

## Meditation

Tomorrow, in honor of Pride Sunday, our Zoom service will feature music by LGBT composers. The organ prelude is a mystical excerpt from composer Calvin Hampton's *Alexander Variations*. Player one repeats a serene chord progression in F# major, while player two's melody, in a seemingly unrelated key, evokes a kind of celestial birdsong. *The Alexander Variations* was the last piece composed by Hampton before death from AIDS in 1984. We will also sing Hampton's beloved hymn *There's a Wideness in God's Mercy* and soloist David Charles Tay will present a recently-published work by composer Sally Ann Morris: *God's Love is Boundless*.

To link Pride Sunday with the national conversation on racial justice of the past weeks, I am including (below) my husband Zachary Wadsworth's anthem *Earthquake*. The text was written by priest and poet Thomas Merton. Wadsworth writes: "In 1966, in response to the Christian non-violent movement for Civil Rights, Merton wrote *Eight Freedom Songs*. In the last of these, *Earthquake*, he reimagined Isaiah 52 as a call to action for the Christians of the world to use their "marching feet" to become "messengers of peace," and to build a world in which "All ... people / shall be one." This message of strength and obligation reverberates powerfully in the continuing civil rights struggles of our time. My anthem, *Earthquake*, starts darkly with Merton's invocations to "tell the thunder / To wake the sky," but erupts joyfully with images of the bright paradises of love and unity."

See the links below for Merton's complete poem as well as a recording of the premiere performance of *Earthquake* at the American Guild of Organists' National Convention in 2016.

With all best wishes,

Tim Pyper  
Director of Music

Thomas Merton: *Earthquake (complete poem)*

<https://www.theologyofwork.org/work-in-worship/hymns-psalms-poems/psalms-poems-for-a-service-on-work/modern-psalms-and-poems/earthquake-poem-by-thomas-merton-based-on-isaiah-52>

Zachary Wadsworth: *Earthquake (Houston Chamber Choir)*

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/10Eb69m-0TYltZJt9nws0ZHlrqdx\\_3gTq/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/10Eb69m-0TYltZJt9nws0ZHlrqdx_3gTq/view?usp=sharing)

Calvin Hampton: *The Alexander Variations (Variation VIII)*:

<https://youtu.be/IEpax3WaZYE>

Calvin Hampton: *There's a Wideness in God's Mercy*

<https://youtu.be/cFd9dQsHpCE>