MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE
TO THE LORD, ALL YOU LANDS
COME INTO GOD'S PRESENCE
WITH A SONG
PSALM
100

A Service of Thanksgiving for the Life of

✝ Robert Clifford Johnson (BJ) ✝

July 16, 1948 – October 16, 2019

Sunday, October 27, 2019 ✝ 2 p.m.
Boe Memorial Chapel ✝ St. Olaf College
Northfield, Minnesota

*An asterisk * invites you to stand as you are able.*

Prelude Music

Improvisation on the German Chorale "Oh, That I Had a Thousand Voices"	Paul O. Manz
Prelude on the Welsh Hymn Tune Rhosymedre ("Lovely")	Ralph Vaughan Williams
Grand Responsive Chorus	Eugène Gigout
Wedding Hymn	Dominick Argento
Toccata on "Now Thank We All Our God"	Egil Hovland

*** Gathering**

℗ Welcome in the name of Jesus, the Savior of the world.
We are gathered to worship,
to proclaim Christ crucified and risen,
to remember before God our brother Robert,
to give thanks for his life,
to commend him to our merciful redeemer,
and to comfort one another in our grief.

* Thanksgiving for Baptism

℗ When we were baptized in Christ Jesus,
we were baptized into his death.
We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death,
so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,
we too might live a new life.
For if we have been united with him in a death like his,
we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

℗ Eternal God, maker of heaven and earth, who formed us from the dust of the earth, who by your breath gave us life,

℃ **we glorify you.**

℗ Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life, who suffered death for all humanity, who rose from the grave to open the way to eternal life,

℃ **we praise you.**

℗ Holy Spirit, author and giver of life, the comforter of all who sorrow, our sure confidence and everlasting hope,

℃ **we worship you.**

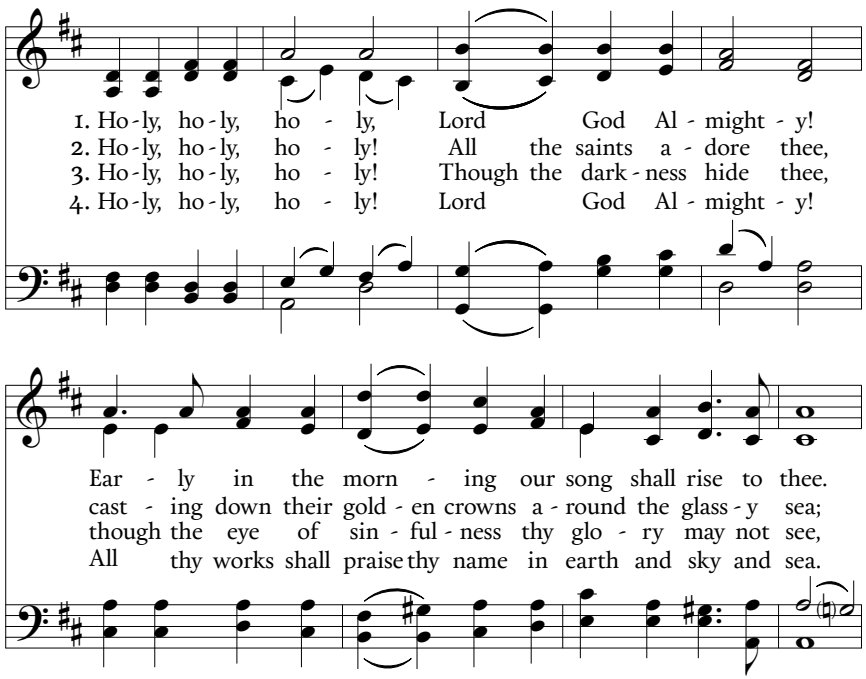
℗ To you, O blessed Trinity, be glory and honor, forever and ever.

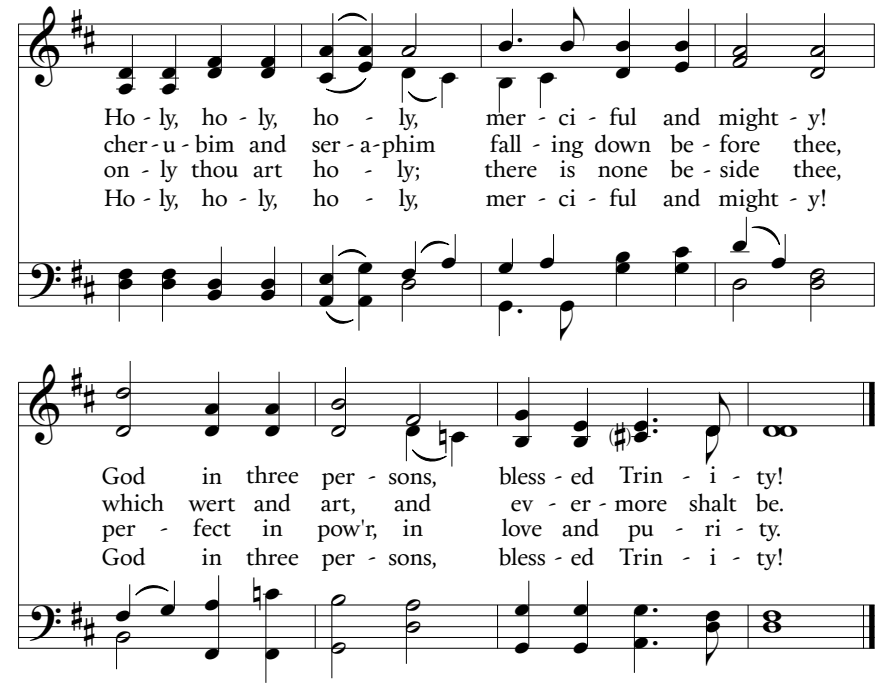
℃ **Amen.**

* Hymn

"Holy, Holy, Holy" — Nicaea

Text: Reginald Heber
Music: John B. Dykes





* Greeting

℗ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

℃ **And also with you.**

* Prayer of the Day

℗ Let us pray.

O God of grace and glory, we remember before you today our brother, Robert.

We thank you for giving him to us to know and to love as a companion in our pilgrimage on earth. In your boundless compassion, console us who mourn.

Give us faith to see that death has been swallowed up in the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that we may live in confidence and hope until, by your call, we are gathered to our heavenly home in the company of all your saints; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

℃ **Amen.**

Remembrances by Family and Friends

Greg Nelson, brother-in-law

Anton Armstrong, friend and colleague

David Bengtson, friend

Anthem

"Be Thou a Smooth Way" Ralph M. Johnson

Be Thou a smooth way before me,
Be Thou a guiding star above me,
Be Thou a keen eye behind me,
This day, this night, forever.

I am weary, and I forlorn
Lead Thou me to the land of the angels;
If only Thou, O God of life, be at peace with me,
be my support, be to me as a star, be to me as a helm,
From my lying down in peace to my rising anew.

— Carmina Gaedelica I, 171, Abridged
trans. Alexander Carmichael

Reading

"Epitaph" Merrit Malloy

Psalm 139

Read responsively

L Lord, you have searched me out;
O Lord, you have known me.

C **You know my sitting down and my rising up;**
you discern my thoughts from afar.

L You trace my journeys and my resting-places
and are acquainted with all my ways.

C **Indeed, there is not a word on my lips,**
but you, O Lord, know it altogether.

L You encompass me, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.

C **Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;**
it is so high that I cannot attain to it.

L Where can I go then from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?

C **If I climb up to heaven, you are there;**
If make the grave my bed, you are there also.

L If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

C **Even there your hand will lead me**
and your right hand hold me fast.

Reading: Lamentations 3:21–26

After the reading:

P The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Anthem

"O Day Full of Grace" Christoph E. F. Weyse
arr. F. Melius Christiansen

O day full of grace, which we behold
Now gently to view ascending
Thou over the earth thy reign unfold,
Good cheer to all mortals lending,
That children of light in every clime
May prove that the night is ending.

How blest was that gracious midnight hour
When God in our flesh was given;
Then flushed the dawn with light and power,
That spread o'er the darkened heaven;
Then rose o'er the world that sun divine
Which gloom from our hearts hath driven.

Yea, were every tree endowed with speech,
And every leaflet singing,
They never with praise God's worth could reach,
Though earth with their praise be ringing.
Who fully could praise the light of life,
Who light to our souls is bringing?
Who fully could praise the Lord!

With joy we depart for the promised land,
And there we shall walk in endless light.

—Scandinavian folk hymn, Nicolai F. S. Grundtvig
trans. O.H. Smeby, G.T. Rygh, C. Doving, alt.

* Gospel: Matthew 6:25-34

Before the reading:

P The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 6th Chapter.

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

After the reading:

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to you, O Christ.**

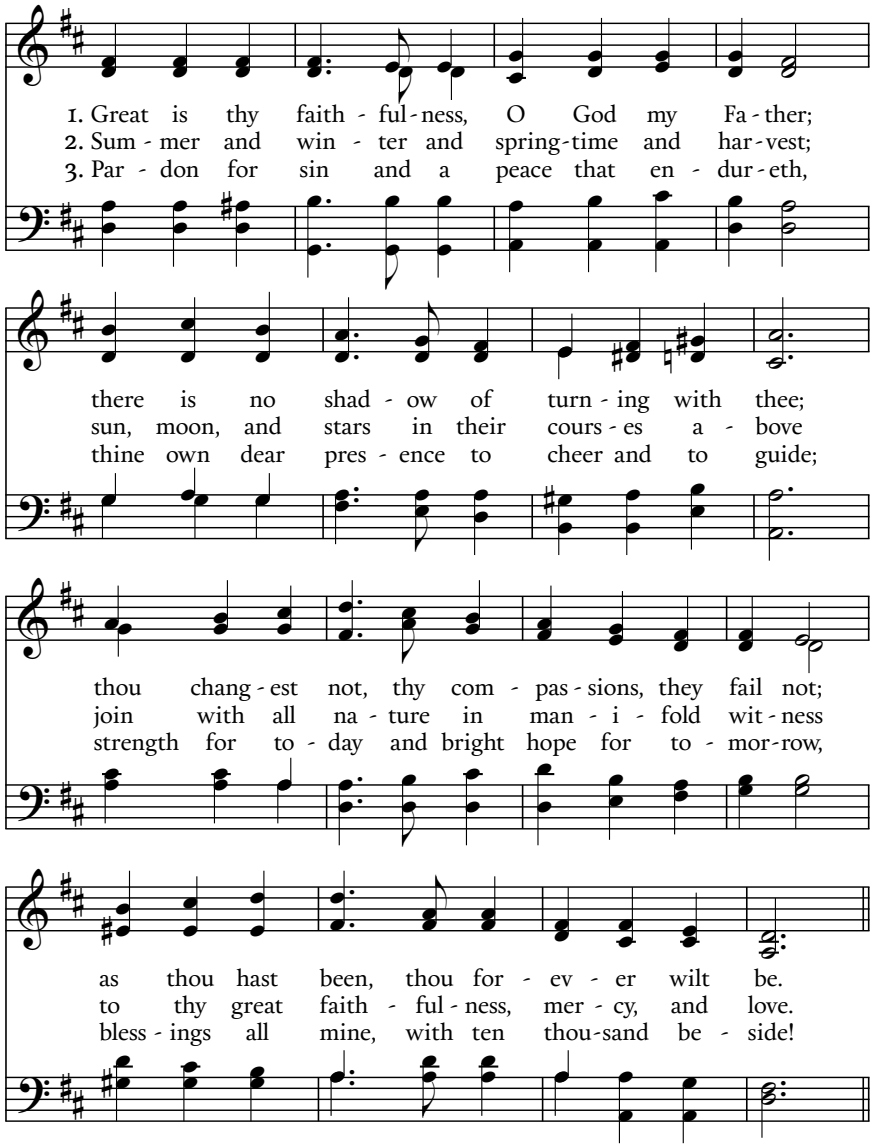
Homily

* Hymn of the Day

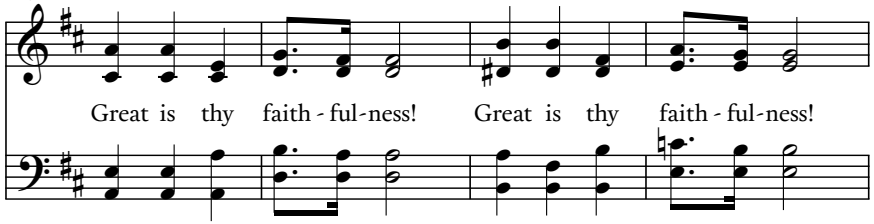
"Great is Thy Faithfulness"

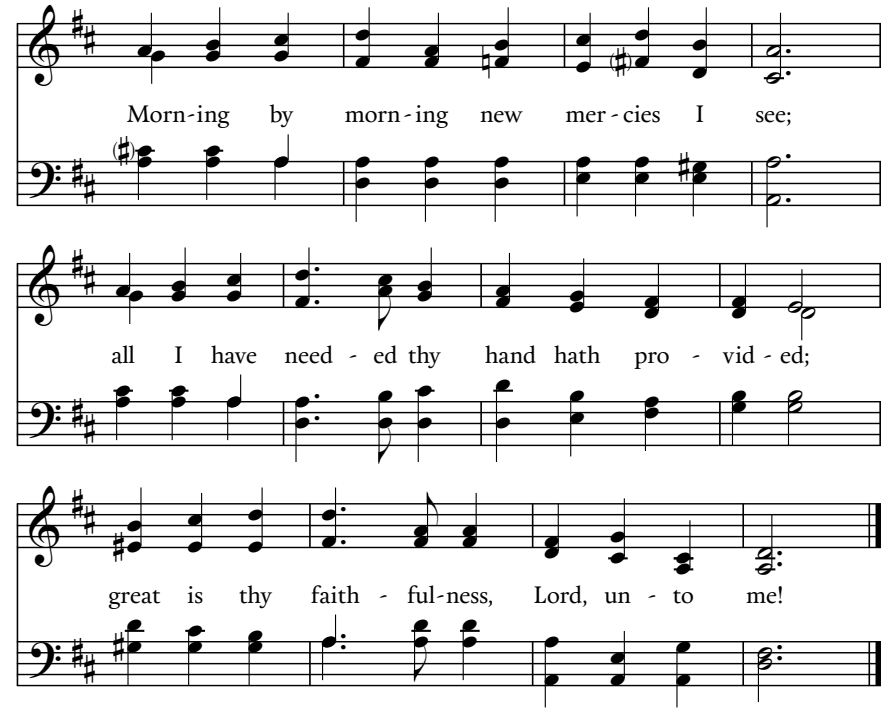
Faithfulness
Text: Thomas O. Chisholm
Music: William M. Runyan

Verses:



Refrain:





* Prayers of Intercession

After each petition:

P God of mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

At the conclusion:

P O God of grace, we give you thanks because by his death our Savior Jesus Christ destroyed the power of death, and by his resurrection he opened the kingdom of heaven to all.

Make us certain that because He lives we shall live also, and that neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come, will be able to separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

* The Lord's Prayer

C **Our Father in heaven,**
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial.
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

Anthem

"As We Sail to Heaven's Shore" Greg Nelson and Phill McHugh

Storms may rise on seas unknown
While we journey towards our home
Surely we'll learn what grace is for
As we sail to heaven's shore.

Send us strength, oh, Pilgrim Guide
Sin would drown us in its tide
Be close at hand and go before
As we sail to heaven's shore.

Holy Spirit, lead us on
Give us courage, bring the song.

Lord, we trust Your Father's care
Will convey us safely there
Open or seal off every door
As we sail to heaven's shore.

Straighten our course with every prayer
Let heaven's breezes speed us there
And grant us mercy evermore
As we sail to heaven's shore.

Draw us near, oh, finest Friend
From dawn's light to evening's end
Each passing day, we love You more
As we sail to heaven's shore
As we sail to heaven's shore.

— *Greg Nelson and Phill McHugh*

* Commendation

P Let us commend Robert to the mercy of God our maker and redeemer.

Silence is kept.

P Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant Robert. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive him into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light.

C **Amen.**

* Benediction

P The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious to you,
The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

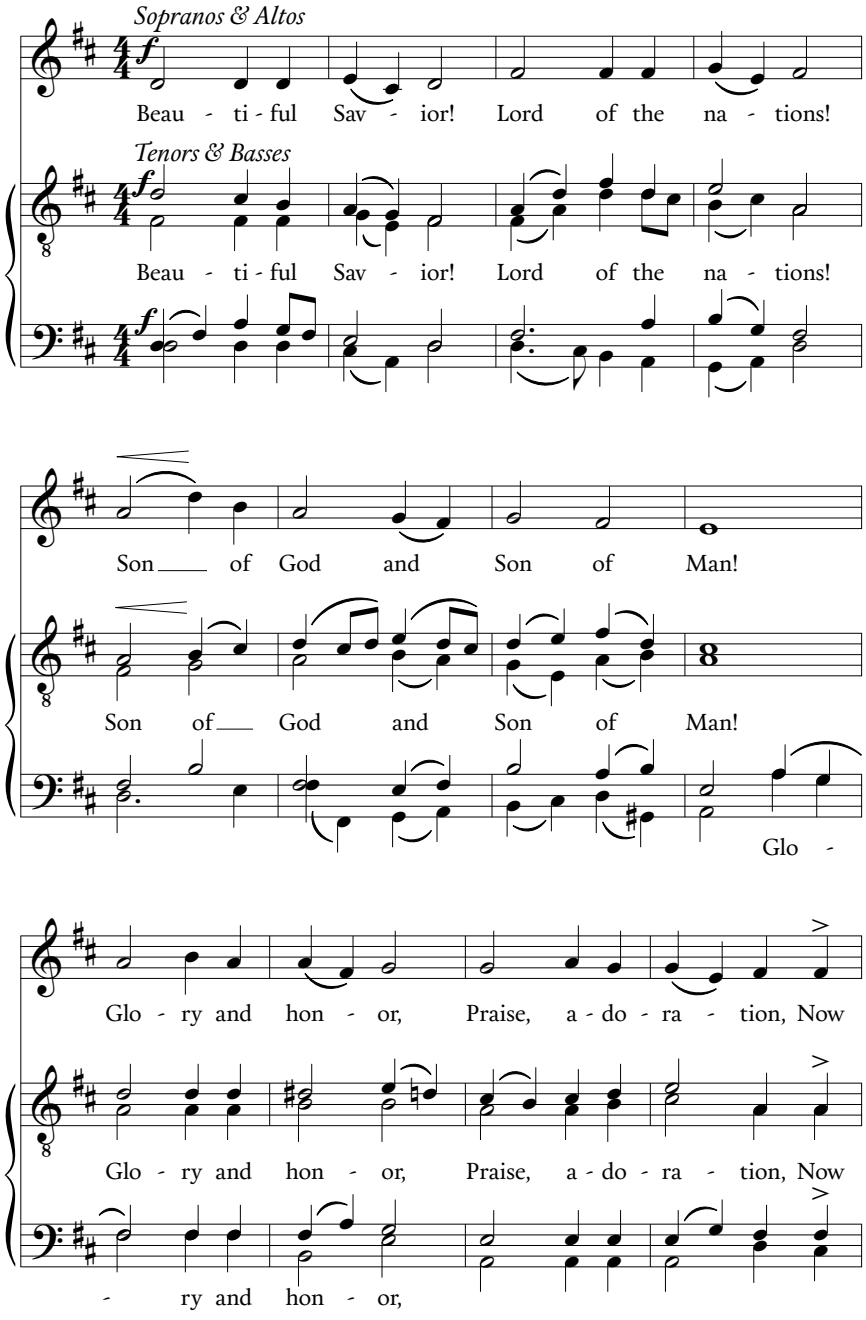
C **Amen.**

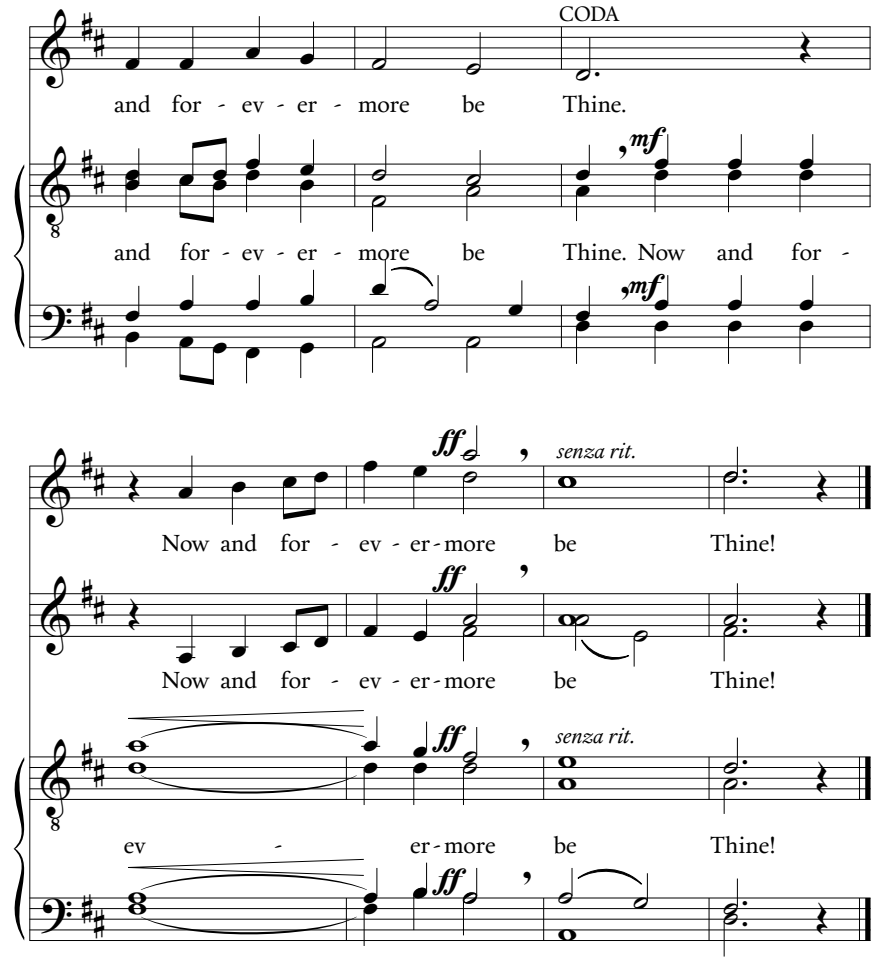
* Closing Hymn

"Beautiful Savior" — Schönster Herr Jesu

Text: *Gesangbuch* Münster, tr. Joseph A. Seiss
Music: Silesian Folk Tune, arr. F. Melius Christiansen

Stanzas 1 and 2 sung by The St. Olaf Choir
Stanza 3 sung by all as below





Postlude

"Toccata" from *Symphonie No. 5* — Charles-Marie Widor

Following the service, you are invited to a reception in the Black and Gold Ballrooms on the third floor of Buntrock Commons. All are welcome.

St. John's Lutheran Church of Northfield is grateful to the community of St. Olaf College for its hospitality, and its willingness to open the generous space of Boe Memorial Chapel to accommodate this service.

Acknowledgments

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Leaders in Today's Service

Presiding
Pastor Pam Fickenscher
Pastor Jonathan Davis

Preaching
W. Bruce Benson

Organist
Philip Brunelle

Ensemble Pianists
Nathan Proctor
Jonathan Thomas Madden

Pallbearers
Andrew Johnson
Peter Johnson
Leigh Huhn Melville
Ross Huhn
Jay Huhn
Robert Huhn

Cover Art
Judith Seleen Swanson

Bulletin Design
Jeffrey O'Donnell

Choir
The St. Olaf Choir
Anton Armstrong, conductor

Reader
John Gorder

Honorary Pallbearers
Anton Armstrong
David Bengtson
Peter Bleby
Jean Callister-Benson
Rich Erickson
Dale Lammi
Lois Rand
Jerry Teeson
Mike Wolsted

Arrangements
Benson & Langehough Funeral Home

Robert Clifford Johnson (BJ) was born on July 16, 1948, in Alexandria, Minnesota, to parents Ruth Fowlds Johnson and Clifford Conrad Johnson. He died on October 16, 2019, in Northfield, Minnesota, with his family at his side, after living with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS aka Lou Gehrig's disease).

BJ graduated from Jefferson High School, Alexandria, in 1966, and continued his education at Concordia College in Moorhead. Upon graduation in 1971 he married Sigrid Nelson in Bismarck, North Dakota. Together they moved to Monticello, Minnesota, where he taught public school music while Sigrid pursued a Bachelor of Music degree at St. Cloud State University. Upon completion of her degree in 1974, they moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan, where Sigrid pursued graduate studies in vocal performance at the University of Michigan and earned a Master of Music degree. BJ worked at the university at the University Musical Society, the largest university concert series at the time.

In 1978, BJ was hired by St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, to manage the college's music organizations, a great opportunity in the field of arts administration. His office was responsible for arranging domestic and international tours, facilitating the technical production of the internationally renowned St. Olaf Christmas Festival, and overseeing the commercial recording business (St. Olaf Records). Under his leadership, 30 international concert tours were launched by the St. Olaf Choir, St. Olaf Band and St. Olaf Orchestra in addition to annual domestic concert tours successfully undertaken by these ensembles.

The St. Olaf Christmas Festival, an annual college holiday concert since 1912, benefited from BJ's leadership. First broadcast on television in 1975, the St. Olaf Christmas Festival has been a featured highlight of the holiday season on PBS since 1983, thanks in great part to BJ's collaborative efforts with Twin Cities Public Television. In 2005 and 2013, BJ was the catalyst in creating the two television Christmas specials that the St. Olaf Choir filmed at the Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim, Norway. Also because of his entrepreneurial vision, the 2007 and 2011 St. Olaf Christmas Festivals were streamed live in theaters throughout the United States. BJ's commitment to the arts extended beyond St. Olaf. In 1990 he called together tour managers from other college and university music programs for the founding conference of what immediately became the College Music Tour Managers Association (CMTMA), an organization that still thrives, sharing best practices in the arts touring world.

In 2014, Johnson was honored with an Emmy Award by the Upper Midwest Emmy Awards for his role in the PBS production of Christmas in Norway with the St. Olaf Choir. Johnson was awarded the ACE award for lifetime achievement by the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) of Minnesota in 2015. In 2018 he was inducted into the Hall of Fame by the Alexandria School District in recognition of his significant distinction and achievement in arts administration at St. Olaf College.

Johnson is survived by his wife of 48 years, Sigrid (Nelson) Johnson, sons Peter Johnson and Andrew Johnson (Sarah), and grandsons Soren Meilan and Halvor Clifford, all of whom reside in the Twin Cities. He is also survived by a sister Karen Elizabeth Johnson, of Maple Grove, Minnesota. He was preceded in death by his parents and sister Jane Huhn.

In keeping with BJ's commitment to providing St. Olaf's student ensembles with the finest performance venues during concert tours, the family has requested that memorials be given to the Sigrid and Robert "BJ" Johnson Endowed Fund, established for that purpose. c/o St. Olaf College, 1520 St. Olaf Ave., Northfield, MN, 55057, Att'n: Development Office.

From the Cover Artist

In thinking about BJ Johnson, verses from Psalm 100 came to mind when considering his work — year after year, arranging for messages of peace and hope and healing to be heard "in all those lands" all over the world, and doing it with most exquisite, most glorious sounds — truly making "a joyful noise."

BJ commissioned Boe Memorial Chapel's processional cross, one large enough to be easily seen in the huge Skoglund Auditorium during Christmas Festival performances. Moving out from the shining sun are four rivers, water that flows all over the Earth, some to the north, some to the south, others to both east and west — to "all those lands."

— Judith Seleen Swanson