

Craig Courtney Biography Composer/Conductor

For composer Craig Courtney, music has been a lifelong pursuit. He began picking up melodies on the piano at the age of three, and in his teens he analyzed recordings of classical masterworks. This immersion into music helped to foster Courtney's passion for excellence and influenced the art he would create throughout his life.

Courtney went to the University of Cincinnati, where he received a bachelor's and a master's degree in piano performance. Feeling that it was necessary and valuable to devote time to totally reworking his technique, Courtney spent time in Milan continuing his piano studies.

Not long after leaving Milan, he was invited to join the music faculty of the famed Mozarteum University in Salzburg as a piano teacher and accompanist for the woodwind and brass department. He also conducted the choir at the Salzburg International Baptist Church, which led to a turning point – due to the scarcity of music in English, he began composing sacred choral music for his choir. One of these compositions would prove to be the catalyst for the next stage in his life.

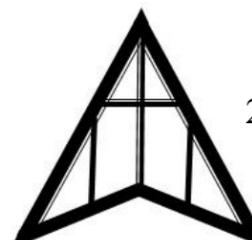
In 1985, Courtney's *Thy Will Be Done* caught the attention of John Ness Beck, founder of Beckenhorst Press. This began a relationship with Beckenhorst that continues to this day. Courtney's music became a cornerstone of the Beckenhorst catalog, and Courtney himself became an editor for the publisher. Today, he is the Executive Music Editor, a job that has introduced him to yet another passion in his life – mentoring.

In his time at Beckenhorst, Courtney has helped to develop a number of composers. His most important advice for composers is to avoid repeating a successful formula – rather, they should keep challenging themselves to step outside their comfort zone. Try things that don't feel natural and incorporate them into each new piece.

For Courtney, writing comes from a place inside he calls his "sanctuary." It is only accessible in solitude, where only he and God are at work. Partnership with God is his deepest motivation; he prefers to think of writing music as a form of prayer. When looking for inspiration, that is the mindset he seeks, and it is truly evident in every piece of music he writes.

In Concert Craig Courtney

Sunday, March 30, 2025
4:00 p.m.



Northwood Presbyterian Church
2875 SR 580, Clearwater, FL 33761
(727) 796-8090
www.northwoodpc.org

In Concert
Craig Courtney

with
Northwood Presbyterian Church Chancel Choir
Handbells & Brass

Stephanie Carson, Director of Traditional Music
David Furr, Organist

Sunday, March 30, 2025
4:00 p.m.

Welcome

Stephanie Carson

Prayer of Invocation

Chris Curvin, Pastor

"Praise the Lord Who Reigns Above"

Craig Courtney

Choir, Brass, Organ

Praise the Lord who reigns above and keeps His court below.
Praise the holy God of love, and all His greatness show.
Praise Him for His noble deeds, Praise Him for His matchless power.
Him from whom all good proceeds let earth and heaven adore.

Celebrate the eternal God with harp and psaltery.
Timbrels soft and cymbals loud in this high praise agree.
Praise with every tuneful string; all the reach of heavenly art.
All the powers of music bring, the music of the heart.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.
Praise Him, all creatures here below.
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host.
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

God, in whom they move and live, let every creature sing.
Glory to their Maker give, and homage to their King.
Hallowed be His name beneath, as in heaven on earth adored;
Praise the Lord in every breath. Let all things praise the Lord.
Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

"To Sing Once More"

Craig Courtney

Awake our souls to sing once more the songs that long have silent been.
From troubled nights and fearful days, our notes of praise and joy begin,
Our notes of praise and joy begin.

Inspired by hope, compelled by grace, we sing Your everlasting praise.
Most holy God, your song we seek and trust in Your unchanging ways,
And trust in Your unchanging ways.

With comfort, Your eternal voice is music to our fainting soul.
It speaks in times of hurt and wrong, it whispers peace, it makes us whole,
It whispers peace, it makes us whole.

Arise, His children, rise again, your God and maker now adore.
No longer silent, lift your voice, awake your souls to sing once more.
Awake our souls to sing once more. Amen

"Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"

arr. Craig Courtney

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah, pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but thou art mighty. Hold me with thy powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more.
Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain, whence the healing stream doth flow.
Let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through.
Strong Deliverer, Strong Deliverer, be thou still my strength and my shield.
Be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside.
Death and hell's destruction, land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises. I will ever give to thee.

"The Shelter of Shalom"

Craig Courtney

You wrap yourself in wondrous light and let it shine on me.
You spread the heavens like a tent and cover me with peace.
You make a shelter of Yourself, my dwelling place, my home.
A refuge in the wilderness, a shelter of shalom.

Refrain: Lead me home, lead me home, lead me home at last to You.

The sorrows of this life are great and, God, my heart so small.
The fragile peace within the world cannot withstand them all.
Yet even in the shadowlands, You will not let me go.
My haven and my hiding place, the shelter of shalom. *Refrain*

When stars above my head at night are whispering "Shalom",
I do not fear my brokenness. I know I shall be whole.
And when my earthly tent comes down, this house of flesh and bone.
O lead me home to peace at last. Your shelter of shalom. *Refrain*

Shalom. Shalom. My Shalom.

"I'll Fly Away"

arr. Craig Courtney

4-hand Piano, Stephanie Carson & David Furr

Some glad morning when this life is over, I'll fly away.
To a home on God's celestial shore, I'll fly away.

Refrain: I'll fly away, O glory, I'll fly away.
When I die, hallelujah by and by, I'll fly away, fly away.

When the shadows of this life have gone, I'll fly away.
Like a bird from prison bars has flown, I'll fly away. *Refrain*

Just a few more weary days and then, I'll fly away.
To a land where joys shall never end, I'll fly away. *Refrain*

“Ukrainian Alleluia”
Craig Courtney, Piano

Craig Courtney

“Let Your Light Shine”
Handbell Choir

arr. Craig Courtney

You are the light of the world. You are the light of the world.

Refrain: Let your light shine, before all people.
Let your light shine in all the earth.
Let your light shine before all people that they might see your good works
And glorify your Father in heaven.

You are the salt of the earth, but if salt loses its flavor, it is good for nothing.
You are the light of the world. You are the light of the world.
A city built on a hill cannot be hidden.
A lamp cannot be covered, a lamp cannot be covered but shines for all, for all to see. *Refrain*

Let your light shine. You are the light of the world.

“Be Not Afraid”

Craig Courtney

Be not afraid for I have redeemed you.
Be not afraid, I have called you by name.

Refrain: When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.
When you pass through the floods, they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire, you will not be consumed.
You are mine. You are precious in my sight.

My love for you is everlasting. My love for you shall have no end. *Refrain*

“The Days of Christ”

Craig Courtney

On a Sunday, Jesus rode on a donkey, on a Sunday, people hailed Him as King.
They laid palms before Him, as they praised and adored Him on a Sunday.

On a Thursday, Jesus dined with disciples, on a Thursday, Jesus washed their feet.
Then He went to a garden, prayed, “not My will, but Thine” on a Thursday.

Refrain: He is Lord and every knee will bow and every tongue confess.
He is Lord and His Kingdom shall stand in truth and righteousness.

On a Friday, Jesus suffered in silence. On a Friday, Jesus died on a tree.
He cried, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do” on a Friday. *Refrain*

On the third day, even death could not hold Him.
On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead.
And the legions of darkness were defeated forever on the third day.

At the last day, I will see my Redeemer, at the last day,
We will meet face to face. Though my skin be destroyed,
Yet in my flesh shall I see Him at the last day, at the last day.

And some day I will cross over Jordan and some day,
I’ll reach the promised land. I will sing with the angels in that
Heavenly choir some day. *Refrain*

On a Sunday, On a Thursday, On a Friday, On the third day, At the last day
He is Lord!

Closing Words

Stephanie Carson

“One Faith, One Hope, One Lord”
Choir, Brass, Organ

Craig Courtney

Refrain: One faith, one hope, one Lord, one church for which He died.
One voice, one song, we lift in praise to Him who was and is and
Shall be evermore.

There is one body, one spirit, as you were called to one hope.
One Lord, baptism and faith.
One God and Father of all, one God and Father of all, one God and Father of all.
Who is in you all. *Refrain*

Though we be many people, diverse with various gifts. We are given to each other
For the unity of faith, that we grow in the knowledge of the Son of God,
In the fullness of Christ. *Refrain*

One faith, one hope, one Lord, one God.

**Your kind generosity is appreciated to help defray the expenses of our Composer Weekend
with Craig Courtney. There will be offering plates at the exits as we leave today.**

Chancel Choir

Soprano

April Carter
Elaine Cornillaud
Rachelle Cox
Susan Curry
Santee Geres
Rollie Haugen
Nadia Hennemen
Marion Homer
Lea Kirdatt
Debbie Lang
Jessie Lusk
Mary McCauley

Alto

Melanie Brown
Emily Cantin
Stephanie Carson
Susan Gajentan
Barbara Jordan
Aimee McDermott
Claudia Mitcham
Mary Sue Schell
Suzanne Sturm
Emily Sutphin

Tenor

Randy Ball
Darrell Cooper
Marti Huff
Dan Jeffre
Steve Lang
Jill Loomis
Dennis Rasmussen
Jerry Sturm

Bass

Steve Anderson
Dylan Cantin
Mike Elza
Jim Ferguson
Peter Gajentan
David Hamilton Jr.
Nick Hodson
Garry Justice
John Sutphin

Instrumentalists

Emily Cantin, Trumpet
Steve Cantin, Trumpet
Dylan Cantin, Trombone
Laura O’Leary, French Horn

Handbells

Ellis Cantin
Terry Curkan
Linda Feller
Rollie Haugen
Lynne Homen
Aaron McDermott
Aidan McDermott
Kevin O’Leary
Skylar Weidner