

## **An Historical Overview of the Macalester Plymouth United Church Hymn Contest**

The Macalester Plymouth United Church Hymn Contest began in 1996 as part of a continuing memorial to A. A. (“Al”) Heckman, a church member who was widely known as Minnesota’s “Dean of Philanthropy.” He was one of the first men in the nation to earn a graduate degree in social work and went on to create many private and public partnerships to help the needy. He was a pioneer in the establishment of integrated social services at the city, county and state level, and served on the boards of many philanthropic foundations. His life was an inspiration to those seeking to integrate Christian faith and social action.

Pastor Roger Grussing and music director Curt Oliver conceived the contest as a way of continuing Mr. Heckman’s legacy by encouraging the writing of hymns which call the church and its people to greater awareness of social issues and concerns.

The first year’s contest focused simply and directly on calling the church to work for social justice. As the contest continued and participation grew, the topics requested of hymn writers became more specific, such as the care of children, the environment, gay/lesbian rights, religious toleration and peace-making.

From its inception the contest has carried an annual prize of \$500 for the winning hymn. Occasionally the prize may be divided among several equal winners, and the judges have also frequently awarded “Honorable Mentions.”

The church is grateful to all who have entered our contest and to all who choose to sing these hymns. The church does not hold the copyrights to the hymns, however, and permission for wider use must be obtained from the authors or copyright holders.

**Our 2011 contest will be a search for hymns that express dismay over the growing gap between rich and poor and call the church to action to work for greater economic equality**

## **HYMN WRITING CONTEST**

March 1, 2011

For immediate release

For more information, call (651) 698-8871

Macalester Plymouth United Church of St. Paul, Minnesota, announces a sixteenth international contest for English language hymn writers. It is our understanding that hymns can motivate the church to be more actively involved in social reform, a vital part of its ministry. It carries a prize of \$500 for the winning entry. **Our 2011 contest will be a search for hymns that express dismay over the growing gap between rich and poor and call the church to action to work for greater economic equality.**

This contest is part of a continuing memorial to Macalester Plymouth church member A. A. ("Al") Heckman, widely known as Minnesota's "Dean of Philanthropy." One of the first men in the nation to earn a graduate degree in social work, he went on to create many private and public partnerships to help the needy. He was a pioneer in the establishment of integrated social services at the city, county and state level, and served on the boards of many philanthropic foundations. His life was an inspiration to those seeking to integrate Christian faith with social action.

This is a search for new **texts**. We strongly encourage the use of familiar meters which may be sung to familiar tunes, but if you have an original tune for your text, it is certainly welcome. New music for the winning hymn may also be sought in the future. Hymns previously published or currently entered in other contests should not be submitted. It is certainly permissible, however, to have a local congregation or other group sample your hymn before submitting it.

Macalester Plymouth United Church, a member of both the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the United Church of Christ, is a liberal and inclusive church with a history of active involvement in contemporary social issues. We suggest avoiding archaic language (e.g. "Which wert, and art, and evermore shall be") and non-inclusive language (e.g. "O brother man, fold to thy heart thy brother").

There is an entry fee of \$3 for each hymn submitted, and checks should be made payable to "Macalester Plymouth United Church" with a memo entry for "Hymn Contest." Entrants should provide four copies of each hymn which should not include the entrant's name. Please provide a cover letter with your name, address, telephone number, and the title of your entry or entries. All entries will be acknowledged within two weeks of receipt.

All entries must be postmarked by December 31, 2011. The judges will arrive at their decision by February 15, 2012, and their decision is final. The winning hymn will be announced after the winners have been notified. Only one winning entry is anticipated, but the judges may decide to split the prize among several co-winners. The judges also reserve the right not to select any hymn as the winner. Each entrant will receive notification of the contest winner and a copy of the winning hymn.

Copyright for the winning hymn will be retained by the author, but the author agrees to permit the use of this hymn by Macalester Plymouth United Church in perpetuity. Churches of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area (Presbyterian Church/USA), and churches of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ shall be permitted to use the winning hymn(s) for one year (March of 2012 through February of 2013).

Please send entries and correspondence to -  
**Hymn Contest, Macalester Plymouth United Church, 1658 Lincoln Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55105**

**E-mail:** [office@macalester-plymouth.org](mailto:office@macalester-plymouth.org)