

The background of the entire page is filled with a pattern of small, light gray musical notes, including eighth and sixteenth notes, scattered across the white space.

# Restore Our Song!

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A RESOURCE  
FOR RESTARTING YOUR CHOIR

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**By Lee Dengler  
and Susan Naus Dengler**

**Jubilate**  
MUSIC

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For congregational projection or bulletin inclusion, a PDF of the lyrics only for RESTORE OUR SONG! is available as a free download. Go to [www.jubilatemusic.com/downloads](http://www.jubilatemusic.com/downloads) and enter JMG1076 in the search window.

# Restore Our Song

## Foreword

*“Though we’ve walked through darkest valleys,  
Lord, You’ve kept us strong.  
Days of silence now are over.  
Restore our joy! Restore our song!”*

As we approach that glorious day when choirs may resume rehearsing and singing in worship, we invite churches, pastors and directors to consider the potential for renewal and growth that lies ahead. *Restore Our Song* includes tools for celebrating our return to corporate worship. Plans for special times of celebrations, devotions for choirs, anthem suggestions, ideas for recruitment of new singers—plus a newly-composed and very accessible hymn for congregations and choirs—are included.

There is no question that we have all been through the most unusual and challenging times! As if surviving a global pandemic were not enough, we learned that the act of singing together had the potential to spread the virus with even more ferocity. Never before had we heard that it is unhealthy to sing in groups. It seemed we were denied the very thing that might have helped us to deal with the heartache, isolation and fear of a pandemic.

It is our fervent prayer that the material in this resource will prove to be enormously helpful as we look to our faithful and gracious Lord to restore our song.

Susan Naus Dengler

Lee Dengler

The publisher hereby gratefully acknowledges valuable input on this publication from the following church music leaders:  
Randy Brittain (Athens, GA), Melissa Emerson (Nashville, TN), and Joe Fitzpatrick (Nashville, TN).

# RESTORE OUR SONG!

Words by  
SUSAN NAUS DENGLER

for Unison or SATB voices, accompanied

Music by  
LEE DENGLER

♩ = ca. 76

ACCOMP.

*mf*

C/G G7sus G7 C

5

*mp* 1. Days of sad - ness, days of sick - ness, nights of lone - li - ness and pain, —  
*mf* 2. There is joy that comes at morn - ing, nights of weep - ing o - ver - come. —  
*f* 3. Glo - ry, glo - ry, hal - le - lu - jah! Let God's peo - ple find their voice. —

C Fm/C C C/G Am G C C/E F C/G G7sus G7

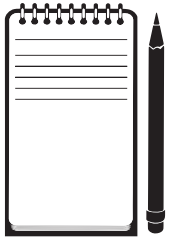
9

faith - ful God, You walked be - side us. With Your grace, our — souls — sus - tained.  
Lord, in grat - i - tude, we bless You for the vic - t'ry — You — have won.  
Glo - ry, glo - ry, hal - le - lu - jah! Let the church of — God — re - joice!

C G/B F/A Csus/G C/G F C/E F G7sus C

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# *Restore Our Song*

## *First Rehearsal Plans*

I keep thinking about what that first choir rehearsal will be like after not being able to sing together at the same time and in the same space for so long. I know that many of us will be shedding tears of joy!

With that in mind, we came up with plans for that first, glorious rehearsal. These plans are intended to be a time of reunion and celebration rather than they are lesson plans for a regular musical rehearsal. Since many of your members have had to take a break from singing for many months, you will certainly want to include many of your favorite warm ups and other teaching devices to achieve musical proficiency. Also, they have been written with the possibility in mind that you might want to invite other members of the congregation—persons who have not regularly sung in the choir in the past, and maybe even children and youth—to join in presenting the theme song, “Restore Our Song” to your congregation.

In addition to learning the theme song, plans include group sharing and prayer, a celebration response, and even a time of fellowship and refreshments with an option for celebrating birthdays and holidays that could not be observed during the pandemic.

### **Things to do in preparation for the first rehearsal**

1. Communicate with regular choir members via email or Zoom about the following:
  - making this in-person choir “restart” an opportunity for recruiting new members.
  - inviting members of the congregation to join the choir in introducing “Restore Our Song” in worship.
  - asking choir members to invite persons in their Sunday School classes or other groups within the congregation.
  - asking members to make new persons feel welcome.
2. Invite congregants to join the choir for the first rehearsal in order to learn “Restore Our Song” with plans to introduce it to the congregation during the next worship service.

# *Restore Our Song*

## *Choir Rehearsal Devotions*

There are devotions included for 6 rehearsals. Feel free to use them in any order you wish, and also, you may use them all, or as many as you would like.

Writing these devotions was an extremely spiritual and hope-filled experience, as they are reflections of thoughts and prayers as we moved through the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though they were written during times when infection rates were high and fear was great, they had to be written with the assurance that we had survived this dark time and were now free to gather, and especially, to sing.

Most of the devotions are reflections on persons, either from the Bible, or from around our world who have not only gone through times of great struggle, but have also had their voices silenced during these times. With God's help, all have come through the trials as victors.

Also included in each devotion is a responsive reading based on a psalm of praise about singing. Finally, there is a short prayer of blessing that leads into your weekly rehearsals. Notice that, in each case, there is a page break between the story and the other components of a devotion. This is meant to allow you to reproduce the responsive readings and prayer for your group.

It is our sincere desire that these devotions will provide your choir members with hope as they face the days ahead.

Or another:

*Why is light given to one who cannot see the way?"*

from Job 3:20,23 (NRSV)

In deep despair, finally, he cried out:

*"O that I knew where I might find God." Job 23:3 (NRSV)*

It was a young friend who began to help Job see that God was *for* him, and in fact, God was *with* him, right there in that heap of ashes. At last, Job heard God speaking, not giving Job direct answers, but emphasizing the power that the Creator has over our entire world. After hearing God speak and feeling God's presence with him, Job responded;

*"I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. I had heard about You by the hearing of the ear, but now, my eyes see You."*

Job 42:2, 5 (NRSV)

Now Job *saw* God. Job saw His mighty power, and Job saw that He is God even in the midst of a disordered and tragic world. Because of love, God causes the universe to continue to run its course. God's love is with us, never letting us go.

**Scripture (responsive reading)** Psalm 13:5, 6 (NRSV)

Leader: I trusted in Your steadfast love.

All: My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.

Leader: I will sing to the Lord,

All: who has dealt bountifully with me.

**Singing Together** "Restore Our Song"

### **Prayer**

Faithful God, You have walked with us through such a difficult time. It has felt as if our voices were silenced. We thank You, now that we can finally join our voices to sing Your praise. We ask Your blessing on us. May the words and music of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, our Strength, our Deliverer, and our Redeemer. Amen.



# Restore Our Song Hymn Sings

If your congregations are anything like ours, there will be tremendous rejoicing on that day when we can raise our voices in corporate songs of praise to God without the fear that someone will become sick. That is why we decided to include suggestions for two hymn sings. I knew that our own congregation loves to sing so much that we would probably be willing to hold two hymn sings.

The first is a song service based on scripture readings from Psalms and Isaiah. Between each reading is a list of appropriate hymn suggestions. These hymns should be familiar to most congregations, but feel free to insert other hymns or contemporary songs that are loved by your own group.

The second hymn sing is a service based on songs that have probably been sorely missed during this pandemic year. It is a service to “reclaim the church year in song.” Narration moves us through the seasons of the church and calendar year, with appropriate hymn and carol suggestions after each narrative.

Each hymn sing also includes responses and prayers to lead your gathered flock in celebrating and praising our faithful God.

## **Suggestion 1: A Service of Scripture and Song**

### **Welcome**

### **Call to Worship**

Leader: O come, let us sing to the Lord.

All: O come, let us sing songs of joy to our God who has brought us to this new day.

Leader: This is the day that the Lord has made.

All: This is a day of thanksgiving and celebration.

Leader: Praise God, for our days of silence now have ended.

All: Lord, restore our joy! Restore our song!

### **Prayer**

Faithful God, You have led us through a time of dark valleys, a time of sadness and loneliness and loss. Thank you for always walking with us, for supporting us and holding us closely.



## Suggestion 2: Reclaiming the Church Year in Song

### Prelude

### Welcome

Welcome to this time of celebration and worship. During the past months, we have walked through times of sickness and sadness, of loneliness and pain. During this challenging period in our history, we have not been able to observe the special, holy times of the church year as we usually do. We have observed our holidays and holy days in isolation, yearning to gather together to sing the songs that tell the blessed story of God's love and faithfulness.

Today, we attempt to reclaim our joy during these seasons as we move throughout the year in song. I invite you to join as we read together the Call to Worship.

### Call to Worship

Leader: And God said, 'Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night;

All: and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years.

Leader: For everything, there is a season,

All: a time for every matter under heaven;

Leader: a time to weep and a time to laugh,

All: a time to mourn and a time to dance,

Leader: a time to keep silence, and a time to speak,

All: a time to keep silence, and a time to sing.

Leader: O come, let us sing unto the Lord.

All: Let us bring glad songs to the rock of our salvation

### Prayer

Faithful God, You have walked with us through such a difficult time. It has felt as if our voices were silenced. We thank You, now that we can finally join our voices to sing Your praise. We ask Your blessing on this joyful gathering. May the words and music of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, our Strength, our Deliverer, and our Redeemer. Amen.

### Hymn "Restore Our Song"

### Leader

How fitting that we should begin our journey to reclaim a lost year, a year of waiting, with the season of Advent, a season when we recall those long-ago days when God's people cried out for the Messiah to come and save them. As we know, Advent falls in the darkest time of the calendar year, a time that moves



**LEE DENGLER** is a composer and arranger with over 400 published choral anthems, cantatas for Christmas and Holy Week, children’s musicals and vocal and piano solo collections to his credit. Lee studied composition and arranging with Alice Parker, and received both his Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees from West Chester University in West Chester, Pennsylvania. His music is performed throughout the US and in many other countries throughout the world. He currently serves as conductor for the Adult Choir at College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana. He is also an outstanding baritone soloist who has appeared in a wealth of operas, oratorios and recitals. Lee has taught voice and composition on the college level, and is currently a freelance music editor and engraver.

**SUSAN NAUS DENGLER** is a lyricist and writer. Her lyrics, narrations, and poetry have been used by many composers and publishers. Together with her husband Lee, she has written many anthems, cantatas for Christmas and Holy Week and children’s musicals. She has conducted children’s choirs and has served as a guest conductor for choral festivals. She developed an intergenerational arts curriculum for churches that teaches children healthy vocal technique and introduces musical concepts, along with visual arts and drama, all of which teach Biblical stories and spiritual truths. In addition, Susan has taught classes and private students on the high school and college level. She is a soprano soloist who has sung in a long list of operas and oratorios throughout her career. She received her Bachelor’s Degree in Music Education from West Chester University and her Master of Music Degree in vocal performance and church music from Valparaiso University in Indiana. Lee and Susan live along the Elkhart River in Goshen, Indiana where they enjoy spending time with their grown children and five grandchildren.