

Conductor/Organist

Matthew 5: 1-12,
writing of Dr. Joe Peabody

I-IV

The Beatitudes

V

for soloist(s), unison choirs,
schola, and organ

Organ

dedicated to the Open Door Sunday School Class
of Marietta First United Methodist Church,
and in honor of Pastor Joe Peabody

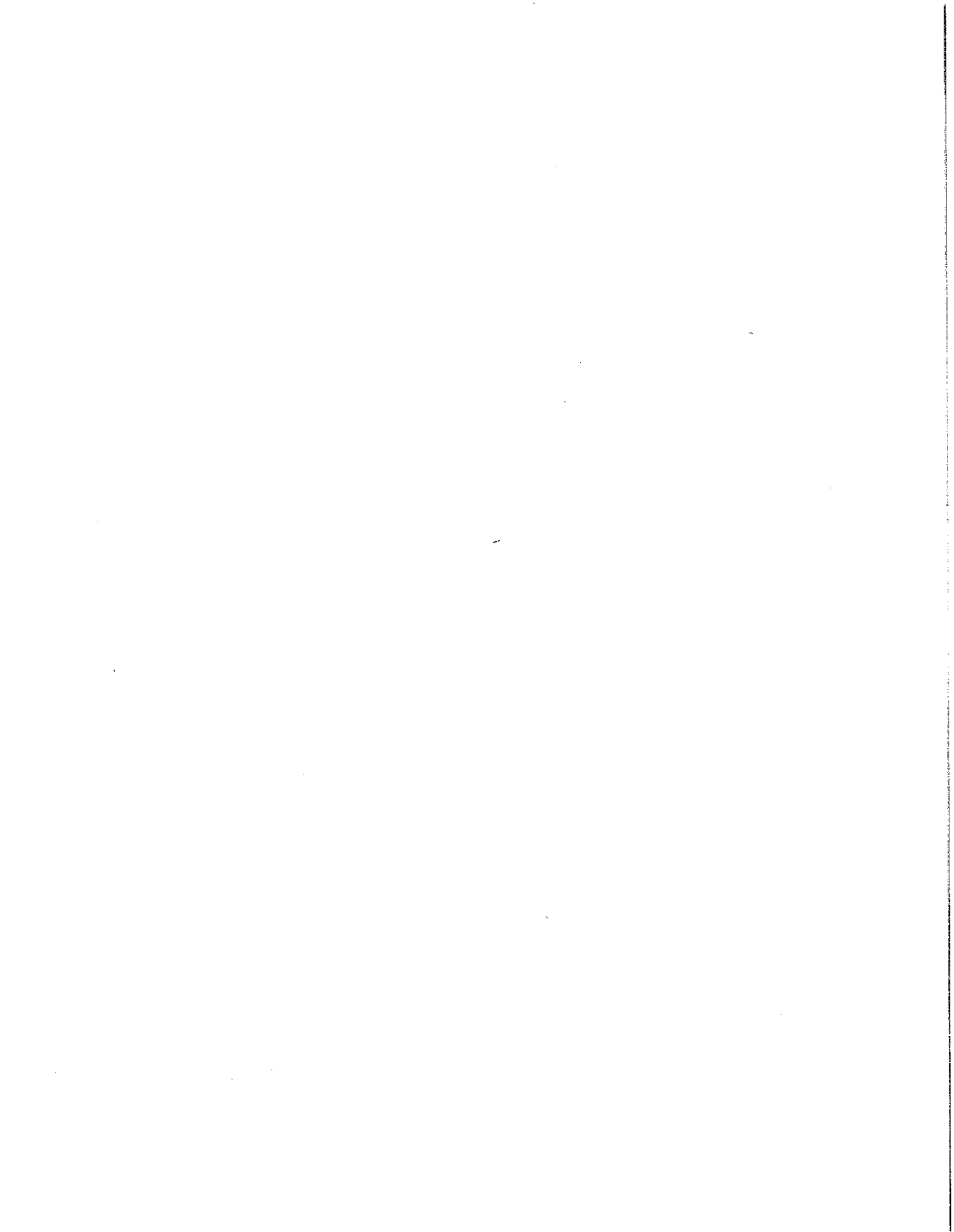
I-IV

V

composed autumn 2018
Marietta Georgia

Organ

by Brian Parks



This piece is the brainchild of two couples in the 2018 Open Door Sunday School Class at Marietta First United Methodist Church: the Revs. Fred and Lois Finzer, and Dr. Tim and Linda Boone. As co-chairs of the class's annual retreat, they expressed to me a wish to "shake things up a bit." First, they retained the ministerial-intellectual services of Dr. Joe Peabody. His decades-long dive into the New Testament scriptural text of Matthew 5: 1-12, colloquially known as the "Beatitudes", served to foreground the discourse for the retreat. In order to animate the text further, they commissioned me to write a musical setting of this iconic scripture. There were other creative projects embarked upon, incorporating movement in prayer, thematic graphic touchpoints (realized by Ann and Duane Douglass), and appropriate hymns and musics that accompanied Joe's lectures. I attended the retreat partly as an accompanist and partly to teach this setting to (mildly coerced) volunteer singers. I also provided some history on other settings of Beatitudes in the canon. And, I served as liturgist for nightly renderings of Compline. The trip was both privilege and joy.

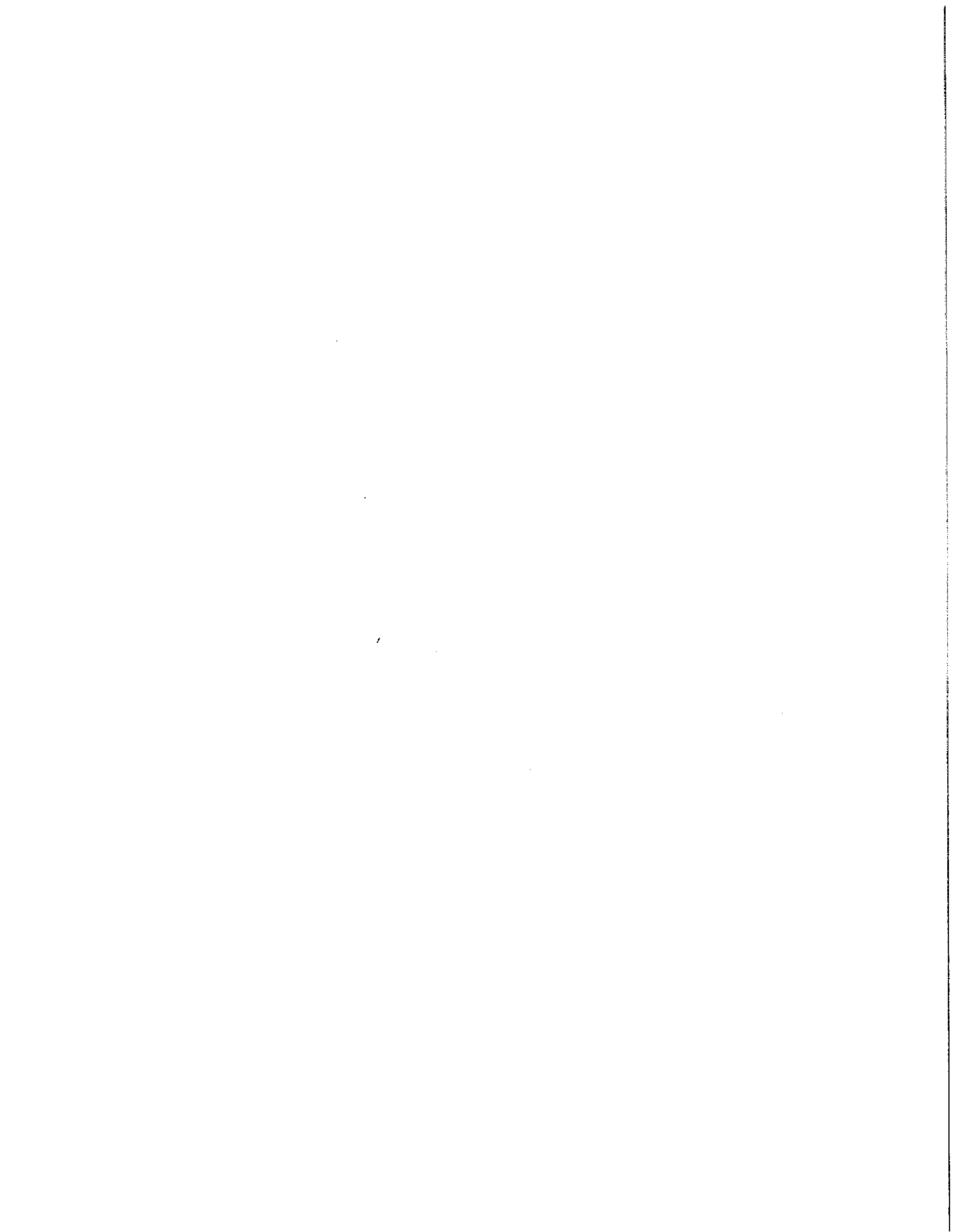
On to the "how-to": Conductors and organists read from full scores. The choral forces will receive part-books. These parts are not divided by voice type but simply by designated number, with each chorister singing in his or her own register (i.e., in octave-equivalence). Each verse of text is sung on one note only, progressing chromatically through an octave, with each new line of verse moving to the next note. There is no vocal polyphony in the main part. Rather, participation moves from soloist to a small ensemble and eventually to the entire ensemble, winding through these alternations throughout. The four part-books should be distributed roughly as follows:

- Part I – one member of the choir; if the conductor wishes, a small group can take turns being the "soloist"
- Part II – 20% of the choir
- Part III – 50% of the choir (including those members in Part II)
- Part IV – 100% of the choir (including those members in Parts II and III)

The soloist (who sings Part I) may sing the other parts as well. If the choir is on the smallish side, e.g. $n < 15$, that might be for the best. Part V (intended for a *schola*) is optional and requires excellent singers who can navigate tough intervals and rhythms in (octave-equivalent) unison. The piece concludes optimally (but optionally) with a psalm-chant, ideally sung by the schola. All of the schola parts, including the psalm-chant, are derived from Joe Peabody's scholarly and homiletic writings on the Beatitudes, which he generously sent to me a few months before the retreat to familiarize myself with his thinking. The more scholarly aspects appear in the piece proper, while the psalm-chant lyrics derive from a very personal story that he tells which has great emotional resonance with me. I love the Anglican psalm-chanting tradition but have little opportunity to sonify much of it in the mainline liturgy I enact. This felt like an opportunity to craft such a harmony and "point" the text in a poetic way. The only word of Joe's that I substitute is "Adonai" for "YHWH." Having grown up with יהוה, I do see how a literal phonetic translation results in the Latinate tetragrammaton of YHWY or YHVH (Joe's symbols of choice). Seeing as how neither the Hebrew nor the English should be uttered, "Adonai" seems like a logical fit.

The retreat was held at the Cohutta Springs Conference Center in Chatsworth Georgia on November 3rd-5th, 2018. The group of 50 Methodists were excellent sports and cheerfully took on the great risk of singing new, unconventional music. The work was first heard in worship on May 19th, 2019, with Mark Ridings directing the Marietta First UMC Chancel Choir with me on organ and directing Schola Quadratum for the psalm-chant.

Brian Parks
December 2018/rev. May 2019

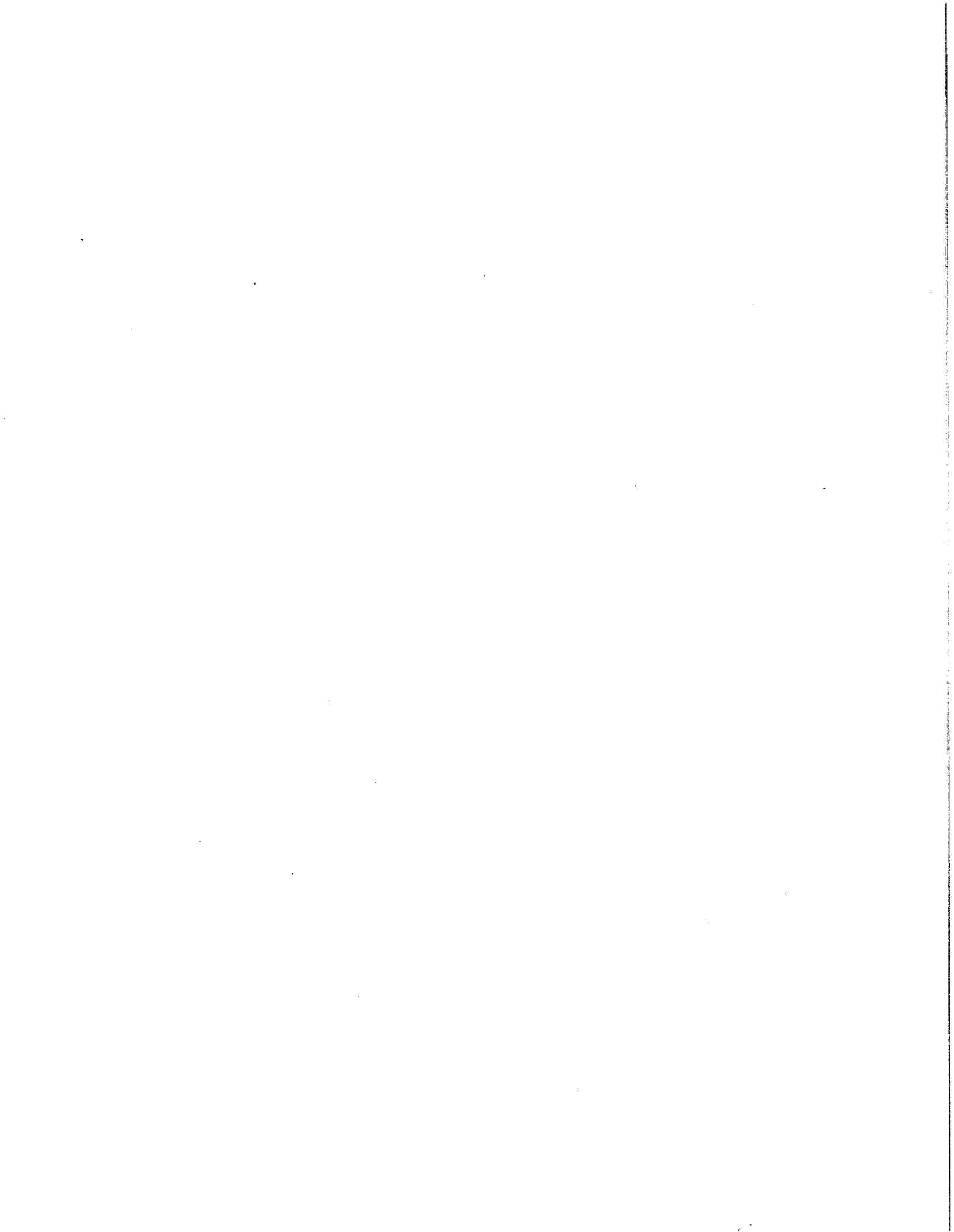


A note on the organ registration:

The organ should be clear, not loud. The piece requires no registral changes until measure 66, (Matthew 5: 12), when the choir reaches its highest note and sings with 100% participation. This is also where the organ ceases to creatively render the overtone series and plays with a more conventional I – x – IV – V harmonic arc. Here, the organ's volume should still not overpower the choir.

For the balance of the piece, an 8' string stop (Viole de Gambe, Salicional) with a soft flute should be sufficient in the manuals. In the pedals, a soft 16' Rohrflute with the string stop coupled to the pedals should suffice. If the string and pedal flute are under expression, that could be a valuable tool to correspond with shifting choral density.

While the psalm-chant is best sung unaccompanied, each realization will require different support.



♩ = ca. 100 bpm

I II

I-IV (8) Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountain-side

V (8)

Organ (Ped.)

4 III

I-IV (8) and sat down. His disc - i - ples came to

V (8)

Organ

7, **IV**

I-IV

him, and he be - gan to teach them,

V

Organ

9, **I**

I-IV

Say - ing: Ble - ssed are the poor in

V

Organ

11, **II** **III**

I-IV

Spi - rit, for theirs is the King - dom

V

Who is the aud - i - ence? The

Organ

13, **IV** **II**

I-IV

of Hea - ven Bless - ed are

V

crowd, or the young disc -

Organ

15

I-IV

III IV H

those who mourn, for

V

i-ples the

Organ

18

I-IV

IV

they will be com-for-ted. Bless-ed are

V

bless-ed people are the bent knee'd, fu-ly sur-ren-dered

Organ

21, II

I-IV (b) the meek, for they shall in - her - it

V (b) peo - ple. There are no

Organ

24, IV I

I-IV (b) the earth. Bless - ed are

V (b) 'steps to ho - li - ness.'

Organ

-5-

27 **II**

I-IV *those who hun - ger*

V *Mo - ses ob - jec - ted to go - ing to E - gypt,*

Organ

30 **III** **IV**

I-IV *and thirst for right - eous - ness, for*

V *A - do - nai coun - tered with, " I*

Organ

33

I-IV

they will be filled. Bless-ed are the

V

Will be with you."

Organ

36

I-IV

mer-ci-ful for they will be shown mer-cy

V

Organ

39

I-IV

III

IV

Bless - ed are the pure in heart, for they

V

I be - lieve that each Be -

Organ

42

I-IV

I

will see God.

V

a - ti - tude is a pri - sm through which

Organ

45, **IV**

I-IV

Bless - ed are the peace - mak - ers,

V

We glimpse the light of the gos - pel.

Organ

48, **II**

I-IV

for they will be called Chil - dren of God.

V

The "King - dom"

Organ

8va

51, I II

I-IV

Bless - ed are those who are

V

is not a coun - ty o - ver in A - la -

Organ

54, III IV III

I-IV

per - se - cut - ed be - cause of Right - eous - ness, for

V

ba - ma. The King - dom of

Organ

57, II I

I-IV

⑧ theirs is the King-dom of Hea - ven.

V

⑧ God is a phrase which de - scribes the

Organ

60 II III IV

I-IV

⑧ Bless-ed are you when peo - ple in - sult you, per - se - cute you and

V

⑧ act - ive, dy - nam - ic, sov - reign

Organ

63

I-IV

(8) false-ly say all kinds of ev-il a -gainst you,

V

(8) life of God in real time,

Organ

65

I IV

I-IV

(8) be-cause of me Re-joice and be

V

(8) right now

Organ

(p) (increase) f

67,

I-IV

glad, be - cause great is your re - ward in Hea - ven, for

V

Organ

70,

I-IV

in the same way they per - se - cu - ted the pro - phets

V

Organ

73

I-IV

V

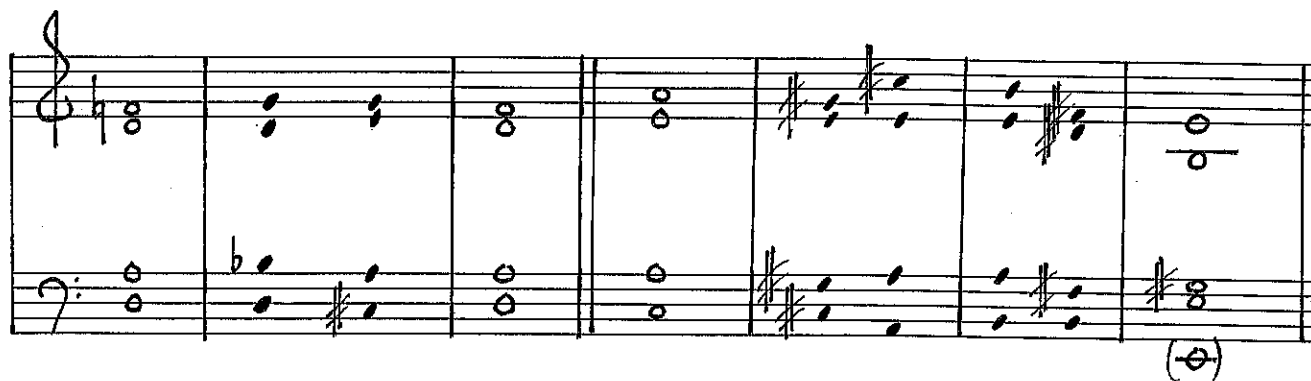
Organ

who were be - fore you.

(hold until chant begins)

(Schola attacca to Chant)

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is written on three systems. The first system, labeled 'I-IV', is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains the lyrics 'who were be - fore you.' with a fermata over the final note. The second system, labeled 'V', is a vocal line in treble clef with a fermata. The third system, labeled 'Organ', consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef, both with a key signature of one sharp. They contain chords and a fermata. Handwritten annotations include '(hold until chant begins)' above the I-IV staff and '(Schola attacca to Chant)' to the right of the V staff.



1. There is still an unconverted | part of • my | personality :
which pretends from time to time to | tell me | that I | am alone.
2. God is busy | some-where | else :
He's not paying attention to me and my concerns; *
and that's when the seeds of | sin • and re|bellion • are | sown in my soul.
3. My | brain is | learning :
what my heart | is still | trying • to | comprehend.
4. Adonai | is with | me:
For me to be righteous, * it requires of me
that I stay in the | dance • with our | ever-present | God.
5. I remember | visit-ing a | member :
of the | Dal-ton | church • who was | dying.
6. Her cancer was | back for • the | third time. :
and we both knew | what the | out-come | would be.
7. I | went to • see her | often :
and one day began to talk about the radically different way *
in which | Bu-ber | talks a-bout | Adonai.
8. Not as an unmoved, untouched, uninvolved | philo-sophical | deity :
but as the | "be-ing | with you • God of | Exodus.
9. I noticed that she had be - | gun to | cry :
and kicked myself for boring her * with a report
on my reading | rather • than | being • with | her.
10. My next words | were • "O I'm | sorry..." :
She looked at me through her tears *
and said, *
"I think I like the | 'being • with you | God' | best.
11. Glory | be to • the | Father :
And | to the • son and | to the • Holy | Ghost. :
12. As it was in the beginning, * is | now and • ever | shall be. :
World | with-out | end, A - | men.