

# History of Musical Worship

Our goals:

- To grasp a basic understanding of the various ways the church has worshiped for the past 2000+ years, and how we got from the New Testament to today.
- To learn from the errors and mistakes of our predecessors, so that we might avoid the same errors and mistakes today.
- To have a better idea of why we sing the way we sing here at Parkway.

1. **Judeo-Christian (New Testament—70)**
2. **Catechistic (70—313)**
3. **Imperial and Monastic (313—590)**
4. **Roman Catholic (590—1517)**
5. **Reformation (1517—1730)**
6. **Revivalistic Hymnody (1730—1950's)**
7. **Contemporary Christian (1960's—1990's)**
8. **Neo-Revivalism and Neo-Catechistic (1990's—2021)**

1. **Judeo-Christian (New Testament—70)**



*Exodus 15:1 - Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord, saying,  
"I will sing to the Lord,  
for he has triumphed gloriously;  
the horse and his rider  
he has thrown into the sea.*

- Call and Response
- Repetition, repetition, repetition

*Acts 16:25-26 - About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken.*

## **2. Catechistic (70—313)**

*Since the monodic music of the liturgy was so closely wedded to words and inflections, music suited to the language of Jewish worship would seldom be suitable for translations. More or fewer syllables would be required for expression in the Greek tongue, points of stress would differ, as would the positions and nature of the inflections. If the liturgy was to be sung in Greek, then, it must be to [a style of music] that would accommodate the language.*

- Charles Etherington

*"Shepherd of Tender Youth"  
Attr. Clement of Alexandria*

*Shepherd of tender youth,  
guiding in love and truth  
through winding ways:  
Christ, our triumphant King,  
we come your name to sing;  
here we our children bring  
to shout your praise.*

*You are our holy Lord,  
the all-subduing Word,  
healer of strife:  
you did yourself abase,  
that from sin's deep disgrace*



*your might now save our race,  
and give us life.*

*You are the great High Priest,  
you have prepared the feast  
of heav'nly love:  
while in our mortal pain,  
none calls on you in vain;  
help you do not disdain,  
help from above.*

*Forever be our Guide,  
our Shepherd and our pride,  
our staff and song:  
Jesus, O Christ of God,  
by your enduring Word,  
lead us where you have trod;  
make our faith strong.*

*So now and till we die,  
sound we your praises high,  
and joyful sing:  
infants and the glad throng  
who to your church belong  
unite to swell the song  
to Christ our King.*

### **3. Imperial and Monastic (313—590)**

*“After Constantine’s conversion, Christian worship began to be influenced by imperial protocol. Incense, which was used as a sign of respect for the emperor, began appearing in Christian churches. Officiating ministers, who until then had worn everyday clothes, began dressing in more luxurious garments. Likewise a number of gestures indicating respect, which were normally made before the emperor, now became part of Christian worship. The custom was also introduced of beginning services with a processional. Choirs were developed, partly in order to give body to that procession. Eventually, the congregation came to have a less active role in worship...people were flocking into the church in such numbers that there was little time to prepare them for baptism, and even less to guide them in the Christian life...”*  
Justo L. Gonzalez

#### 4. Roman Catholic (590—1517)

- The music of the church is sung in Latin, so the congregation cannot sing it or understand it.
- The music is characterized by style over substance.
- The music was not about edification; instead it was about justification.





## 5. Reformation (1517—1730)

*It is also plain that the public [prayers and songs] are not to be couched in Greek among the Latins, nor in Latin among the French or English, (as hitherto has been every where practised,) but in the vulgar tongue, so that all present may understand them, since they ought to be used for the edification of the whole Church, which cannot be in the least degree benefited by a sound not understood. - John Calvin*

Metre	German	English	Psalm 136
8	Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott,	A mighty fortress is our God,	Give thanks to God, for he is good
7	ein' gute Wehr und waffen;	a bulwark never failing;	His love endures for-e-ver
8	er hilft uns frei aus aller Not,	our helper he, amid the flood	Give thanks to him, the God of Gods
7	die uns jetzt hat betroffen.	of mortal ills prevailing.	Great wonders come forth from him
6	Der alt' böse Feind,	For still our ancient foe	Tis he who made the skies
6	mit Ernst er's jetzt meint,	does seek to work us woe;	And laid the waters wide
6	groß Macht und viel List	his craft and power are great,	The sun, the stars, so bright
6	sein' grausam' Rüstung ist,	and armed with cruel hate,	His word, to give us light
7	auf Erd' ist nicht seinsgleichen.	on earth is not his equal.	Like him there is no o-ther

## 6. Revivalistic Hymnody (1730's—1950's)

- The Baroque Period
- Desire for more poetic Metrical Hymns
- The First Great Awakening

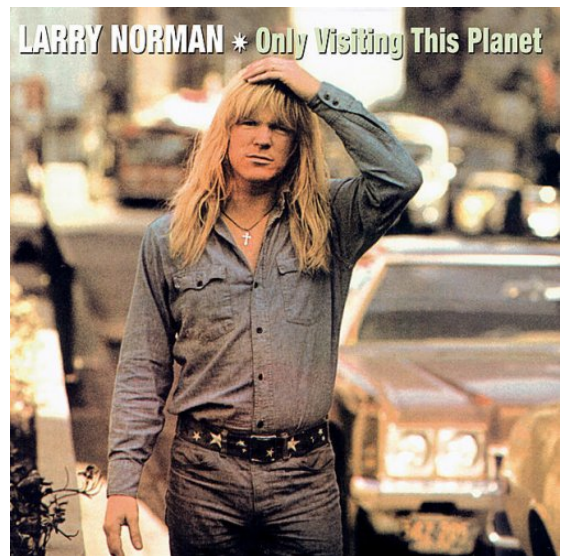
## 7. Contemporary Christian (1960's—1990's)

Good:

- Pushes back against legalism
- Plays songs that are communicable to today's culture

Bad:

- Divides churches
- Produces shallow, theologically deficient music



## 8. Neo-Revivalism & Neo-Catechistic (1990's—Present)

*We are a community of believers passionate about God's manifest presence.*

*We believe that God is good*

*+ our great privilege is to know*

*+ experience him. - Bethel Church*

