dinner"
in the City Hall Mentone ...
heard in outline a plan to raise
£25,000 (\$50,00) to cope with the
growing needs of the Davies
Memorial Presbyterian Church"
(now our Mentone Uniting Church)

MORDIALLOC CITY NEWS Thursday, October 11, 1956

Section of the crowd of 350 Presbyterians, who attended the Loyalty Dinner at the City Hall, Mentone, on Tuesday night.

ANOTHER CHURCH EXPANSION SCHEME LAUNCHED

Mentone Presbyterians enthusiastic

More than 350 people who attended a "loyalty dinner" in the City Hall, Mentone, on Tuesday night, heard in outline, a plan to raise £25,000 to cope with the growing needs of the Davies Memorial Presbyterian Church.

Laymen of the Church, headed by the General Chairman of the planning group (Mr. Basil Heriot) described the expansion programme and received an enthusiastic reception.

The Minister, Rev. A. C. Karmouche, declared it was the greatest night of his whole ministry, and the greatest night in the history of the Davies Memorial church.

member of the congregation, outlined the history of the church, with which he had been associated since 1912.

"Mr. North Fitcher stressed the urgent need for more accommodation in the church and particularly for the Sunday School."

Present accommodation could no longer cope with the number of children. As an illustration he said that one class which met in the open completed its study in a parked motor car, when it rained.

Mr. Alex Narco, with the aid of diagrams projected on to a screen, explained the plan and layout of the proposed buildings in detail.

Church Committee Chairman (Mr. Stan Whittle), emphasising the importance of immediate action, said there was no desire either to seek charity or to pass to today's children a burden of debt.

"The aim was to lay the foundation of a greater church and assistance was needed immediately."

"If we had the help to do these things and larrikin about," said Mr. Whittle.

Mr. Ross Arjona said the plan being outlined was big, yet, then a building project. The re-building was only

THE NEW
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handy tube
NO DRIP!

FROM
PHARMACY
MORDIALLOC
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1916

exTWINIGHTER
the only blind that makes your room

BUT DARK!

Melbourne Bach Choir Presents

MELBOURNE
BACH
CHOIR

20
YEARS
ANNIVERSARY
SEASON
2026

Brahms

Ein Deutsches Requiem

Szymanowski

Stabat Mater

Conducted by
Rick Prakhoff
with
Zelman Symphony

Brahms
Nänie, Op 82
Conducted by
Jessica Zuk

Soloists
Helena Dix
Belinda Paterson
Warwick Fyfe

Melbourne Recital Centre
Friday 11 September 2026 at 8.00pm
Bookings: www.melbournerecital.com.au

Wanderer above the Sea of Fog[a] is a painting by German Romanticist artist Caspar David Friedrich in 1818.

SPONSOR



ZM
SO Zelman
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MELBOURNE
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Bible Readings September 2026 *(the readings used in our service may differ slightly)*

September 6th	Pentecost 15	Exodus 12:1-14	Psalm 149	Romans 13:8-14
September 13th	Pentecost 16	Exodus 14:19-31	Psalm 114 or Exodus 15:1b-11, 20-21	Romans 14:1-12
September 20th	Pentecost 17	Exodus 16:2-15	Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45	Philippians 1:21-30
		John 3:10-4:11	Psalm 145:1-8	
September 27th	Pentecost 18	Exodus 17:1-7	Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16	Philippians 2:1-13

Prayers of the People



Robyn
Pat
Adie & Ally
Katherine's cousin David & Family
Tina, friend of Joan Wood
Phillip (Barbara's nephew)
Barry
Adrian
Anne-Maree, Andrew and their daughter, Rachel
Maria

We pray for all in need especially -

Jenny and Janine Bartholomeusz
Anita and Kingsley
Joyce Curnow
Stuart - addiction struggles
Helen & Earle Hosking
Grace & Van Rensberg
Joan's friends Robyn & Jemma
Kath Tondorf
Susan Hoskin
Karen
Helen Cole

Gloria, Samson & Family
Mark
Margaret Walker
Joyce Carpenter
Andrew
Bronwyn
Teresa
June and Grace Fairbank

We give thanks for those whose prayers have been answered..

BayCISS Collection Contributions - change of delivery arrangements

Many thanks to those who continue to support BayCISS with donations. Goods especially non perishable food should be brought to the church where they will be distributed along with Family Life contributions

~ DINE OUT GROUP ~

Our next dine out will be on 15th Sept at 6:30pm at Cheltenham RSL.
Please let Joan LUM (0437 397 066) know if you are interested in coming.

ALL WELCOME



WEEKLY OFFERINGS: Thanks to everyone who have continued to make their weekly offering.

Direct Debit: Cheltenham / Mentone members note that direct payments can now be made to our Westpac account at Southland, **BSB number is 033 358, Account Number is 664 881** Payee "UCA Cheltenham Mentone Parish"

SOCIAL COLLECTION DEPARTMENT:

BayCISS - collection of goods by Graeme & Joan Wood has recommenced. Leave goods with them at 66 Bernard St. Cheltenham, or call them on 9555 0462

Emerge - Financial help is the best way to help - Cheques to - GPO Box 420 Melbourne VIC 3001 or donate via the website www.emergesupport.org.au
Emerge welcomes vouchers for supermarkets or art materials which children could use at home - materials, pencils, colouring books etc. Margaret Bode is happy to collect items if you leave them at her home, 16 Monaco Street Parkdale. **Donations in an envelope marked EMERGE may be left in the collection plate.**



OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL:



Click on the YouTube logo to view a selection of **over 200** sermons and service preludes

This week's video -

*"Deep Listening" Rev Greg Fry
30th August 2026*

Click on image or [HERE](#) to view



Church on the Internet - Sunday 10am *(virtual doors open 9:45 am)*



If you don't have Zoom on your computer/laptop/iPad/Smartphone, click on <https://zoom.us/support/download>

Then click on this link below or the "Sunday Church" image to join our Service

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82004410836?pwd=cU9RWlhVMm8wOUw0TStLV1EvNFdYdz09>

Meeting ID: 820 0441 0836 Passcode: 665 784

You can also join us on your phone by dialling **03 7018 2005** and entering the above meeting details.

**Sunday Church
on Zoom**



Animals have all the answers ...

