



THE HYMN SOCIETY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA and INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI

MARCH 9, 2017

The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada (HSUSC) and Community of Christ international headquarters are pleased to announce that Dr. Jan Kraybill of Stillwell, KS, has been named the next Executive Director of HSUSC. She will assume the position currently held by Rev. Dr. Deborah Carlton Loftis, FHS, who will be retiring May 1. Dr. Kraybill was selected after a final round of interviews held in Dallas, TX, and hosted by Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University. An active member of HSUSC since 1998 and a member of its Executive Committee from 2010-2013, Dr. Kraybill has participated in numerous conferences, hymn festivals, workshops and committees during her tenure.

Dr. Kraybill is a passionate advocate for the power of music to change lives for the better. She holds degrees in music from Kansas State University and the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Her early career included experience in pharmaceutical publishing and management before she became a full-time musician in 1996. In addition to her work with HSUSC, she has been active in leadership of the American Guild of Organists (AGO) on both the regional and national levels. An accomplished organist, she holds the certification of Fellow of the AGO, the highest level of certification available for organists.

For the past eighteen years, Dr. Kraybill has served as the principal organist for Community of Christ in Independence, MO. Community of Christ is pleased to announce that it will house the offices for HSUSC at its headquarters in Independence, MO. Dr. Kraybill will continue in a reduced and complementary role for the church.

Along with her responsibilities with HSUSC and Community of Christ, Dr. Kraybill will maintain her relationship with the Kaufman Center for the Performing Arts where she is currently the Organ Conservator. She will also continue her performances as a free-lance concert organist and hymn festival leader.

“Based on my experience with Jan over the years, I know that I can confidently pass the leadership of this organization into her responsible hands,” said Dr. Loftis. “She is an ideal person to lead The Society as it approaches its 100th anniversary.” The Hymn Society will be celebrating Dr.

Loftis' seven-year tenure as Executive Director during its summer 2017 conference in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.

"Jan Kraybill brings an extraordinary combination of passion, knowledge, creativity and artistry to this position," said Rev. Geoffrey Moore, current president of HSUSC. "We feel confident that Jan will provide the mix of gifts required to help The Society cast the kind of vision we need to lead us into our second century and bring a treasured tradition of singing together to new people."

Marilyn Haskel, president-elect of HSUSC added, "Jan is a gifted storyteller and a known bridge-builder who understands the power of congregational song. She is a perfect fit for this position."

Community of Christ has a long-standing relationship with HSUSC. Most recently, *Community of Christ Sings*, a new denominational hymnal, was launched at The Hymn Society's 2014 Conference in Columbus, Ohio. "We were blessed to have Jan on the hymnal steering team and are excited to support her move into this new responsibility," said Jane Gardner, presiding evangelist for Community of Christ.

In response to the invitation to serve as Executive Director of HSUSC, Jan Kraybill said, "I am thrilled and honored to have been chosen for this role. Singing together makes a positive difference in our world: songs can help create community, teach important concepts, promote unity of purpose, inspire action, and positively affect physical and mental wellbeing. The Hymn Society's mission and supportive network of members from diverse faith traditions have been personally important to me. I am excited to contribute to the next chapter of this vital organization's story."

Since 1922, The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada has lived out its mission to encourage, support, and enliven congregational singing. Members of HSUSC are guided by the belief that the holy act of singing together shapes faith, heals brokenness, transforms lives, and renews peace. Through its annual conference, publications, and special events, HSUSC serves those who create, study, and lead congregational song. As an outcome of its successful capital campaign, The Hymn Society will officially launch The Center for Congregational Song in Dallas, TX, October 15-16, 2017. This new endeavor will develop new resources and provide regional and local events to support those who lead congregational singing.

For additional information contact Deborah Carlton Loftis at

deb@thehymnsociety.org

Website: www.thehymnsociety.org

800-THE HYMN