

Voices United: The Hymn and Worship Book of the United Church of Canada

Nancy E. Hardy

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Voices United: The Hymn and Worship Book of the United Church of Canada Nancy E. Hardy Voices United (VU), the Hymn and Worship book of the United Church of Canada, is a Christian music resource. Voices United was produced in conjunction with the Hymn and Worship Resource Committee, and was edited by John Ambrose. It was published in 1996. The main pew edition of Voices United includes full words and music to more than 700 hymns by Canadian and international writers, as well as responses, psalms, scripture songs, canticles, prayers, communion settings, service music, creeds, and John Wesley's "Directions for Singing." There is also a words-only edition, a music director's edition with annotations, and electronic versions. VU is the third hymnbook produced by the United Church, following the 1930 Hymnary and the 1972 Hymn Book (the latter created jointly with the Anglican Church in Canada). It includes hymns from the 1972 book, as well as some that were included in 1930 and dropped in 1972 but never abandoned by congregations. Many of the older hymns have been edited line by line and sometimes word by word, to make their language more comprehensible to modern worshippers and more applicable to the Canadian context, and to remove language that would suggest that God is male or that all of humanity is male. The expression "Lord", for example, is rare in VU hymns, although it can be found, and there are also hymns that envision God in female terms. Only a few long-established hymns, those that have been in use since the 19th century, retain the archaic "thou" and "thee" and "hast" of traditional hymnody. The hymnal does not acknowledge or otherwise annotate edits to the original versions.



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