

# Notes from the Music Director (No. 21)

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Rochester, Pennsylvania

## Henry Doktorski, III

December 6, 2015—2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent

In today's Gospel (Luke 3:1-6), John, the son of Zechariah, proclaims—in the wilderness around the Jordan River—that all should be baptized in repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah: "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

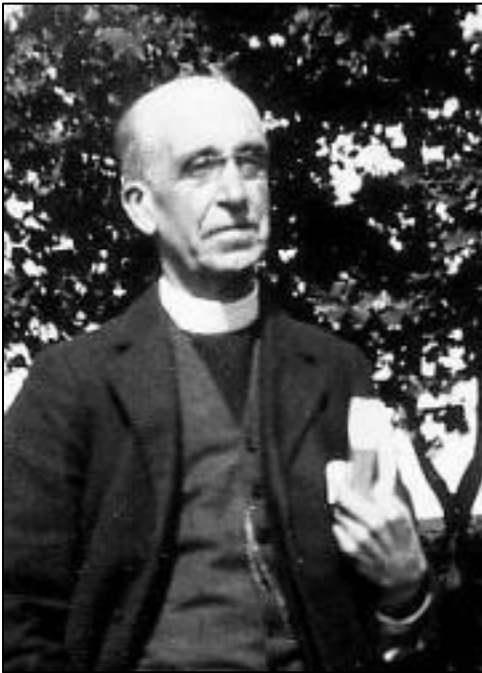


John the Baptist in the Wilderness,  
painting by Titian (c. 1542)

Today's Offertory anthem features the well-known Advent hymn "The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns" with text by John Brownlie and tune (Consolation, also known as Morning Song) by Ananias Davisson. Stanza one captures the spirit of Advent and the expectant waiting of the faithful for the birth of the Savior at Christmas: "The King shall come

when morning dawns and light triumphant breaks, when beauty gilds the eastern hills and life to joy awakes.”

Brownlie’s text depicts Christ as a blazing light dispelling darkness: “crowned with glory like the sun,” “brighter than the rising morn,” and “brighter than that glorious morn.” Stanza six foretells the future, when the earth has been transformed from darkness to light: “And let the endless bliss begin, by weary saints foretold, when right shall triumph over wrong, and truth shall be extolled.”



John Brownlie

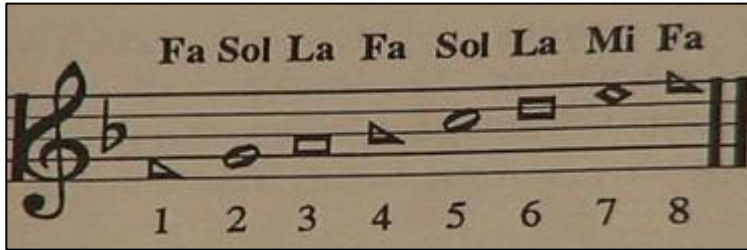
John Brownlie (1857-1925), was a Scottish clergyman, scholar and hymnist who is best known in his day for his translations of early Greek and Latin hymns into English. He was born in Glasgow, Scotland and studied at the University of Glasgow and the Free Church College. He was ordained by the Presbytery of Glasgow in 1884. In 1885 became assistant minister of Trinity Free Church in Portpatrick, Wigtonshire, Scotland and became senior pastor in 1890. He wrote more than 300 hymns.

The tune for “The King Shall

Come” was composed by Ananias Davisson (1780-1857), a singing school

teacher, printer and compiler of shape note tunebooks. Davisson was born in Shenandoah County, Virginia and became a member and ruling elder of the Presbyterian Church. He is best known for his 1816 compilation—*The Kentucky Harmony* (Harrisonburg, Virginia)—which is regarded as the first Southern shape-note tunebook.

The notation of shape-note music is unfamiliar to most singers today, in that the different musical note heads appear in different shapes, such as squares, circles and triangles, to help 19<sup>th</sup>-century amateur singers and congregations find the correct pitches.



Davisson spent his last years living on a farm at Weyer's Cave (about 14 miles from Dayton, Virginia) and is buried in the

Massanutten-Cross Keys Cemetery, Rockingham County, Virginia.

To hear “The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns” with text by John Brownlie and tune by Ananias Davisson performed by the Corona Vocalis ensemble at the Gymnasial Kirche Osnabrück, Germany, under the direction of Michael Schmoll in an arrangement by Peter Witte, go to [https://youtu.be/A7c\\_v38aRdU?t=7s](https://youtu.be/A7c_v38aRdU?t=7s).

## Resources

Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version (Zonderfan: 1989)

LBW: Lutheran Book of Worship (Augsburg Publishing House: 1978)

WOV: With One Voice (Augsburg Fortress: 1995)

W&P: Worship & Praise Songbook (Augsburg Fortress: 1999)

ELW: Evangelical Lutheran Worship (Augsburg Fortress: 2006)

Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org>

Hymnary.org: <http://www.hymnary.org>

GIA Publications: <http://www.giamusic.com>

Hymntime.com: <http://hymntime.com>

Singers.com: <http://singers.com>

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