

# The Center for Congregational Song - Guiding Stances

As we begin our work, we do so with the following stances:

- The holy act of singing together shapes faith, heals brokenness, transforms lives, and renews peace – these characteristics can apply to both individuals as well as corporate bodies
- SHAPES FAITH
  - We celebrate the width and depth of variety in the church’s song throughout history, recognizing that each genre, like each culture or each person, brings unique gifts and challenges to the church
  - We celebrate the width and depth of instrumentation that is available to lead the church’s song, recognizing that how instruments are played and/or used can enhance or detract from the congregation’s song
  - There has never been a time in the church’s history when new songs were not being written
  - There has never been a time in the church’s history when new and old songs were not being critiqued and criticized
  - The church’s song has always been intentionally curated and inevitably winnowed and because of those processes, some songs endure and others do not
  - The church’s song has always included those that prove timeless as well as those that are useful only for a particular time and place
- HEALS BROKENNESS
  - Collaboration and teamwork honors each other’s different gifts and therefore makes everyone stronger by building up partnerships, strengthening relationships, and amplifying each other’s ministries
  - Because CCS exists in a Western and Anglo-dominated society, it is important to recognize that songs composed in Western Anglo-centric musicological idioms have no more or less intrinsic value for the church than contributions from other cultures and parts of the world
  - Para-church organizations, like the church itself, have long struggled with many justice issues including systemic racism and proper resource allocation – therefore, we must do our part to work towards justice and reconciliation throughout the human family, and song can and should be a force for change
- TRANSFORMS LIVES
  - The church’s song arises from the people and therefore exists wherever faith and life intersect
  - Transformation by God’s grace through our song can happen regardless of personal stylistic preference
  - We celebrate that the church’s song, like preaching and other art forms, can proclaim the Word
- RENEWS PEACE
  - At its best, singing together enables unity when perhaps spoken conversation is difficult or impossible.
  - At its best, our song reminds us and inspires us to be better versions of ourselves.
  - We seek conversation partners who have strong, thoughtful convictions, and who approach their work with humility and collegiality.

\*These stances only change when we are told a story or share an experience that persuades us to change them!