



**Your DECEMBER ~ 2017 HUG IN A MUG VOL. 31**

**A CHRISTMAS " Hallelujah !" TO YOU ALL!!!**

*Psalm 150:1-6*

.....Imagine for a moment, a couple of your best friends and you stepping out to your favorite Starbucks before last minute shopping next week...and have a Christmas Flash Mob of fifty-some voices suddenly break into Handel's **Messiah!**???

Composed in 1741, with its scriptural text compiled by Charles Jennens, a wealthy 18th century scholar who never received a penny for his many "libretti," {texts used for extended musical works} he wrote five for Handel, thus establishing Handel's immortal fame and popularity. Taken by Jennens from the King James Bible, and from the version of the *Psalms* included with the *Book of Common Prayer*, it was first performed in Dublin, April of 1742, and received its London premiere nearly a year later, eventually becoming one of the best-known and most frequently performed choral works in Western music.

Jennens's text is an extended reflection on Jesus as the Messiah called Christ, beginning in Part I with prophecies by Isaiah and others, moving to the annunciation to the shepherds, the only "scene" taken from the Gospels. In Part II, Handel concentrates on the Passion and ends with the "Hallelujah" chorus. In Part III, he covers the resurrection of the dead and Christ's glorification in heaven.

(/ˌhæliˈluːjə/ **HAL-i-LOO-yə**) is a transliteration of the Hebrew word הַלְלֵי־יְ (Modern *halleluya*), composed of two elements: הַלְלֵי , a second-person imperative masculine plural form of the Hebrew verb *hillel*: an exhortation to "praise" addressed to several people, and יְ (the name of God Jah or Yah). Hallelujah is found 24 times in the Old Testament, but only in the book of Psalms. It appears in 15 different Psalms, between 104-150, and in almost every case at the opening and/or closing of the Psalm. These passages are called the "Hallelujah Psalms."

However, "hallelujah" means more than simply "praise Jah" or "praise Yah;" it means a joyous praise in song, to boast in God! AND The second part, Yah, is a shortened form of YHWH, the name for the Creator. It is sometimes rendered by Christians as "Yahweh" or "Jehovah". The Septuagint translates Yah as Kyrios (the LORD), because of the Jewish custom of replacing the sacred name with "Adonai", meaning "the Lord."

The word *hallelujah* occurring in the Psalms is therefore a request for a congregation to **join in praise toward God**. It can be translated as "Praise Yah" or "Praise Jah, you people". Most well-known English versions of the Hebrew Bible translate the Hebrew "Hallelujah" (as in Psalm 150:1) as two Hebrew words, **generally rendered as "Praise (ye)" and "the LORD", but the second word is given as "Yah."** In English translations this is mostly rendered as "Hallelujah", but as "Alleluia" in several translations, while a few have "Praise the Lord", "Praise God", "Praise our God", or "Thanks to our God".

As we rejoice now throughout our ADVENT, "coming into" focus on the Christmas story, Luke 2:1-20, almost by rote, and come to the ".....suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those with whom he is pleased.....'" May your "**congregational flash mob**" consider the joyFULL words of praise to God as heartfelt expressions of joy, thanksgiving and praise towards God, requiring no prompting, but rather of praise and singing!!

Most heartfelt Blessings to You All, and Yours,

☺ Pat Reck, Chair, Leader Development