

Notes from the Music Director (No. 1)

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Rochester, Pennsylvania

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July 19, 2015—8th Sunday after Pentecost



Sir Henry W. Baker

In today's readings, Jeremiah compares the Lord's people to a flock of sheep and the leader of the people to a shepherd. In addition, the Psalmist affirms, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want." In Mark's Gospel, Jesus is "recognized" by the people (perhaps like sheep recognize their shepherd) who "rushed about" bringing "the sick" "to wherever they heard he was."

Our hymns today reinforce the conception that the people of God depend on their Lord as a flock of sheep depends on their shepherd, especially the inspiring hymn with text by Sir Henry Williams Baker set to a beautiful Irish tune called "St. Columbia."

Sir Henry Baker (1821-1877) was born in London, the son of a Vice-Admiral in the British Navy, who served with distinction at Guadeloupe in 1815. Baker studied at Trinity College in Cambridge, received his B. A. degree and Holy Orders in 1844 and became Vicar of Monkland, Herefordshire, where he displayed a remarkable literary talent as a hymn writer. He served as editor for the hymnal, "Hymns Ancient and Modern," first published in 1861. He died at the age of 55, after writing 58 hymns, and was buried in the churchyard of the Monkland Parish.

Sir Baker wrote "The King of Love My Shepherd Is" in 1868. The text is based on Psalm 23. You can hear a lovely arrangement of this hymn by Sir Baker on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0cHWMltF9_8.

Sources

Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version (Zonderfan: 1989)
LBW: Lutheran Book of Worship (Augsburg Publishing House: 1978)
WOV: With One Voice (Augsburg Fortress: 1995)
W&P: Worship & Praise Songbook (Augsburg Fortress: 1999)
ELW: Evangelical Lutheran Worship (Augsburg Fortress: 2006)
Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org>
Hymnary.org: <http://www.hymnary.org>
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