

**HOMILY**  
**Music Sunday – 07.27.25**  
**Music the Methodist Way**

The Wesley brothers, John and Charles, are known, primarily as the founders of what is, today, the United Methodist Church and world methodism. Their theological writings, sermons, meditations, and administrative directions for churches are still being studied and applied around the world.

But they, along with their father, Samuel, were also artists and poets.

Samuel wrote at least 6 hymns that are still in use today, with up to 19 attributed to him overall, his best-known hymn being “The Lord of Sabbath Let Us Praise.” He also published a collection of poems in 1736 that included religious verse.

Charles Wesley was a hymn-writing powerhouse—he penned over 6,000 hymns during his lifetime making him the most prolific hymnist in the history of Christianity. His hymns were crafted to accompany sermons, express theological truths, and stir the hearts of congregations in worship. 51 of his hymns reside in our current United Methodist Hymnal, including: “Christ the Lord is Risen Today” - “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” - “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” - and “O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing”

His lyrical legacy helped shape the Methodist movement and continues to echo through churches around the world.

His older brother, John, while best known as a preacher and organizer of Methodism, did write a few original hymns and translated many from German. He also edited and published numerous hymn collections, shaping Methodist worship through his selections and theological revisions.

His most lasting and enduring contribution to Methodist music, however, is “Directions for Singing” which he wrote in the introduction to “Select Hymns” a collection of Charles’s hymns published in 1761. His directions still appear in the opening pages of the United Methodist Hymnal.

**DIRECTIONS FOR SINGING**  
**by John Wesley**

1. Learn these tunes before you learn any others, afterwards learn as many as you please.
2. Sing them exactly as they are printed here, without altering or mending them at all; and if you have learned to sing them otherwise, unlearn it as soon as you can.
3. Sing all – see that you join the congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a slight degree of weakness or weariness hinder you. If it is a cross to you, take it up and you will find a blessing.

4. Sing lustily – and with good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half-dead or half-asleep; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of its being heard, than when you sang the songs of Satan.

5. Sing modestly – do not bawl so as to be heard above or distinct from the rest of the congregation that you may not destroy the harmony, but strive to unite your voices together so as to make one melodious sound.

6. Sing in time – whatever time is sung, be sure to keep with it. Do not run before and do not stay behind it; but attend closely to the leading voices and move therewith as exactly as you can and take care not to sing too slow. This drawling way naturally steals on all who are lazy; and it is high time to drive it out from among us and sing all our tunes just as quick as we did at first.

7. Sing spiritually – have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so, shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve here, and reward when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.

Finally, John's opinion concerning the use of musical instruments in the service of worship: "I have no objection to musical instruments in worship as long as they are neither seen nor heard." He later softened his stand on this one.