

## **Singing the “Forever Song”**

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“I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever; with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.” Psalm 89:1

When the Church sings, it never sings alone but joins its voice with all those who worship the Lamb upon the throne. Our worship is extended beyond time and space through many peoples, cultures, tongues and languages who have sung the same old song in new and diverse ways. To sing the “Forever Song” is to know that you are connected to something greater than yourself—something of an eternal wonder, beauty and majesty.

It is also to know that the song we sing now will never end. All other songs will cease, even those of the greatest accomplishments of our lives and of our world. But when we sing as His people, about His steadfast love and faithfulness, in His Spirit, we can be certain that, because He lives and loves forever, so will we.

The theme and verse for Concordia’s 2018-19 academic year is “Singing the ‘Forever Song,’” drawn from Psalm 89:1. Our hymn of the year comes from one of the most ancient and complete expressions of praise in Christian history: the “Te Deum.” Concordia-Chicago’s own Prof. Jonathan Kohrs has composed a stirring, festival setting of “We Praise You and Acknowledge You,” and it’s been a delight to sing it throughout this academic year.

The processional cross used for University services this year is called the “Te Deum Cross,” for on its wooden base is carved the complete English text of the “Te Deum” (We praise Thee, O God). The cross was crafted by Lutheran liturgical artist Reinhold Marxhausen (1922-2001) and presented by our sister school, Concordia Nebraska on the occasion of Concordia-Chicago’s centennial anniversary in 1964. At Concordia Nebraska stands a sister processional cross with the Kyrie (Lord have mercy) inscribed on it. The two crosses serve as a reminder of the long and affectionate connections between our institutions who praise the same Lord but with different songs.

The song of God’s steadfast love and faithfulness began in God’s own heart, and is heard most powerfully in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In Christ, the “Forever Song” seeks and saves a broken and discordant creation, bringing redemption, resurrection, and restoration for all who join its unending music. His steadfast song is eternal because He is eternal; and we are invited to join in its harmonies both here in time and finally forever.

Jeff Leininger