

There's A Wideness In God's Mercy

~ for SATB choir & organ ~

Music by Christopher J. Hoh

Text by Frederick W. Faber



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There's A Wideness In God's Mercy

There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in His justice which is more than liberty.
There is no place where earth's sorrows are more felt than up in heav'n;
There is no place where earth's failings have such kindly judgement giv'n.

There's welcome for the sinner and a promised grace made good.
There's mercy with the Savior and healing in His blood.
There's plentiful redemption in the blood which He has shed;
There's joy for every member in the sorrows of the Head.

There is grace enough for thousands of new worlds as great as this;
There is room for fresh creations in that upper home of bliss.
For the love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.

Frederick W. Faber, 1814-1863

Alt. C. J. Hoh

*Excerpted from "Souls of Men, Why Will Ye Scatter" in Oratory Hymns (1854)
(Note: Many hymn collections have included under the title "There's A Wideness in God's Mercy" some abridged version of the 13-verse poem "Souls of Men..." These vary in the order of verses and revision of the text. In this piece, the composer has drawn largely from the work of the Consultation on Ecumencial Hymnody.)*

This piece was written as a farewell gift to the choir of the Union Church in Lima Peru, where I rediscovered my love of choral music. Only my second anthem, and my first for four-part choir, it offers a jaunty tune for a beloved text. The folk-song feel (pentatonic scale, straightforward structure), snappy rhythm and skipping melody seek to portray the people of God rejoicing in his love. With its word painting, e.g. intervals on "wideness" and "up" or chromatic harmony for reference to Christ's passion in the second verse, the music is dramatic and colorful. This composition benefits from an accomplished organist with a sense of fun and from sopranos happy to soar on arpeggios up to a high A. The whole choir needs to be on top of the rhythm, to contrast the middle verse with the outer two and to approach the piece with joy. My friends at the Lima Union Church had all those qualities and more. I am forever grateful for their encouragement and patience in my on-the-job training as their choir director! CJH

~ Dedicated to the Choir of the Union Church of Lima ~

There's A Wideness In God's Mercy

Frederick W. Faber

Christopher J. Hoh

Moderate & rhythmic (♩ = 112)

Organ

I: *f*

4 All voices: *f*

There's a wide - ness in God's mer - cy like the

II: *mf*

7

wide - ness of the sea; There's a kind - ness in His

* Manual I should be registered with something more prominent than the setting on manual II, which should be foundation stops. The two should not contrast greatly and neither should sound heavy.

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10

jus - tice which is more_ than li - ber - ty. There is

13

no place where_ earth's sor - rows are more felt than up_ in

16

heav'n; There is no_ place where earth's fail - ings have such

19

kind - ly judge - ment giv'n. There's

Free, expressive & slower *mp*

Free, expressive & slower (♩ = 92) *rit.* *p*

22

Sopr. wel - come for the sin - ner and a prom - ised grace made

Alto wel - come for the sin - ner and a prom - ised grace made

Tenor 8 wel - come for the sin - ner and a prom - ised grace made

Bass wel - come for the sin - ner and a prom - ised grace made

25

good. There's mer - cy with the Sav - ior and

good. There's mer - cy, Sav - ior,

good. There's mer - cy, Sav - ior,

good. There's mer - cy, Sav - ior,

28

heal - ing in His blood. There's plen - ti - ful - re -
heal - ing blood. There's plen - ty re -
heal - ing blood. There's plen - ty re -
heal - ing blood. There's plen - ty re -

The musical score for measures 28-30 consists of four vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are in a soprano, alto, tenor, and bass range. The piano accompaniment is in the right and left hands. The lyrics are: "heal - ing in His blood. There's plen - ti - ful - re -", "heal - ing blood. There's plen - ty re -", "heal - ing blood. There's plen - ty re -", and "heal - ing blood. There's plen - ty re -".

31

demp - tion in the blood which He has shed; There's
demp - tion, blood He has shed; There's
demp - tion, blood He has shed; There's
demp - tion, blood He has shed; There's

The musical score for measures 31-34 consists of four vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are in a soprano, alto, tenor, and bass range. The piano accompaniment is in the right and left hands. The lyrics are: "demp - tion in the blood which He has shed; There's", "demp - tion, blood He has shed; There's", "demp - tion, blood He has shed; There's", and "demp - tion, blood He has shed; There's".

34

joy for ev - 'ry mem - ber in the sor - rows of the
joy in the
joy in the
joy in the

37 *rit.* As at first

Head.
Head.
Head.
Head.

rit. // As at first
I: *f*

40

f There is grace— e-nough for—
f There is grace— e-nough for
f There is grace— e-nough for—
f There is grace— e-nough for—

There is grace— e-nough for

I: {
II: { *mf*

43

thou - sands— of new worlds as great as this; There is
thou - sands of new worlds— as great as this; There is
thou - sands— of worlds— as great as this; There is
thou - sands— of worlds— as— great as this; There is

I: {
II: { *mf*

46

room - for fresh cre - a - tions in that up - per home of

room - for fresh, fresh cre - a - tions in that up - per home of

8 room - for fresh cre - a - tions in that up - per home of

room - for fresh, fresh cre - a - tions in that up - per home of

49

bliss. For the love of God - is broad - er than the

bliss. For the love of God - is broad - er than the

8 bliss. For the love of God - is broad - er than the

bliss. For the love of God - is broad - er than the

52

meas - ure of — man's mind; And the heart — of the E -
meas - ure of man's mind; — And the heart — of the E -
8 meas - ure — of man's mind; And the heart — of the E -
meas - ure — of — man's mind; — And the heart — of the E -

The musical score for measures 52-54 features four vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are in a B-flat major key with a common time signature. The lyrics are: "meas - ure of — man's mind; And the heart — of the E -". The piano accompaniment consists of a right-hand melody and a left-hand bass line.

55

ter - nal is most won - der - ful - ly kind,
ter - nal is most won - der - ful - ly kind, won - der - ful - ly —
8 ter - nal is won - der - ful, won - der - ful - ly, —
ter - nal is won - der - ful, won - der - ful - ly —

The musical score for measures 55-57 continues with four vocal staves and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "ter - nal is most won - der - ful - ly kind, won - der - ful - ly —". The piano accompaniment includes a right-hand melody and a left-hand bass line. A first ending bracket labeled "II:" is present in the piano part at the end of measure 57. The word "cresc." is written above the piano part in measures 56 and 57.

58 *cresc.*

won-der-ful-ly kind, most kind;

cresc.

kind, most kind;

8 won-der-ful-ly kind, most kind. There's a

kind, most kind. There's a

61 *rit. to end*

like the sea.

like the sea.

8 wide - ness in God's mer - cy like the sea.

wide - ness in God's mer - cy like the sea.

rit. to end

* Divide sopranos and altos relatively evenly among the three parts; divide tenors and basses relatively evenly among the three parts.