

Team Meetings

Text Preparation for Sacred Harp Revision

Zoom Information

<https://emory.zoom.us/j/7168231035> (URL); 716 823 1035 (Meeting ID)

Team

Will Fitzgerald, Jesse P. Karlsberg (chair), Robert Kelley, Erik Schwab, Malinda Snow, Micah Walter, Thomas Ward, Becky Wright

Upcoming batch deadlines

Complete!

Communicating text changes, January 26, 2026

Invitees: Will, Jesse, Micah

Agenda

- Tiered approach
 - Emphasize what people need for singing
 - Transparency
 - Not misrepresenting the revision process in light of discourse
- Combining text and music changes in communications
- Communicating changes between printings
- Flow of information for third and future printings
 - Spreadsheet
 - GitHub
 - Dependencies: print book, [Fasola.org](https://fasola.org), GitHub repo, Braille eds., FaSoLa Minutes app, potential digital edition, Hymnary.org
 - Future printings too!
- Updating 1991 lyrics on [Fasola.org](https://fasola.org) (and app as well)
 - Micah wrote to “webmaster” and then to Chris ccing JPK and WF

Notes

- Process for future changes/other topics
 - Could we use this document as a place to collect topics for periodic meetings to discuss issues
- Flow of information
 - Use  Updates and Corrections for Additional Printings - The Sacred Harp: 2... spreadsheet to manage potential change, which are implemented in authoritative project spreadsheets that feed into the  Sacred Harp Topmatter Combined for Page Layout
 - Can use a “release” feature in GitHub
 - A team member can commit all changes in a PR, that is then reviewed.

- Sharing text and music changes
 - Framing language along the lines of: Changes to songs in *The Sacred Harp* have been made at each revision. Both text and music changes in the 2025 Edition have been made with due consideration of several aspects, including, among other things, carefully consulting and weighing pre-1991 editions (the 1991 edition and others introduced, possibly accidentally, a number of changes).
 - Note (if true!!) that every single one of these changes restores an earlier source, whether a Sacred Harp edition or earlier source. For music, mark some changes as “restored” rather than “changed” in the list of changes.
 - Share three things:
 - Version of Micah’s “List of word choice changes” (could add a column with source of word restored/justification; recorded in text change recommendations)
 - GitHub repositories
 - Spreadsheet with tabs for words, other text, notes, other music [optional]
 - Music changes
 - Micah likes the idea of keeping text and music changes separate
 - Separate the music changes into different categories
 - For note changes consider illustrating
- Sharing third printing changes
 - Third printing is now available/shipping. This printing has these two musical changes. Also includes updates to X attributions, a corrected scripture citation, and X other categories. Here is a full list.
- Next steps
 - Will is willing to compile the tabs in
 - ➦ Text Change Recommendations - Text Preparation Team spreadsheet to into one tab and then populate new column in
 - ➦ Punctuation, Word, Note, and Notation Changes in The Sacred Harp: 2025... for word selection changes only.
 - Jesse will write to Chris about updating the 1991 text on the [Fasola.org](https://fasola.org) index
 - Jesse will work on segmenting the music change recommendations
 - Jesse will work on third printing blog post
 - Will will make a PR and and tag current version and third printing
 - MW and I will review
 - Downstream dependencies: turn into a list of people
 - Share blog post with Peter Raymer
 - Will will add 2025 information to Hymnary with help from their staff

Topics for August 2024 Meetings

- Topics where we need to formulate an approach
 - Friend/friend: when do we capitalize common nouns that refer to God, but indirectly – as an appositive, predicate nominative, or metaphor?
 - ➦ Friend/friend (divine referent)
 - MW, JPK

- ☒ Should we always capitalize “Heavenly” in conjunction with “Father” or can we distinguish between adjective vs. part of an epithet?
 - WF, MJW, RK, JPK
- ☒ Serial commas: should we consistently use or not use them? If not, are there other cases where we should revisit current punctuation in these situations?
 - Serial commas
 - RW, JPK, MW*
- ☒ Blessed/bless'd/blest: when should we use these terms? How best to indicate the pronunciation of one- and two-syllable versions of “blessed.”
 - Blessed Analysis in 1991 Lyrics
 - How to Handle Blessed/Blest in The Sacred Harp
 - WF, JPK, MW**
- ☒ Word/word: in which situations do we want to capitalize “Word” vs. leave it uncapitalized? How should we resolve situations where the meaning of the term is open to interpretation.
 - Word/word analysis Word vs word
 - WF, JPK, MW**
- ☒ Verse extension choruses: has our approach been reasonably consistent? Anything we would like to change?
 - MW, JPK***
- ☒ Mid/'mid: should we revert to *mid* consistently?
 - MW, JPK***
- Topics we’ve resolved where we need to check our implementation
 - ☒ Exclamation points: we’ve decided not to capitalize the word following a mid-sentence exclamation point. Did we consistently apply this standard in the early batches?
 - WF
 - ☒ Capitalization of heaven: we’ve decided not to capitalize “heaven” or “heav'n” unless the term is used as an epithet for God. Have we consistently applied this standard?
 - WF
 - ☒ Interrupting refrains: we’ve codified an approach with Rob’s guidance. As we’ve applied this to subsequent songs at least one of us has had further questions about the balance of music and text. We may also want to take a look holistically at how we’ve applied these guidelines.
 - Punctuating Interrupting Refrains in The Sacred Harp
 - Additional comments on interrupting refrains
 - 1991 Sacred Harp Songs with Interrupting Refrains
 - RK, MW, JPK****
 - ☐ Discretionary commas: some of us have flagged songs to return to with our approach to discretionary commas in hand. Please see the list in [this document](#) and add any on your radar.

- RK, MW, JPK****
- ☐ Additional miscellaneous songs: [Songs to revisit for text preparation](#)
 - MW, JPK***
- ☐ Consistent punctuation of identical texts:
 - [Close line check](#)
 - WF, JPK

Interrupting refrains – August 20/27, 2024 (2–3 pm ET)

Present

Rob Kelley, Micah Walter, Jesse P. Karlsberg

Agenda

- Talk through Micah's comments ([Additional comments on interrupting refrains](#))
- Look at all the interrupting refrains to review how we've applied our guidelines
 - Guidelines: [Punctuating Interrupting Refrains in The Sacred Harp](#)
 - List: [1991 Sacred Harp Songs with Interrupting Refrains](#)

Notes

- Approach
 - We're not revising Rob's guidelines
 - But there may be cases where we roll back some songs where either the previous punctuation doesn't follow our general guidelines but is helpful or preferable because it's clear or looks consistent, or otherwise seems like a better choice, or where it meets Rob's guidelines but rolling back changes would lead to sentence fragments.
- LWe added to Will's initial list of songs with interrupting refrains and started reviewing and noting decisions there.
- Next steps
 - Ask Will if he has any thoughts on validating the list.
 - Meet again in a week to review the rest of the refrains.

Notes 8/27

Verse extension; (')Mid; Misc. – August 19, 2024 (3–4 pm ET)

Present

Micah Walter, Jesse P. Karlsberg

Agenda

- (')Mid
 - Using the apostrophe makes it look unnecessarily informal.
 - MW doesn't have an apostrophe and recognizes as the first sense a word separate from amid.

- Things to do:
 - 164 and 496 are the only two songs with apostrophes to remove
 - Jesse will check any songs not yet edited that may have the word
- Verse extension
 - Examples:
 - 58 PISGAH
 - 103 ANIMATION
 - 162 PLENARY
 - 206 CHRISTIAN'S HOPE
 - 314 CLEBURNE
 - 325 SOLDIER OF THE CROSS
 - 338 SAWYER'S EXIT
 - 389 FREDERICKSBURG
 - 390 NEW PROSPECT
 - 403 HEAVENLY REST
 - Approaches:
 - Terminal after verse, then commas within extension chorus: 58, 103, 314, 325, 162, 389
 - Medial after verse, then commas within extension chorus: 206, 338, 390 (in a class by itself b/c extension starts before chorus), 403. (Micah notes the absence of a phrase barline)
 - Medial after verse, semicolon at midpoint, commas elsewhere: 338 (old editions had commas at midpoint)
 - Changes:
 - Semicolon to comma at midpoint of 338.
 - JPK will make a PR for the 338 change and will check that all are implemented as intended in music engraving
- Miscellaneous songs

Notes

Serial commas – August 19/September 12, 2024

Present

Becky Wright, Micah Walter, Jesse P. Karlsberg

Agenda

- Review where we are
- Consider options!
- Make decisions

Notes, August 19

- Approach

- Jesse: emerged from previous discussions without a good sense of why we are adopting a given approach or even clearly what that approach should be. Sees five options:
 - Always use serial comma
 - Use it unless its absence makes meaning clearer
 - Mostly keep what's there
 - Omit it unless its presence makes meaning clearer
 - Never use serial comma
- Micah: Doesn't see consistency as something to strive for, sees it as something to edit in poetry with a text transmission history rather than as in a prose context. Some singers (especially those with non-shape-note singing as part of their background) will put weight on commas with regard to pacing, pauses, or breaths.
 - Where we have made changes is often where historically there's something different.
- Becky: Generally likes the serial comma and thinks it helps with meaning most often. But thinks we're already generally imposing much more consistency than before so we shouldn't worry about appearance of consistency.
 - Would advocate for a willingness to add them where it improves clarity but no mandate.
- Micah: We already have a rule that if a change improves clarity we do it. Likewise a rule that we revert changes we don't like made in 1991. Those may cover us.
- We really wouldn't want to add a serial comma to 125 or 328 (believing, true and clean)
- But we might find one helpful in 477
- Next steps
 - Micah will make a list of all the lists in the book, whether we use the serial comma or not, and whether we've changed it or not
 - How to do that: presence of "and" or "or" preceded by commas... commas in line
 - Would also be good to get a sense of the scope. If there are relatively few of these
- Lists:
 - Proper lists: 29.2/419, 322, 354.1, 361, 370, 376
 - Serial comma: [113](#), , [82.2/127](#), [151](#), [204](#) (2x), [205](#) (2x), [564](#)
 - No serial comma: [45.1/105](#), [81.1](#), [110](#), [123.1](#), [123.2](#), [125](#), [328](#), [477](#)
 - Inconsistent: [144](#)
 - Edge cases: 467, 534, 131.2, 134, 129, 147.2, 168, 183, 329

Notes, September 12

- Micah created this list: [Serial commas in the Sacred Harp](#)
- Decisions: We looked at all cases and wound up
 - Adding serial commas to several songs, mostly those where the serial comma was present in 1870 and removed in 1911, one where the serial comma was

present in 1911 and removed in 1991, and a couple where adding the serial comma clarified otherwise unhelpfully ambiguous meaning

- Leaving some songs without serial commas as they are where making a change did not improve sense or restore historical punctuation, and
- Leaving all songs with serial commas as they are.
- Becky agreed to make a pull request for these changes.

Bles(t/sed); (W/w)ord – August 14, 2024 (3–4 pm ET)

Present

Will Fitzgerald, Micah Walter, Jesse P. Karlsberg

Agenda

- Bles(t/sed)
 -  Blessed Analysis in 1991 Lyrics ;
 -  How to Handle Blessed/Blest in The Sacred Harp
- (W/w)ord
 -  Word/word analysis
 -  Word vs word

Notes

March 18, 2024 (3–4 pm ET)

Agenda

- New team members
- Revision-music committee update
- Process
 - ☐ Word, verse changes, and text replacements ([spreadsheet](#))
 - ☐ Review of texts with no changes using “[no change]”
 - ☐ Role of historical non-Sacred Harp sources ([style guide](#))
 - ☐ Becky’s new [text prep checklist](#)
- Style questions
 - ☐ O/oh, continued ([list and analysis](#))
 - ☐ Serial commas, revisited
 - ☐ Blessed/bless’d/blest ([list and analysis](#))
 - ☐ Exclamation points
 - ☐ Interrupting refrains ([list](#); [conversations](#))
 - ☐ Word/word

Notes

- On [no change]: yes, we’ll do this

- Role of historical texts
- Interrupting refrains: possible approaches
 - Care more about the musical phrasing
 - “Loose”?
 - Clarification on Micah’s point of view: “I don’t think we wanted to enforce a certain type of punctuation around interrupting refrains. Rather, it’s helpful to us to note that these songs may operate differently than others. If we identify a song as being in this camp, we can then give ourselves permission to punctuate it more in line with the music – more loosely than we would if we wanted to make strict syntactic sense of it. For example, we wouldn’t need to have a semicolon before “Roll, Jordan, roll” in 274b just because that is a complete clause, or have varying punctuation around “I am bound to die in the army” in 80b based on the nature of the phrase in front of it. (In 274t, the interrupting refrain does make sense with the preceding lines, and in that case we may not need to treat it in any special way. Other songs may benefit more from this type of thinking.)”

New Team Member Discussions, March 5–8, 2024

Agenda

- Overview
 - Scope
 - Timeline
- [Tools and process](#)
 - [Style guide](#) and priorities
 - [Format](#)
 - [Tracker](#)
- Next steps
 - Agreement
 - First batch
 - March team meeting

Notes

- eschwab (Google); erikschwab (GitHub)
- becky.c.wright (Google); rewrighting (GitHub)
- thomas.thward (Google); thomasthward (GitHub)

February 2, 2024 (11 am–noon ET)

Agenda

- Checking in
 - Timing? How is it going?
 - Access to [historical editions](#)
 - Other process suggestions?
- How to handle O/oh

- Commas
 - Approach to discretionary commas
 - Serial commas
- Capitalization
 - Capitalization after medial ? and !
- Unusual hyphenation situations
 - When to retain contractions that shorten long one-syllable words (e.g. tho'ts, tho')
 - Contractions for words that don't match dictionary syllabification (e.g. glor·ious")
 - Annotating mandatory hyphenation for non-intuitive syllabification (e.g. bles·sed)
- Editing songs with similar texts
- Process going forward
 - Batch size?
 - Availability?
 - Adding team members?
- Next steps

Notes

- Contemporary definitions
 - O: Vocative: addressing a person/God (or something). Can be real or imagined.
 - Oh: Interjective: more exclamatory, like an outcry.
- But
 - Both have both uses over centuries; style guides have gone back and forth a good bit; and is it different for "chiefly poetical or rhetorical" texts
 - Because of its poeticalness, "O" feels a bit prayerful and/or formal
- Possibilities
- Commas
 - "Ye mountains and valleys, **ye** rivers and plains,"

January 5, 2024 (12:30–2:00 pm ET)

Agenda

- [Principles](#) for text preparation
- [Format needs](#) from music engravers
- [Process and tools](#)
- Next steps

Notes

(See above linked documents for notes.)

- Next steps:
 - JPK will discuss discretionary commas with DI
 - JPK will draft section of style guide on text prep based on Principles document and share with WF, RK, MS, and MJW for feedback
 - JPK, WF, MJW, and KC will meet to finalize use of GitHub and progress tracker

December 8, 2023 (11 am–noon ET)

Agenda

- Style guide
 - [Sample text corpus exploration comparison](#)
 - Takeaways: convictions and questions
 - It's all about punctuation
 - What constitutes a line?
 - Touchpoints: historical sources, musical features, etc.
- [Tools for text editing](#) and document management (and process)
- [Format needs](#) from music engravers
- Next steps
 - Scraping Fasola.org
 - Preparing reference texts from 1991 edition

Notes

- Sample corpus explorations
 - What is a line? Should every line be capitalized?
 - MS: editing the text in the format in the song book rather than as poetry/stanzas; rather than four shortish lines, two lines, led to different choice on “medial caps” and different punctuation
 - WF: Capitalization offers “landing points.”
 - MJW: This *is* stanzaic poetry, and presented in that way in SH1991 when set beside
 - Use of commas
 - MJW: Medial capital can indicate a new line and provide visual pause even without a comma
 - MJW: When you want a visual indication at the end of a line, can afford to omit the comma because of a medial capital
 - MJW: There are many commas that make it hard to parse the meaning of the sentence.
 - RK: Removed commas wherever felt we could get along without them; was seeking to identify principles we could follow about commas, challenge of consistency
 - Principles
 - MJW: Somewhere between style guide and case by case
 - MJW: Articulate principles that offer guidance but understand that they may sometimes be in conflict, require judgment to weigh, but can still b
 - Specific principles to consider
 - Reflect music
 - Clarify meaning
 - Prefer 1991 ed
 - Prefer original punctuation (but was so inconsistent, especially re comma use); MS: it's easy to get excited about original punctuation, but may not

be relevant to singers; MJW: even more so with words that have been changed over time... would be disruptive to change them back. But original punctuation can better match original

■ ____??

- Roles
 - Will see primary role as facilitating automation

Next Steps

- Principles
 - **JPK** will set up document to articulate, prioritize, and contextualize principles
 - Here's the doc: [Principles - Text Preparation](#)
 - **All** will enter comments/text
- Tools
 - **WF/MJW** will think further about how best to use GitHub
 - **KC/WF/MJW/JPK** will connect to dovetail GitHub use with process
 - **WF/MS** will connect for GitHub intro
- Format
 - **JPK** will ask folks for format questions
 - Should verses be numbered?
- Next meeting
 - **JPK** will circulate poll: <https://www.when2meet.com/?22760384-zeGqD>

Kickoff – November 21, 2023 (3–4 pm ET)

Agenda

- Introductions
 - Sacred Harp story
 - What you bring to this project
- [Style guide](#)
 - Changes with singing in mind
 - Other comments
- [Sample text corpus](#)
 - Do we want texts laid out?
 - [Sample song corpus](#)
- Process
 - Tools for text editing and document management
 - Automating hyphenation
 - Other comments
 - Documenting changes
 - Documenting deviations from guide?
 - Version with all words fully spelled for concordance/searchability?
- Next steps

Notes

- Style guide
 - Want consistency in approach, documentation of approach
 - Tensions:
 - Fidelity to style guide vs. fidelity to approaches that facilitate practical singing
 - Role of punctuation for a silent reader vs. role of punctuation for a singer
 - Observations:
 - Terminal punctuation tends to come at end of right brace in 1991 edition.
 - Punctuation varies across songs with same text in 1991 edition.
 - Hyphenation helpful for singers and difficult for engravers (space concerns). This group will provide hyphenation for all texts. Preference for hyphenation, but will remove when there's too much horizontal pressure.
 - Capitalization at start of meter line reads strangely but sings well (and potentially removes pressure to include a common to show the break). SH singers tend to breathe at the stop/start of each meter line.
 - Some cases where adherence to style guide could be disruptive to singers (ex: Fairfield?) if too great a break from precedent. Worry about reshaping everything to modern sensibilities.
 - Oblong book forces multiple lines of texts into a smaller number of braces. 1991 tends to use punctuation to show line breaks in text but does not do this consistently.
- Sample text corpus
 - Would be helpful to see some but not necessarily all of sample text corpus set with music. Share the song corpus?
 - Sample song corpus may be a good starting point.
 - Include selection of fusing tunes with repeated phrases.
 - Include some of the most sung songs from the last decade.
 - Other notes:
 - 103: chorus made from material from the verse.
 - 29t: what do we do with this cramped "accordion box" text?
 - 569b Sacred Throne: use of semicolon. Note: poetry changes likely.
 - Gospel Pool better example?
 - 59: lot of verses, some set to the right.
 - 234: sample anthem (prose text from the Bible).
 - 550: internal second endings.
 - Consider unwritten customs? (ex: unwritten repeat on 120?).
 - David Ivey taking the lead on word changes (ex: changing individual words, adding verses).
 - Don't need to privilege one printing over another.
- Process
 - Documentation: committee does not want to oversee/rule on comma changes, but does want changes documented.

- Would like to prepare reliable text of 1991 edition that we can measure against. Start new rather than using txt files.
- Next steps
 - JPK (and FTM/MS/RWH?): continue developing list of concessions (ex: remove hyphenation before dropping point size or going to a second line).
 - Done (?): select sample text corpus. JPK should confirm by email.
 - All: send input to JPK/KC on tools, process, etc.
 - KC/JPK: propose file structure.
 - MS/MJW/RK/WF: prepare reference version of text from 1991 edition. KC/JPK need to propose a light process for this before work begins.
 - MS/MJW/RK/WF: Trial run on text editing (sample text corpus), as well as trial run for documentation processes. Highlight questions and/or convictions. KC/JPK need to propose a light process for this before work begins.
- Other
 - Malinda has done an initial review of ~180 pages, is compiling questions