

June Interview Continued

HDD: Who is the St John's Psalter primarily intended for? The choir?

TIM: Frankly, the St. John's Psalter was primarily intended for use by our own St. John's Cathedral Choir. As I mentioned, I never set out to make a "public" Psalter. My goal was strictly to produce a very practical, easy to use, easy to read Psalter for our choir to have all the Psalms in one place. That said, I'm hoping that the very values we were working with - clarity, ease of use, sturdiness, practicality, will also appeal to other choirs and congregations.

HDD: How might the St John's Cathedral Psalter be a real improvement for a parish choir? Would members of the congregation who read music benefit from having a copy? Would this Psalter be of use to a church organist/choir in a smaller church with modest music resources?

TIM: Many of the other Anglican Chant Psalters out there use Byzantine systems of organization related to the daily office and daily hours that make usage extremely difficult for the average choir. We simply arranged all of Psalms, complete from 1 to 150, in straightforward order. Anglican chant is really meant to be sung by trained, rehearsed choirs. While some intrepid choir directors may try to do some of it with an unrehearsed congregation, I'd be lying if I said I recommended that, and I've never seen such attempts really go well. But ANY size rehearsed choir could use it, if they had singers who were familiar with the style.

HDD: You use the Myles Coverdale translation of the Psalms (A.D. 1535) in the St John's Cathedral Psalter. It is still the most popular translation in the English-speaking world. Tell us why you chose this traditional translation for your psalter.

TIM: Yes, it's traditional for most of the large Anglican cathedral and collegiate choirs in England to use the Coverdale translations. We have hitched our wagon to that tradition, and for good reason. Coverdale's translations are, in my humble opinion, simply unsurpassed in the beauty of their poetry and imagery. His use of language is so elegant and evocative that other translations wilt in comparison. That is, again, just my personal opinion, but I'm certainly not alone in holding it.

HDD: What did you see as some of the primary challenges along the way of bringing this project to fruition?

CAROLE: Tim's regular responsibilities at the Cathedral at times had to take precedence over the Psalter. Also, we were constantly making changes to each of the psalms. About halfway through the project, Tim suggested that we use a common meter, which meant for me backing up and redoing the music typeset. That took time but so worth the outcome for the singers at the Cathedral and any other church that chooses to use this Psalter. Each psalm had about 4-6 rough drafts, before we agreed on the final draft.

HDD: I was impressed to learn of your association with Tim Ware from Riverside Presbyterian Church and of his help on the *St John's Cathedral Psalter*.

CAROLE: Tim Ware made many suggestions, as did his wife Bridget; glare free paper, rounded corners, ribbons to mark pages for the services rather than having dog-eared pages. Stretching the art from the front of the cover around so that the Psalter on a bookshelf looks just like any other book. The other art we included with the Psalter is the Rose Window on the inside front cover, and St. John's Shield is on the back. Once we received the few copyright permissions that we needed, Tim Ware was able to obtain our ISBN # for the Psalter.