

## Behind the Hymn: Give Thanks to God

I've rarely had dreams that seemed meaningful to me—I usually don't even remember my dreams in the morning. But in July, 2002, I dreamed about writing an antiphonal or responsive hymn based on one of the great Psalms of praise. The hymn was a cappella, mostly unison but breaking into parts at the climax.

As I thought about that over the coming weeks, I started searching the Psalms for one that seemed appropriate. Psalm 136 leaped out at me almost immediately. It seems to have been written for responsive singing, with a worship leader singing the variable phrases and the people answering, "His love endures forever." *Give Thanks to God* was finished the following day.

A few days later, I felt prompted to write an Advent hymn along the same lines. *Antiphonal Carol* came to be, based on Isaiah 9:6.

The original manuscript for *Give Thanks to God* shows my first intent: unaccompanied unison throughout, alternating between *Leader* and *People* as marked. But for flexibility, I decided to publish the hymn with the indication, "A Cappella or Accompanied; Unison or in Parts".

--Ken Bible

Hymns:  
[Give Thanks to God](#)  
[Antiphonal Carol](#)