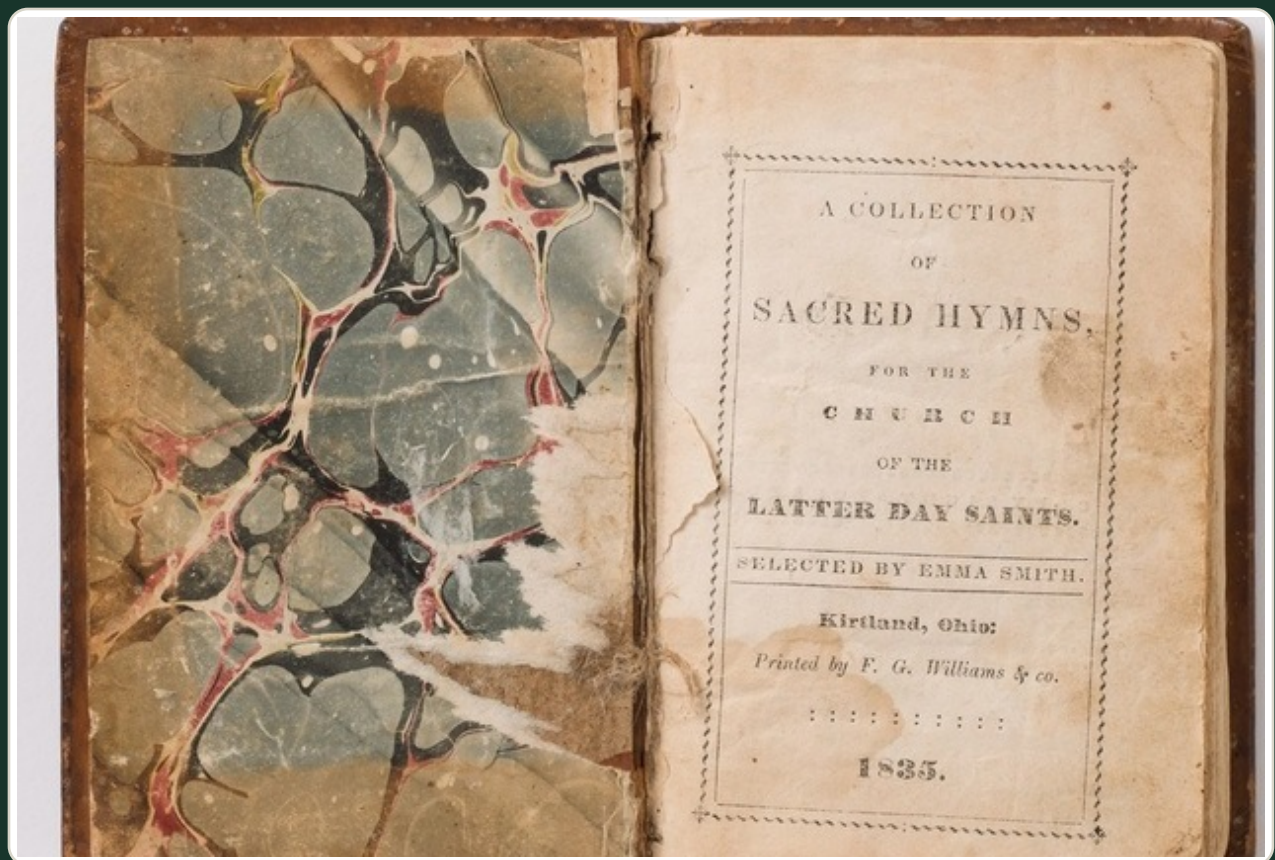


THE SONG OF THE SAINTS

# ILLUSTRATED HYMNOLOGY COMPANION

A visual reader guide to the changing books, tunes, committees, children's songs, world editions, and lived experiences that shaped Latter-day Saint sacred music.

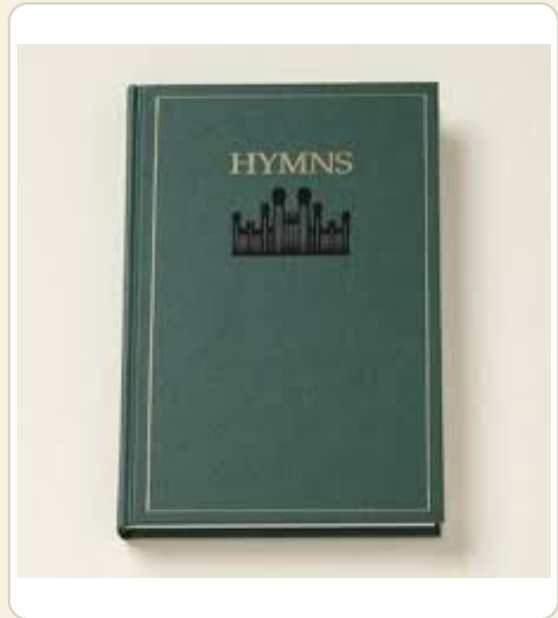
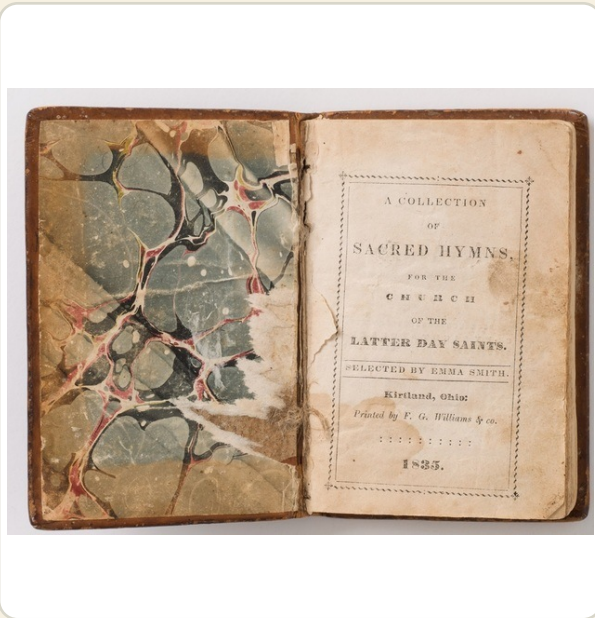
16-PAGE FLAGSHIP GUIDE



BEGIN HERE

# A History You Can Hold

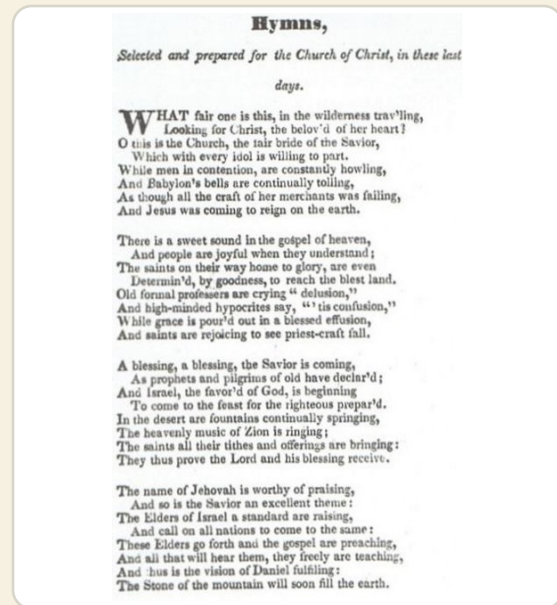
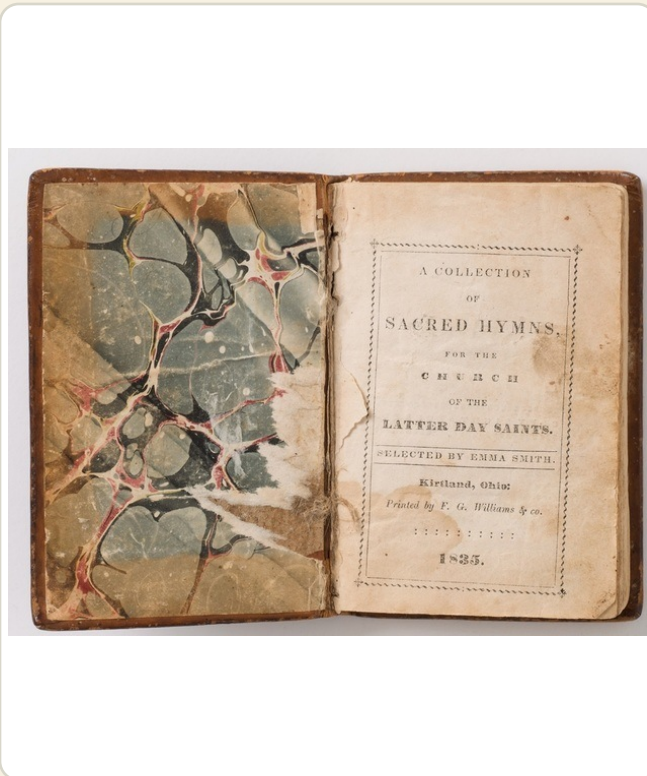
The manuscript follows Church music by following the physical books themselves: what they contained, how they looked, who compiled them, and what each era needed from sacred song.



The first official hymnal was a tiny vest-pocket collection with 90 texts and no printed tunes. By the late twentieth century, hymnbooks and children's songbooks were standardized, illustrated, translated, recorded, transposed, and distributed digitally. The book's central story is therefore both musical and institutional: worship changes while the impulse to sing remains.

# Emma Smith and the First Hymnal

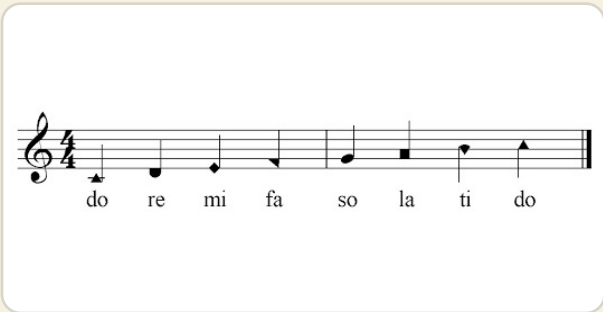
Revelation placed sacred song near the center of Restoration worship. Emma Smith selected hymns while W.W. Phelps revised and prepared them for printing.



The 1836 first printing contained 90 hymn texts, measured only about 3 by 4.5 inches, and included no musical notation. Congregations therefore supplied familiar tunes according to meter and local tradition. The little book established a lasting pattern: uniquely Latter-day Saint texts could stand beside adapted hymns inherited from wider Christianity.

# Before Every Hymn Had a Fixed Tune

In the early nineteenth century, a hymn text could travel with several melodies. Meter - the syllable pattern of the lines - helped singers know which tunes would fit.



A musical staff in 4/4 time showing the melody for the words 'do re mi fa so la ti do'. The notes are: do (quarter), re (quarter), mi (quarter), fa (quarter), so (half), la (quarter), ti (quarter), do (half).

16 STAR IN THE EAST 10, 11. Baptist Harmony, p. 35



Hail the blest morn, see the great Mediator,  
Shepherds, go worship the babe in the manger,  
Down from the regions of glory descend!  
Lo, for his guard the bright angels attend.  
Chorus: Brightest and best of the sons of the morning!

Down on our darkness, and lead us thine aid; Star in the east, the ho - ri - zon a - dorn - ing, Guide where our infant Re - deemer was led.

2 Cold on his cradle the dew-drops are shining;  
Low lies his bed, with the beasts of the stall;  
Angels adore him, in dumbness reclining,  
Wise men and shepherds before him do fall.  
Brightest and best, &c.

3 Say, shall we yield him, in costly devotion,  
Odours of Eden, and offerings divine,  
Gems from the mountain, and pearls from the ocean,  
Myrrh from the forest, and gold from the mine?  
Brightest and best, &c.

4 Vainly we offer each simple oblation,  
Vainly with gold we his favour secure,  
Richer by far is the lowly's adoration,  
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.  
Brightest and best, &c.

## TRY THE HISTORICAL MINDSET

Imagine opening a hymnbook and seeing only poetry. You already know half a dozen tunes by memory. Your job is to notice the meter, choose a melody, and lead the congregation. The manuscript shows that this flexible system was ordinary before later hymnals paired specific texts and tunes more consistently.

What would be gained - and lost - by this flexible tune system?

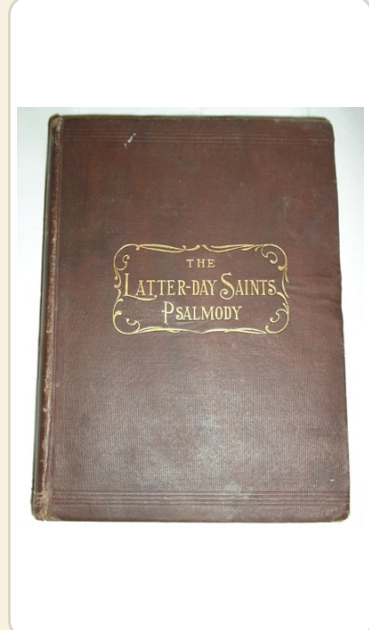
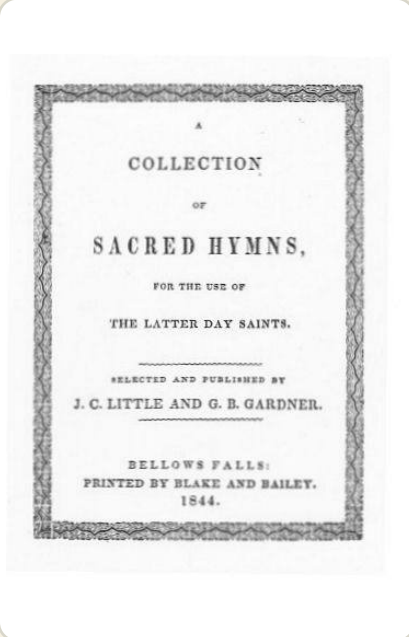
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## Music Enters the Book

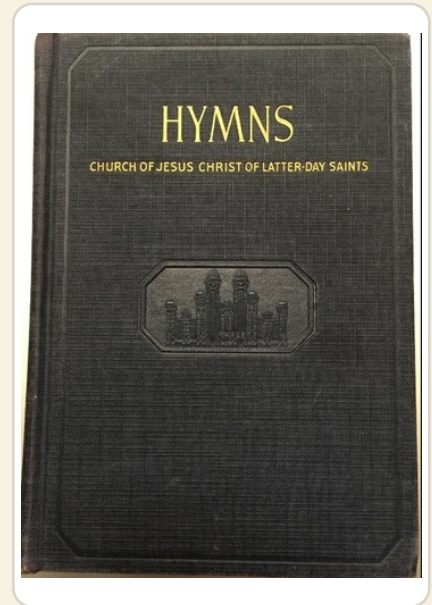
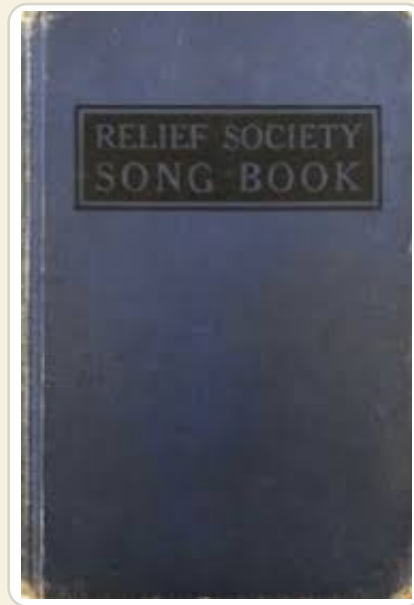
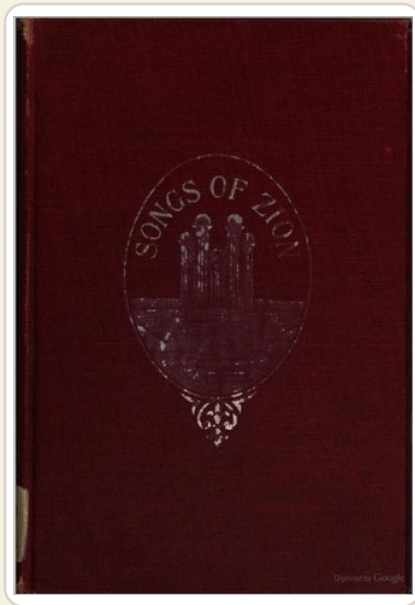
The Bellows Falls hymnal became the first Latter-day Saint hymnbook to print musical notation. The 1889 Psalmody went further by providing music for every hymn text.



These books mark a major move toward standardization. The Psalmody aimed to present an acceptable tune for every text in the existing hymnbook. That convenience came with a cost: as official pairings became normal, some older local or traditional tune practices disappeared from use.

# Expansion, Committees, and Specialized Books

As the Church grew, several hymnals and songbooks served different groups. Relief Society, Sunday School, congregations, choirs, and children all developed overlapping musical repertoires.

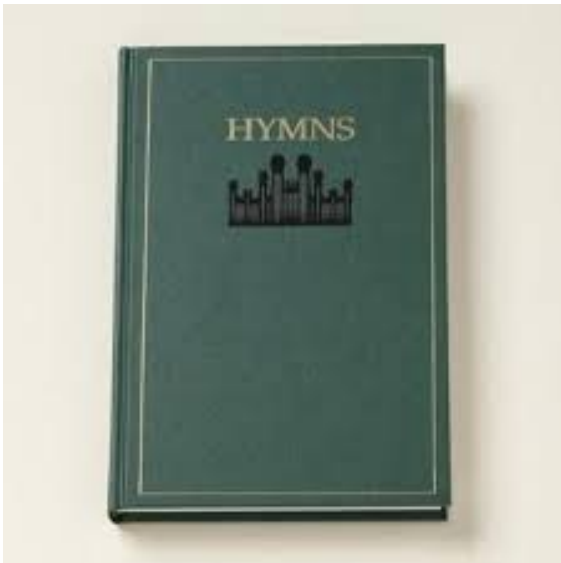


The 1920 creation of a General Music Committee was a turning point. One task was to streamline multiple books into a more unified official repertoire. The 1927 green Latter-day Saint Hymns also adopted the two-staff SATB layout that later hymn users would recognize as familiar.

1985

# The Green Hymnbook Generation

The 1985 committee inherited decades of repertoire, strong member preferences, technical constraints, and thousands of submissions.



## COMMITTEE PRESSURES

- Preserve beloved traditions
- Judge musical and literary quality
- Make keys and ranges singable
- Balance doctrine, usefulness, and popularity
- Negotiate copyright and translation
- Decide what to omit as well as what to add

The book also preserves the committee's human side: members sang candidate hymns together around a piano, evaluated anonymous submissions, and described a strong sense of unity during the work.

# What Gets Left Out?

A hymnbook is shaped as much by omissions as additions. Popularity can change after publication, which is why the history of "Come Thou Fount" became so memorable.

## CASE STUDY: "COME THOU FOUNT"

The hymn had appeared in earlier books but was omitted from the 1985 English hymnal because surveys did not show enough use to justify keeping it. Soon after publication, Mack Wilberg's arrangement helped drive a major resurgence. The manuscript notes that it later became the most requested song for the next edition.

What does this teach about predicting what future worshippers will love?

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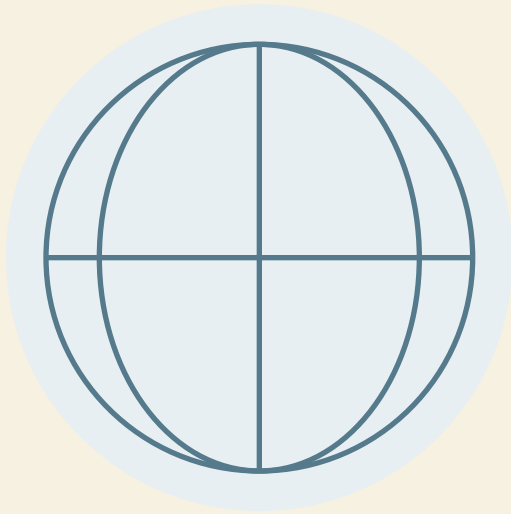
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# One Church, Many Languages

The 1985 English edition became a template for translated books, but different languages still retained some local favorites.



The manuscript describes a core of 104 hymns shared across every language edition, additional recommended hymns from the English book, and locally beloved songs selected for particular languages. Translation required a difficult balance between literal meaning, poetry, meter, and singability.

What should a translator preserve first: exact meaning, poetry, rhyme, meter, or emotional effect? Why?

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# Toward a Worldwide Hymnal

The new project was announced as a simultaneous revision of both the hymnbook and children's songbook, with the same songs planned across language editions.

17,000+

SUBMISSIONS

60+

COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

45,000+

SURVEY RESPONSES

4

SUBMISSION CATEGORIES

The manuscript frames this project as a response to a truly global Church. Unlike previous translated hymnbooks, the announced plan called for every language edition to contain the same songs in the same order, a major symbol of worldwide unity.

What qualities would a hymn need to serve Saints across many cultures and languages?

# Words Are Not Frozen

The manuscript devotes an entire chapter to the reasons hymn texts and tunes are revised: meaning, clarity, inclusion, geography, doctrine, copyright, singability, and member feedback.

## **Today, While the Sun Shines**

A line was revised so its anti-procrastination meaning would not sound like disregard for the future.

## **How Firm a Foundation**

A phrase was altered because rapid singing could produce an unintentionally comic sound.

## **O Sons of Zion**

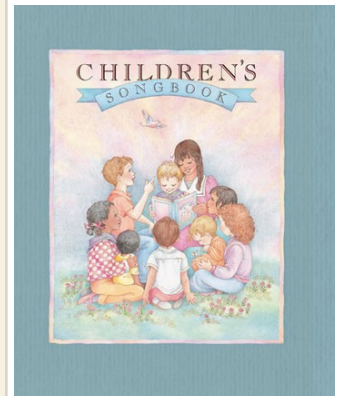
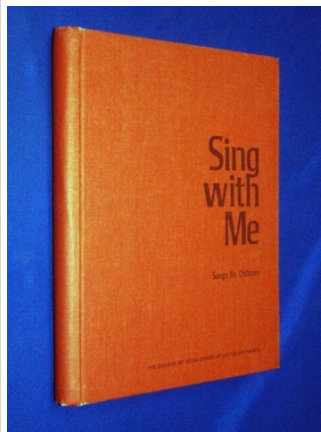
The title became O Saints of Zion so the hymn would not appear limited to priesthood use.

## **The Time Is Far Spent**

A gender-specific missionary line became inclusive of both elders and sisters.

# The Primary Songbook Story

Children's sacred music developed along its own path: text-only books, tune books, patriotic and family songs, reverence collections, the orange Sing With Me, and the illustrated Children's Songbook.



Eliza R. Snow helped compile the first official Primary songbook in 1880. Later books increasingly reflected children's daily lives, reverence, doctrine, home and family, and the Church's changing teaching priorities. The 1989 Children's Songbook was intentionally designed for children themselves and became the first Primary book in the manuscript's story to use extensive pastel illustration.

# A Hymnal Is Also a Memory Book

The book includes interviews and lived experiences because sacred music is not only a publication history. Hymns become attached to missions, funerals, temples, family worship, choir experiences, and moments of testimony.

One committee member described the group standing around the piano and singing every serious candidate together. Another described a strong spiritual confirmation while reviewing the final proofs. A Jerusalem presentation on the hymnbook as a kind of canon ended with "Redeemer of Israel" because the atmosphere had become too spiritually significant to continue.

Which hymn is tied to a specific place, person, or sacred memory in your life?

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# What Hymnbooks Reveal About an Era

The manuscript repeatedly treats the contents of a songbook as evidence: themes, formatting, musical style, omitted material, and added songs can reveal what a community valued at the time.

| TEXTS                                                     | TUNES                                       | DESIGN                                   | SELECTION                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| What doctrines, metaphors, and social assumptions appear? | What musical styles and ranges seem normal? | Who is the book physically designed for? | What is kept, cut, revised, or newly commissioned? |

Choose one historical songbook in the manuscript. What does it reveal about its era?

# My Sacred-Music Shelf

Use this as a reading/listening checklist for the eras covered in the book.

☐ 1836 - Emma Smith / W.W. Phelps hymnal

☐ 1844 - Bellows Falls hymnal

☐ 1889 - Latter-day Saints Psalmody

☐ 1927 - Latter-day Saint Hymns

☐ Mid-century hymnbooks

☐ 1985 - Hymns

☐ 1880-1951 - early Primary books

☐ 1969 - Sing With Me

☐ 1989 - Children's Songbook

☐ 2018 onward - worldwide revision project

The era I want to explore more deeply:

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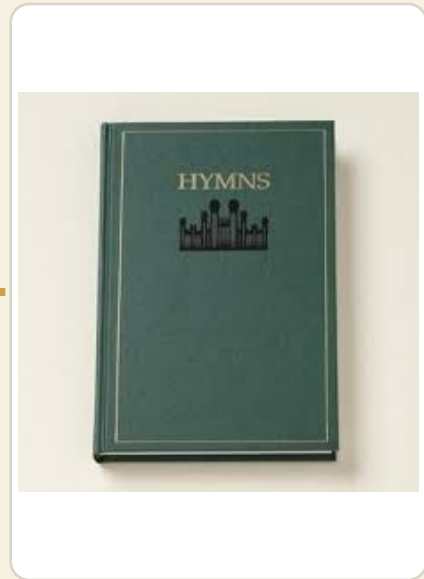
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# The Thread That Remains

Books, formats, languages, and musical styles change. The manuscript argues that worship through sacred song remains a thread joining modern Saints to those who sang at the beginning of the Restoration.



The changing hymnbooks are evidence of a living community trying to preserve memory, teach doctrine, improve worship, include more people, and sing in ways that make sense in each new era. The final question is not whether sacred music changes, but how faithfully each generation carries the song forward.

The song I hope future Saints will still be singing:

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