Sharing the Road

Richard Bruxvoort · Colligan

The Psalm Project
SONGS for WORSHIP

Sheet Music, Songwriter's Notes, and Worship Suggestions

Sharing the Road

Richard Bruxvoort · Colligan

Augsburg Fortress
Minneapolis

THE PSALM PROJECT
Sharing the Road

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Introduction

The psalms are the songs of ancient Israel—the stories of our heritage. To know these songs is to root ourselves deeply in the rich soil of our faith tradition.

The psalms are also the prayers that Jesus prayed. To place these prayers into our mouths is to share breath with our beloved Rabbi, mentor, friend, and Savior.

I began The Psalm Project not long after I graduated from seminary in 2004. I missed my community of artists and theologians, and needed a fix. I decided to immerse myself in the psalms with this question: What would happen to me if I prayed the psalms with the global church in mind? What congregational songs might emerge?

Within the pages of the psalms we find ecstatic songs of praise and gratitude. On the next page, snapshots of raw terror. These are set among tender poems of deep sadness. Now, I'm an Anglo-American male. Speaking for my people, we often resist such passion integrated into our spiritual lives. I am so glad we have in our scriptures the testimony that these moments of vulnerability, rage, joy, loneliness—any and all of it—can be faith-full moments where God is present with us.

What you have in your hands is the by-product of my studies. The "Sharing the Road" songs are not verbatim Bible texts. They are organic interpretations for our worship. Some songs are paraphrases of the psalm texts for us to proclaim together. Some are honest prayers in response to the Scripture. Others are spin-off meditations I pray are true to the psalmist's heart.

May these songs inspire worship in your community, inviting experiences of radical honesty, passionate welcome, uncommon trust, and nurturing faith.

Richard Bruxvoort · Colligan

November 2007

7. God Is Our Shelter and Strength

Psalm 46:1-3, 6-7, 9-11

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present* help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear,
though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult . . .

The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.
The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.#

He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
"Be still and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth."
The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.#

* or *well-proved* # or *fortress*

Songbyte

Psalm 46:1 is sometimes translated "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Of the many rich metaphors necessary to describe and engage the Christ-life, God as shelter, hiding place, stronghold and haven emphasizes the unchanging aspects of God's nature. Martin Luther wrote "A Mighty Fortress" as he meditated on this psalm.

Synopsis

In several movements within the psalm, the people of God praise God's ever-present strength, proclaim God's triumph over violence, and sing of their fearlessness because of God's presence.

Songwriter's Notes

The psalm mentions earthly disasters, the acting governments, God's work of destroying war, and the promise that the Holy One is in our midst.

Let's talk about fear. Psalm 46:2 boldly prays this intention to trust God with life and safety. Two reasons are offered for this trust: God is as unchanging and strong as a fortress (46:1-6), and God will make wars cease (46:8-10).

Fear is an important emotion and a vital instinct of all creaturely beings on our planet. Here is an invitation to know God's presence amid—not necessarily opposed to—fearful, troubling circumstances. Julian of Norwich may be a voice for our time and place: "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and every manner of thing shall be well."

In what ways today can we confess "we will not fear" as we engage the realities of our world with Christ's claim on us? In an age of great fear across the globe, singing of our assurance of God's presence may be among the most faithful proclamations we can make for the world.

Place in Worship

Song of Praise
Hymn of the Day
Sending Song

Times of Use

Lectionary 9, Year A semicontinuous (May 29–June 4)
Reformation Sunday
Reformation Day (October 31)
Christ the King, Year C

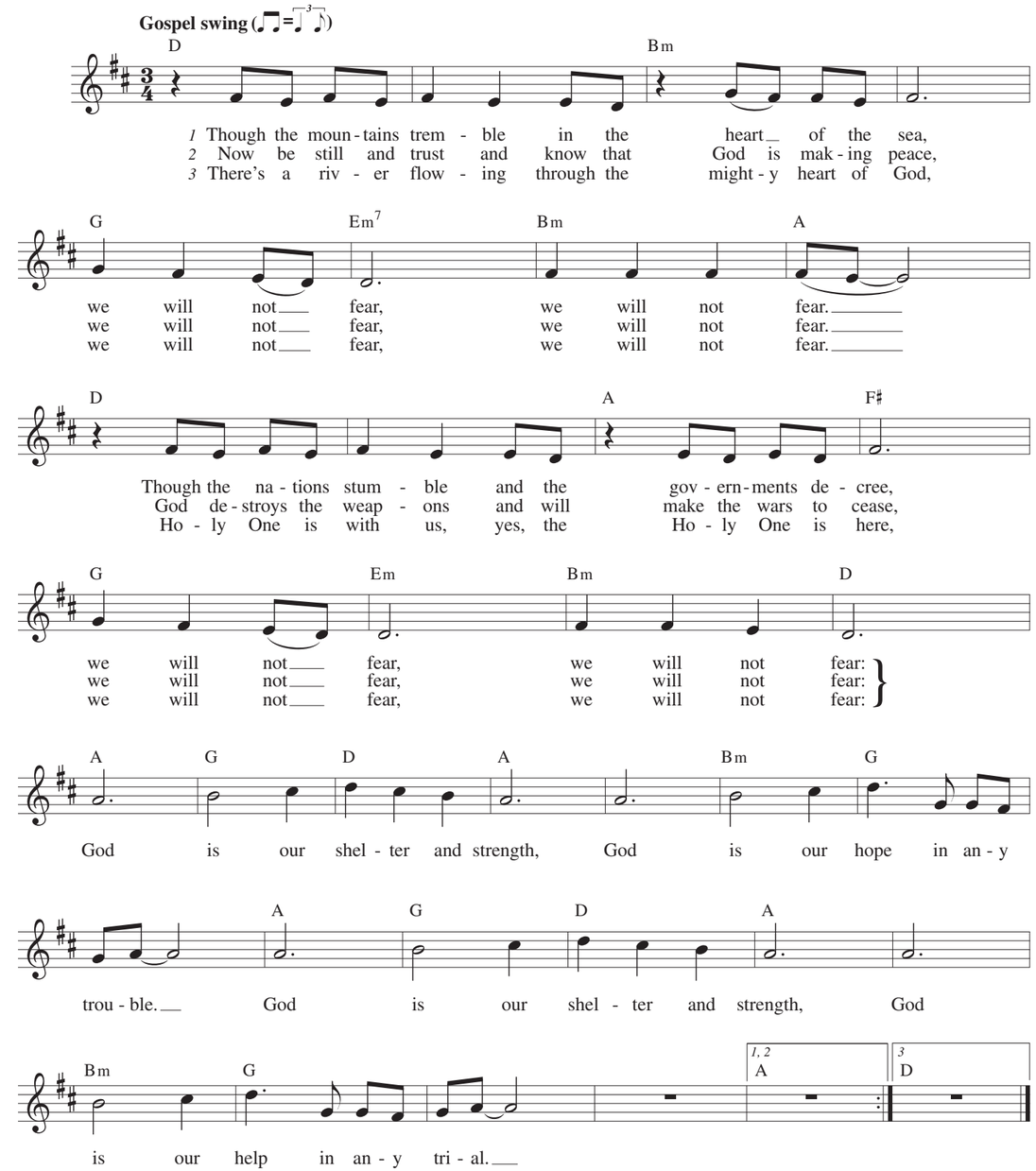
God Is Our Shelter and Strength

Psalm 46

INTRO

D Bm G B A

Richard Bruxvoort-Colligan



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God Is Our Shelter and Strength

Psalm 46

Gospel swing (♩♫ = ♩³♪)

Richard Bruxvoort-Colligan

D Bm G

1 Though the moun-tains trem-ble in the heart of the
2 Now be still and trust and know that God is mak-ing
3 There's a riv-er flow-ing through the might-y heart of

B A D Bm

sea, we will not fear, we will not fear.
peace, we will not fear, we will not fear.
God, we will not fear, we will not fear.

G Em7 Bm A

Though the na-tions stum-ble and the gov-ern-ments de-cree,
God de-stroys the weap-ons and will make the wars to cease,
Ho-ly One is with us, yes, the Ho-ly One is here,

D A F♯

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we will not fear, we will not fear:
we will not fear, we will not fear:
we will not fear, we will not fear:
God is our

G Em Bm D A G

shel-ter and strength, God is our hope in an-y trou-ble.

D A Bm G

God is our shel-ter and strength, God is our

A G D A Bm

help in an-y tri-al.

1, 2 3

G A D

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