

Guidelines for Song Writing: One Category, Open to All

Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise . . . The gift of language combined with the gift of song was only given to man to let him know that he should praise God . . . by proclaiming [the Word of God] through music (Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, vol. 53, 323–24).

Goal

Our goal is to celebrate the heritage and continued relevance of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation in song. Participants—whether singly or in collaboration—are asked to write both an original musical setting (music) and a matching original metrical composition adapted for singing (words) that are connected with the themes of the church reformation. Songs that flow from the Word of God will make the devil flee, and as such all submissions in this art form will contribute to glorifying God.

Submission Guidelines

We hope that you will submit your song for performance at some local celebrations around October 31. It will be up to you to contact local organizers to offer your song. You might also be present at an event to answer questions. This deadline will be established locally, anytime between June and October 20, 2017.

A second submission deadline has been established for submission of songs to Celebrate1517@gmail.com. This date is December 15, 2017.

Each entry should be accompanied by a filled-out submission form, for which you will find multiple links on our webpages. The Celebrate 1517 Committee will code the submission to ensure complete anonymity when your song is passed on the adjudication committee.

- Submissions are to be submitted in pdf format. Engraved manuscripts are not required, but hand-notated manuscripts must be clean and legible. Illegible entries will not be considered.
- To preserve anonymity, the name of the composer (music) and author (words) should not be on the copies submitted for judging.
- Submitting an audio recording of a performance of your song is optional.
- Include a short reflection (maximum 200 words) describing the song and its intent, inserting this information in section 3 of the submission form.

- All submissions must be previously unpublished and should not be simultaneously submitted for consideration in any other contest or for publication.
- A maximum of two submissions per participant is allowed.

Permissions

Signatures by the songwriter, lyricist, composer (or legal guardian) are required on our submission form as applicable, giving permission for the song —should it be selected—to be included in a commemorative book to be published, Lord willing, in 2018.

Content (Topic Suggestions)

A song should be written based on ideas/topics/structures *such as but not limited to* the following

Word/Lyrical Content:

- Statements in any of the Reformed confessions of faith
- The “*Te Deum*,” or the Solas of the Reformation
- Martin Luther’s spiritual struggles that led him to re-discover the righteousness of Christ as revealed in Scripture
- Martin Luther’s thunderstorm conversion
- The assembly at Worms, Germany, when Luther was called to appear before the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V
- A Scripture text important to the Reformation, e.g. Rom 1:17, “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, ‘the righteous shall live by faith.’” See also John 4:24; Eph 2:8–9, 1 Cor 2:15, etc.
- Biblically-based statements made by the reformers
- Worship that is pleasing to the Lord, based on a Bible text. The Reformation significantly changed the way people worshipped (see John 4:23; 14:6).
- How the Reformation made a lasting impact on worship, art, culture, education, music, science, commerce, politics, and/or colonialism

Musical Content:

- The musical setting may be in either a traditional hymnic style or a contemporary musical idiom using a verse, chorus, and optional bridge structure
- The music must demonstrate an intentional choice of musical style

Song Writing Guidelines

- Submissions must be 100% original in both music and lyrics
- A lyricist and composer may work together for a joint submission; in fact, we encourage collaboration among those with such skills
- Songs must demonstrate creativity
- Lyrics in a language other than English should have an English translation
- Lyrics must fit well with the music
- Lyrics must be biblically sound
- Songs must be relevant to the Reformation
- Music must be appropriate for the text
- Melody should be singable, whether by congregation, soloist, and/or choir, as appropriate.