



The songs for this year have been chosen because of their unique stories, which teach us that people from all different walks of life and from past to the present have a soul that seeks goodness.

September 2023 - Come, Come, Ye Saints

Concerned about his wife, Diantha, who had remained in Nauvoo because she was expecting her first child, William Clayton, a musician in the first pioneer company to enter the Salt Lake Valley, wrote the words to “Come, Come, Ye Saints” 103 miles west of Nauvoo after finally receiving news of the birth of his healthy baby boy on April 15, 1846. Although his wife was suffering from illness, he wrote soon afterwards: “This morning I composed a new song. It is entitled ‘All is well.’ “I feel to thank my Heavenly Father for my boy and pray that he will spare and preserve his life and that of his mother and so order it so that we may soon meet again. ”Come, Come, Ye Saints” isn't just a popular hymn among Latter-day Saints. It is also loved among other religions—modified versions appear in several Christian denominations’ hymnals today, including the hymnal for the Seventh-day Adventists. Our Latter-day Hymns, The Stories, and the Messages by Karen Lynn Davison

October 2023 - Long, Long Ago

This song was written in 1833 by English songwriter and dramatist, Thomas Haynes Bayly (1797-1839), whose other songs include Gaily the Troubadour. It was not published until ten years later, after Bayly had died. The song first appeared when Rufus Griswold, editor of a Philadelphia magazine, published a collection of Bayly's poems and songs in 1843. Bayly originally named the tune “The Long Ago”, so it appears Griswold changed the name. It achieved instant popularity and was the most popular song in America in 1843.

Thomas Haynes Bayly was born in Bath, England on October 13, 1797, to wealthy parents. His father expected Bayly to be a lawyer, but after several years at home he went to Oxford to study for the church. His studies ended when he married a wealthy woman. They had two daughters and a son. They lived happily for six years until their son died. Bayly lost his health and faced financial ruin. He turned to writing to pay the bills. Bayly fell ill and died at the age of 42 in April of 1839. <https://en.m.wikipedia.com>

November 2023 - The Old Chorister

Linda Weight Cluff: This song was written in honor of Fredrick Weight, a Utah pioneer. He was a talented man, both musically and artistically. He was choir leader in the Springville Ward for twenty-four years and played the organ until he died. The Springville DUP Museum displays some of the instruments he made by hand. He also made three organs. He was known as “The Old Chorister,” a name given him by the late President Cannon. Daughters of Utah Pioneers, International Society Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Pioneer Song Contest Collection

December 2023 - Christmas Song of Your Choice

Some suggestions: (These are from the green "Pioneer Songs" book.)

Silent Night – page 101 (this song is an audio file on the ISDUP website)

Jingle Bells – page 266

Christmas Chimes – page 36

Since the green book is limited to just these three songs, feel free to go to other sources.

January 2024 - Polly-Wolly-Doodle

"Polly-Wolly-Doodle" is a traditional American children's song. It was sung by Dan Emmett's Virginia Minstrels, who premiered at New York's Bowery Amphitheatre in February 1843, and is often credited to Emmett (1815–1904). It was known to have been performed by the Yale Glee Club in 1878 and was first published in a Harvard student songbook in 1880.

"Polly-Wolly-Doodle" appears in the manuscript for Laura Ingalls Wilder's novel, *These Happy Golden Years* (1943), exactly as it is used in the published version. The melody of the song, as it is usually sung, formed the basis for Boney M.'s hit "Hooray! Hooray! It's a Holi-Holiday" in 1979, and for Alexandra Burke's song "Start Without You". The tune is also found in children's music, including the Sunday school song "O-B-E-D-I-E-N-C-E," "Radio Lollipop" by the German group die Lollipops, and the Barney & Friends songs "Alphabet Soup" (using only the tune of the first verse) and "If I Had One Wish" (which uses both verses). <https://en.m.wikipedia.org>

February 2024 - America (My Country 'Tis of Thee)

"America", or better known as "My Country 'Tis of Thee," was written by Samuel Francis Smith. Lowell Mason arranged and performed it in public for the first time in Boston on July 4, 1831, at a children's Independence Day celebration. The melody is from Muzio Clementi's Symphony No. 3, the same as the United Kingdom's national Anthem, "God Save the Queen." "America" was the national anthem of the United States until "The Star-Spangled Banner" was adopted in 1931. americanliterature.com

March 2024 - Three Cheers for Pioneers

Carol Martineau Stoddard: Every one of the following pioneer ancestors were alive when the gospel was restored. Each joined the Church and pioneered to Utah. James Allred marched in Zion's Camp and founded Spring City in central Utah. His grandson, Reuben Warren Allred, marched with the Mormon Battalion. Daniel Tyler was in the Mormon Battalion and wrote the book "The Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War." Later, he served as a Mission President in Europe and Chaplain of the Martin Handcart Company. Joel Hills Johnson wrote the words to the hymn "High on the Mountain Top." His daughter, Susan Ellen stayed behind in Nauvoo with her grandmother, Julia Hills Johnson, then walked to Utah barefooted at age fourteen. Zerah Pulsipher was a member of the first Quorum of Seventy and is named in The Doctrine and Covenants. The message of my song is that pioneering is not over. People all over the world are joining the Church. They are also pioneers. It is our duty to share what we have. Daughters of Utah Pioneers, International Society Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Pioneer Song Contest Collection

April 2024 - Kind Words are Sweet Tones

Ebenezer Beasley, composer – 1840-1906. Even at the age of two years his family recognized his gift for music, and at the age of six years he was offered training at Windsor Castle, but his parents declined the offer, feeling it was too much of a commitment for such a young child. When he was nine years old, he and his family joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The family later immigrated to the Salt Lake city Valley shortly after Ebenezer had married Sarah Hancock. Their handcart journey was hard coming across the plains, and as they were about to perish from starvation, they were rescued at the Green River by a company sent out from Salt Lake City. Holding many musical positions in the Church and community, he became conductor of The Mormon Tabernacle Choir in 1880 and held that position until 1889.

Joseph L. Townsend, author – He came west from Pennsylvania to the Salt Lake City Valley for health reasons, where he joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, married Alta Hancock, and settled in Payson, Utah, where they opened a mercantile business. During his lifetime he wrote many poems, songs, and hymns. It is said that the words to the song “Let Us Oft Speak Kind Words” came to him while he was laboring as a superintendent in a large Sunday school. He heard among the people several fault-finding remarks and thought how much finer it would be to hear kind words spoken more often. Some called it the finest sermon written. Our Latter-Day Hymns, The Stories, and the Messages by Karen Lynn Davidson

May 2024 - She'll be Comin' Round the Mountain

The first appearance of "She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain" in print was in Carl Sandburg's The American Songbag in 1927. Sandburg reports that this African American spiritual "When the Chariot Comes," which was sung to the same melody, was adapted by railroad workers in the Midwestern United States during the 1890s.

The original song was published in Old Plantation Hymns in 1899. It ostensibly refers to the Second Coming of Christ and subsequent Rapture, with the “she” referring to the chariot that the returning Christ is depicted as driving. Like many spirituals that originated in the African American community, this was probably a coded anthem for the Underground Railroad. It was also used in labor circles to refer to Mother Jones, who frequently visited far-flung communities with labor issues. The secularized version that developed among railroad work gangs in the late 19th century has become a standard over the years, appearing in printed collections of children's music while also being performed by both children and adults in sing-alongs, as a campfire song. <https://galaxymusicnotes.com>