

marty haugen holden evening prayer

Marty Haugen Holden Evening Prayer is a beloved liturgical resource widely used in Christian worship, particularly within the Lutheran tradition. This evening service, composed by Marty Haugen, is celebrated for its accessibility, beauty, and adaptability. Holden Evening Prayer invites congregations into a reflective space that honors the transition from day to night, enabling worshipers to pause and engage in prayer, song, and community. The service is structured to foster a deep sense of connection with God and one another, making it an ideal choice for a variety of worship settings, from traditional to contemporary.

Background of Marty Haugen

Marty Haugen is a prominent figure in contemporary liturgical music, known for his contributions to worship through composition, arrangement, and education. Born in 1950 in Minnesota, Haugen began his musical journey early in life, influenced by his family's strong faith and musical background. His works are characterized by their theological depth and musical accessibility, making them favorites among congregations of various denominations.

Haugen's most significant contributions to worship music include not only the Holden Evening Prayer but also a wide range of hymns, psalm settings, and liturgical pieces. He has served as a teacher, workshop leader, and composer, traveling extensively to share his insights and music with churches around the world.

The Creation of Holden Evening Prayer

Holden Evening Prayer was developed in the early 1980s while Haugen was serving as a musician at Holden Village, a retreat center in Washington State. The setting itself—nestled in the Cascade Mountains—provided an inspiring backdrop for worship and reflection. Haugen sought to create a service that would be both meaningful and easy to use, allowing participants to engage in the worship experience fully.

The service was first introduced in 1986 and quickly gained popularity, becoming a staple in many Lutheran congregations and beyond. Its simple yet profound structure has made it suitable for various worship contexts, from midweek services to special events.

Structure of Holden Evening Prayer

The service is designed to be participatory and inclusive, encouraging congregational involvement throughout. The structure of Holden Evening Prayer typically includes the following key components:

1. Gathering

- The service begins with a gathering song, inviting worshipers to come together in a spirit of unity and anticipation.
- The opening dialogue sets the tone for the evening, providing a moment of reflection and preparation for worship.

2. Evening Prayer

- The core of the service consists of prayers and responses that guide the congregation in offering their concerns and gratitude to God.
- A significant feature of this section is the use of the "light" imagery, symbolizing the presence of Christ in the midst of darkness.

3. Psalmody

- The congregation engages in singing psalms, providing a rich scriptural basis for prayer and reflection.
- The psalm settings are often simple and repetitive, allowing all worshipers to participate easily.

4. Canticles

- Musical elements, such as hymns and canticles, enhance the worship experience, allowing for moments of praise and adoration.
- Haugen's compositions often incorporate traditional and contemporary melodies, making the music accessible to a wide range of abilities.

5. Intercessions

- The service includes a time for intercessory prayer, where participants can lift up the needs of the community, the world, and their own lives.
- This section emphasizes the communal nature of prayer, inviting everyone to share their burdens and joys.

6. The Lord's Prayer

- The service culminates in the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, grounding the worship experience in one of the most fundamental elements of Christian faith.

7. Blessing and Sending

- A closing blessing helps to send worshipers back into the world with a sense of peace and purpose.
- The service concludes with a sending song, reinforcing the call to live out one's faith in daily life.

Theological Themes

Holden Evening Prayer is rich in theological themes that resonate deeply with worshipers. Some of the most prominent themes include:

1. Light and Darkness

- The imagery of light is central to the service, symbolizing Christ's presence and the hope that dispels darkness.
- This theme invites worshipers to reflect on their own experiences of light and darkness in their lives.

2. Community

- The service emphasizes the importance of gathering as a community of faith, supporting one another in prayer and worship.
- This sense of community fosters a shared connection among participants, creating a safe space for vulnerability and growth.

3. Reflection and Contemplation

- Holden Evening Prayer encourages moments of quiet reflection, allowing worshipers to pause and listen for God's voice.
- The contemplative nature of the service invites individuals to connect with God on a personal level, deepening their spiritual journey.

4. Gratitude and Intercession

- The service incorporates themes of gratitude, inviting worshipers to express thanks for God's blessings.

- Intercessory prayer highlights the call to care for one another, promoting a sense of responsibility for the well-being of others.

Musical Elements

One of the distinguishing features of Holden Evening Prayer is its rich musical landscape. Haugen's compositions are designed to be accessible for congregations, encouraging participation from all members, regardless of musical ability. Some notable musical elements include:

1. Simple Melodies

- The melodies are often repetitive and easy to learn, allowing congregations to join in without extensive rehearsal.

2. Use of Instruments

- While the service can be performed a cappella, the inclusion of instruments—such as piano, guitar, or flute—enhances the overall worship experience.
- Instrumentalists are encouraged to improvise, adding a personal touch to the music.

3. Call and Response

- Many of the prayers and hymns employ a call-and-response format, inviting the congregation to actively participate in the worship.

4. Integration of Diverse Musical Styles

- Haugen's work reflects a blend of traditional and contemporary musical styles, making it appealing to a wide audience.

Conclusion

Marty Haugen's Holden Evening Prayer is more than just a liturgical service; it is a profound expression of faith that has touched the lives of countless worshipers. Its blend of accessibility, musicality, and theological depth allows congregations to engage fully in the worship experience. As churches continue to seek meaningful ways to foster community and spiritual growth, Holden Evening Prayer stands out as a timeless resource that invites participants into a sacred space of reflection, prayer, and praise. Whether in a

cozy chapel or a grand sanctuary, this service has the power to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary, illuminating the path of faith as worshipers gather to seek the light of Christ in their lives.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is 'Holden Evening Prayer' by Marty Haugen?

Holden Evening Prayer is a liturgical service composed by Marty Haugen in the 1980s, designed for evening worship and characterized by its blend of contemporary and traditional music.

How is 'Holden Evening Prayer' typically used in worship settings?

'Holden Evening Prayer' is often used in church services, particularly during Advent and Lent, as a way to create a reflective and peaceful atmosphere for evening worship.

What are some key musical elements of 'Holden Evening Prayer'?

The service features simple, singable melodies, harmonies, and a combination of responsive singing and spoken prayers, making it accessible for congregations.

Can 'Holden Evening Prayer' be used outside of traditional church services?

Yes, 'Holden Evening Prayer' can be adapted for various settings, including retreats, community gatherings, and home worship, making it a versatile option for spiritual reflection.

Who can participate in 'Holden Evening Prayer'?

'Holden Evening Prayer' is designed for participation by all members of a congregation, encouraging community involvement through singing and communal prayer.

What themes does 'Holden Evening Prayer' emphasize?

The service emphasizes themes of peace, light, and hope, inviting participants to reflect on their faith and the presence of God in their lives.

Are there any resources available for learning 'Holden Evening Prayer'?

Yes, numerous resources including sheet music, recordings, and instructional materials are available online and through church music publishers to help congregations learn the service.

How has 'Holden Evening Prayer' influenced contemporary worship?

'Holden Evening Prayer' has influenced contemporary worship by integrating modern musical styles into traditional liturgy, encouraging a more inclusive and engaging worship experience.

What is the historical context behind the creation of 'Holden Evening Prayer'?

Marty Haugen created 'Holden Evening Prayer' while serving a community in Holden, Minnesota, aiming to foster a sense of community and spiritual connection through shared worship.

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