From the Editorial Perspective...

Greetings from the desk of the editor,

As I scan the contents of this issue, I see many all-time hymn-favorites listed in the contents, now all freshly presented in creative new settings as though being played/heard for the first time. Since these hymns have a history, including one dating back to the third century, many of my perspectives below reflect that history, sometimes with just the facts, and sometimes with “the rest of the story.” As I have mentioned before, I enjoy exploring history in many areas, and the history of hymns is certainly no exception!

**Thine Is the Glory** – Lee Dengler

Often found in the Easter section of hymnals, this exhilarating hymn is also useful for Eastertide or, really, any time in the general church calendar. It is from Handel’s oratorio, *Judas Maccabeus*, which happens to be the source of the tune name as well. Some hymnals use only *MACCABEUS* as the hymn tune, but that specific tune name refers to another hymn by Handel, also from the same oratorio, *O Lord, Thy Mercy, My Sure Hope*. To confuse matters further, *Thine Is the Glory* first appeared in another oratorio, *Joshua*, in 1747, but, as was his wont, Handel transferred it to *Judas Maccabeus* in 1751. Interestingly enough, Handel himself predicted the popularity of the melody, saying that the tune “...will become a greater favorite with the people than my other finer tunes.” Humility was not a problem for Handel!

History aside, this is a wonderfully inventive setting of this glorious tune. It does become a little rambunctious, and more demanding, in mm. 36–43, so if need be, just play the upper two notes in the RH (eliminating the octaves) and/or the lower notes of the LH. At m. 45, it might also be simpler to use the RH to play some or all of the chromatic 8th notes. Work to make this triumphant arrangement “clean” throughout, pedaling primarily only as marked.
**Deep River** – Mary McDonald

Sonorous and soulful, expressive and emotional, this beloved spiritual is particularly effective as a Memorial Sunday offering. Although this arrangement is not without its challenges, the slow tempo and stylistic *rubato* permitted makes it more accessible than it might look at first glance. If m. 28 looks daunting (even with the indicated *ritard* in place), it can be effectively rendered by playing just the treble clef notes, with the LH taking the first note of each grouping. Measures 40–41 also look difficult, but they lie well under the hands and actually play fairly easily. Ignore the *accelerando* if need be and play it cleanly and under control. I hope you like this setting as much as I do—I think it’s gorgeous—in spite of (or because of?) its challenges. It is worthy of practice!

**The Faithful** – R. Kevin Boesiger

A worship service sometimes calls for quiet moments of reflection in which a piano playing softly in the background can be additive in setting the desired ambience for worship. This original would work very well in these moments, and it is also helpful that it is very flexible with multiple duration options as well. In fact, though it’s not indicated in the music, you could stop at m. 20, beat 3, providing about a minute of meditative music. Or, even better, start at letter C and play to the end—about a 50-second piece. However you use it, *The Faithful* provides a lovely and melodic meditation. Let the melody gently sing throughout, keeping the accompaniment as an understated harmonic accompaniment.

**Where He Leads Me** – Todd Beaney

John S. Norris, composer of this simple, plaintive melody, was born on the Isle of Wight in 1844, but later moved to Canada where he became an ordained Methodist minister. He served churches in both Canada and the U.S., along the way creating several hymns, including this one with E. W. Blandy in 1890. Its repetitive simplicity and inspiring strength as an all-encompassing personal statement of faith made it one of the great and memorable songs of the gospel era. Norris died in Chicago in 1907.

This Todd Beaney setting retains the poignant simplicity of this hymn while interweaving some intriguing countermelodies (e.g. mm. 17–20) for musical interest. Bring those out, but never lose track of the hymn tune in the process. Take your time playing the last four measures, and let the final sounds linger into nothingness before lifting your hands.
**Spirit of God** – Lenny Seidel

This memorable tune—MORECAMBE—was composed in 1870 by the British organist, Frederick Atkinson and originally sung with the text *Abide with Me*. In 1887, a new text was written by George Croly, and the hymn has been standard repertoire for Pentecost services ever since. The interesting tune name comes from a coastal town near Lancaster, England, where Atkinson was the organist. I find this attractive setting by Lenny Seidel to be rich in texture and harmony, much like the hymn itself, and possessing a musical fervor to match the Croly text.

**Sing for Joy** – Lani Smith

This is an archetypal original postlude from the pen of former editor and long-time magazine contributor, Lani Smith. Lani is a master craftsman and possesses an amazing ability to create worthy music that remains both accessible and musically satisfying—no mean feat, I assure you! *Sing for Joy* could be shortened a little by repeating to m. 9 instead of the beginning, but I’d play the whole thing and have a good time doing it! Play it with great verve and, well, great joy!

**Faith of Our Fathers** – Janet Vogt

This simple, straight-forward setting of *Faith of Our Fathers*, a stirring hymn of courage and gratefulness for those who preceded us in the family of Christ, is an excellent choice for Memorial Sunday and church anniversaries or dedications. The setting is understated for such a strong hymn, yet as an offertory or prelude, it creates its own strength in its compact, uncomplicated simplicity—more of a time of reflection than a strong statement of faith. I find it captivating and fresh in that regard.

**It Is Well** – Jason W. Krug

Is there another hymn that is so connected to tragedies that befell both the composer and the lyricist? The well-known story is that of the text-writer, Horatio Spafford, who, in a brief span of time, lost first his son to disease, suffered financial disaster with the Great Chicago Fire, and then also lost his four daughters after they were involved in a shipwreck of the *Ville du Havre* (thus, the tune name). He famously wrote this poignant, stirring text, purportedly at the same point the ship went down, as he travelled to meet his wife who had miraculously survived the
shipwreck. A few years later, Philip B. Bliss wrote the tune shortly before he and his wife were killed in a train accident, plummeting to their death when a high trestle collapsed as the train was crossing it.

Despite the multiple tragedies surrounding the creators of this hymn, it remains a favorite hymn of assurance, comfort, hope, and peace. Arranger Jason Krug has successfully captured all of these elements as well as he ranges dynamically and musically from a simple pianissimo to a dramatic fortissimo before again evolving into a peaceful, reassuring ending. This is an extended setting, so an optional cut is included if needed. It is my hope, however, that you will be able to allow your congregation to experience the full range of emotion and spiritual well-being this piece conveys when heard in its entirety.

**Land of Rest** – Anthony Giamanco

It must be an indication of the popularity of the tune itself that this simple traditional American folk melody has found its way into multiple hymnals with at least ten different texts associated with it. This setting therefore offers a broad range of potential uses throughout the church year! Here are a few examples of the hymns found in just a few mainline hymnals (with usages):

*O Lord, May Church and Home Combine* (Home and Family services)  
*Jerusalem, My Happy Home* (Life Eternal)  
*Lord, When I Came Into This Life* (Confirmation/Ordination)  
*Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days* (Lent/Christian Life)  
*I Come with Joy to Meet My Lord* (Holy Communion)  
*O Thou Who This Mysterious Bread* (Holy Communion)  
*Song of Simeon* (Nunc Dimittis)  
*In Suffering Love the Thread of Life* (Lent/General)  
*This Is the Spirit’s Entry Now* (Baptism)  
*Begin My Tongue Some Heavenly Theme* (Christian Life)

...and this is only a partial list!

Most of this pleasant Giamanco setting is as simple and plaintive as the tune itself, though there is that potentially pesky spot in mm. 32–36 which can be eliminated as indicated if desired. With or without those measures, I find this is a very appealing setting of an enduring melody.
**Fairest Lord Jesus** – Larry Shackley

Even though this is indeed an ancient hymn, it does not date back to the Crusades as its original hymn tune name would lead you to believe. In fact, it was probably not sung until several hundred years later, perhaps around 1400 when the followers of reformer John Hus were known to sing it after the Hussites were expelled into Silesia. Though they maintained their faith in secret, the Hussites had a strong tradition of singing hymns, and the most reliable tradition indicates this hymn came from these humble Christians. Obviously, the text to this hymn has nothing to do with the Crusades or even the persecution of Christians; but rather the beauty of God’s vast creation and the purity of Jesus.

Perhaps to further disassociate the hymn from the misconception created in naming it the CRUSADER’S HYMN, it is now often called ST. ELIZABETH, most likely a result of its inclusion in a Franz Liszt oratorio, *The Legend of St. Elizabeth*.

Another similar text, *Beautiful Savior*, is also commonly sung to this tune. Either text works well as a title for this lovely setting by Larry Shackley.

**Glory Be to the Father** – Jason W. Krug

Yes, the familiar *Gloria Patri* was written by someone—Henry Greatorex—and relatively recently (in 1851), though the text itself dates from the third or fourth century in its use as a doxology (a short hymn of praise). Many churches sing it weekly to this day as part of their Sunday morning worship tradition.

Henry Greatorex was born in England, the son of Thomas Greatorex, a long-time organist at Westminster Abby and renown musician of his time. Born in 1816, Henry moved to Charleston, South Carolina in 1849 and served as the organist for churches in New York City and Hartford, Connecticut. He did much to further the standards of sacred music in America, and published a *Collection of Psalms and Hymn Tunes, Chants, Anthems, and Sentences*, which included his now-ubiquitous *Glory Be to the Father*.

This setting is befitting of the power and praise of the original and makes a stirring (and easy-to-play!) postlude that will have people scratching their heads saying, “Oh, I know that tune!”