

**Cornerstone**  
Methodist Church

250

# **Born in Song**

**Competition to write a  
poem or song**

# Entry pack



## Background

This year is the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Methodism in Horsham. To help celebrate this anniversary, Cornerstone Methodist Church is organising a series of events throughout 2026 and our *Born in Song* competition is just one of them.

For further information about Cornerstone Methodist church and our other celebratory events during our 250<sup>th</sup> year, please visit

[www.cornerstone-mc.org.uk/Groups/457011/250\\_Celebrations.aspx](http://www.cornerstone-mc.org.uk/Groups/457011/250_Celebrations.aspx)

## Aims of the competition

Most worshippers love to gather together to listen to a good reading or to passionately sing a great worship song – and members of Cornerstone Methodist Church are no different.

We wanted to encourage any budding poets, lyricists or songwriters in our community to write a spiritual/reflective poem or worship song, so we decided to hold a competition.

Entering the competition is as easy and inclusive as we could make it, and free of charge – you don't even have to be a Methodist!

And you can choose to enter one or more of three different categories depending on your writing/composing skills or your musical abilities.

## Entry categories:

- 1. Original poem:** Text only, no music, any form of verse up to a maximum of 42 lines. Submissions: in text as a PDF or MS Word document; or as a digital audio recording in mp3 format.
- 2. Original lyrics sung to a tune from our pre-selected list:** The first link in each case includes the tune's reference number in our song/hymn book *Singing the Faith* (StF) and will take you to the Methodist Church Resource Hub, where you can download a short audio clip and find out more; the second link will take you to a full-length version of the tune on YouTube:
  - a) [StF169: Come thou long-expected Jesus](#)  
[https://youtu.be/z\\_YA9GZB76I?si=BaPEmhjfgk13oiRX](https://youtu.be/z_YA9GZB76I?si=BaPEmhjfgk13oiRX)  
Author: Wesley. Tune: Stuttgart. A contemporary tune of the time.

- b) [StF272: From heaven you came](#)  
[https://youtu.be/R-lxT-2\\_jRg?si=AJtk3pMFA0PY92vR](https://youtu.be/R-lxT-2_jRg?si=AJtk3pMFA0PY92vR)  
Author: Graham Kendrick. Modern tune with chorus.
- c) [StF548: Blessed assurance](#)  
[https://youtu.be/HwUzA6l8\\_U4?si=Kj3YsZdLor\\_k3sZm](https://youtu.be/HwUzA6l8_U4?si=Kj3YsZdLor_k3sZm)  
Author: van Alstyne. Tune: Blessèd Assurance. A lively traditional tune with chorus.
- d) [StF710: Peace perfect peace](#)  
<https://youtu.be/rMJS0zMUncU?si=uQTu3mMgoeF237yv>  
Author: Mayhew. An easier, simpler tune.

Maximum of five verses. Submissions: in text as a PDF or MS Word document; or as a digital audio recording in mp3 format.

### 3. Original song with music and lyrics:

Submissions: written musical notation or a score with lyrics; or a demo recording in mp3 format. If you want your song to be performed or accompanied by our singer, choir and/or musician(s), you will need to submit written musical notation or a score with lyrics.

#### Closing date for entries:

- **Midnight, Sunday 28 June 2026**

#### For further digital copies of this entry pack, please:

- scan the QR code
- visit [www.cornerstone-mc.org.uk/BornInSong](http://www.cornerstone-mc.org.uk/BornInSong)
- email [BornInSong@cornerstone-mc.org.uk](mailto:BornInSong@cornerstone-mc.org.uk)



If you need further information or would like a printed copy of the entry pack, please call Gill on 07704 521131.

All shortlisted entries will be performed and judged at our *Born in Song* Concert on Saturday, 19 September 2026 starting from 7pm at Cornerstone London Road Methodist Church, London Road, Horsham RH12 1AN.

Cornerstone Methodist Church is a registered charity number 1134052.

# Competition rules

## General rules

- **Eligibility:** Any budding poets, lyricists, musicians or songwriters in the community willing and able to attend our *Born in Song* Concert. The competition is open to everyone, although under-18s must be accompanied by an adult.
- **Entry fee:** Entry is free with a maximum of three entries per entrant.
- **Competition theme:** Either a spiritual/reflective poem or a Christian worship song on a topic that you feel passionate about.
- **Originality:** All submitted poems, lyrics and songs (lyrics and music) must be the entrant's original works, with the exception that entrants into category 2 of the competition can select from our list of song tunes to which they can add or write their own lyrics. Otherwise, covers or adaptations of poems or songs are not allowed.
- **Use of AI:** AI-generated words, lyrics or music are not permitted under any circumstances.
- **Finality of decisions:** Individual scores will not be disclosed and the judges' decisions are final: by entering the contest entrants agree to accept and abide by the judges' decisions.

## Submission requirements

- **Submission method:** Please ensure the filenames of all the digital files you submit include your name. Each entry should be submitted together with a completed entry form by email to [BornInSong@cornerstone-mc.org.uk](mailto:BornInSong@cornerstone-mc.org.uk)
- **Entry limitations:** Up to three submissions per entrant. Poems must be a maximum of 42 lines; songs/lyrics must be a maximum of five verses.
- **Entry information:** You must submit a completed entry form with each submission to provide key details, such as your name, the poem/song title, and the names of any co-writers or musicians involved.

## Song and poem performance guidelines

- **Maximum duration:** Performances should start and finish within a maximum of five minutes.
- **Live vs. recorded vocals:** Vocal performances will be live, although you can get a reader to read your poem or a singer, musician(s) and/or our choir to play or sing your song for you if you would prefer. Video or prerecorded vocal submissions will not be permitted.
- **Instrumental accompaniment:** A piano and church organ will be available at the venue or you can bring your own instrument(s) if you state the details on your entry form. As well as live accompaniment or a-cappella performances, we will also allow the use of prerecorded instrumental backing tracks.
- **Production quality:** The quality of the recording and production will not be considered as a criterion in the judging.

## Judging criteria

Poems/lyrics/songs will be judged based on their composition and **not** on the quality of their performance, vocals or production. Our judges will evaluate your poem/lyrics/song based on the following specific criteria:

- **Poems**
  - **Creativity and originality:** Does the poem engage the audience through the use of imaginative language, unique concepts and raw emotions?
  - **Storytelling:** Does the poem clearly and effectively convey its message or story?
  - **Structure:** Does the poem make effective use of rhyme, metre, verse and other poetic devices?
- **Lyrics**
  - **Creativity and originality:** Do the lyrics engage the audience through the use of imaginative language, unique concepts and raw emotions?
  - **Storytelling:** Do the lyrics clearly and effectively convey the song's message or story?

- **Structure:** Do the lyrics make effective use of rhyme, metre, verse and other poetic or lyrical devices?
- **Compatibility with the music:** Do the lyrics complement and/or comfortably fit the tune or musical accompaniment?
- **Song**
  - **Creativity and originality:** Does the song engage and connect with the audience through the use of imaginative language, unique concepts and raw emotions?
  - **Storytelling:** Do the lyrics clearly and effectively convey the song's message or story?
  - **Structure:** Do the lyrics make effective use of rhyme, metre, verse and other lyrical devices? Are the composition and structure of the song well-defined?
  - **Compatibility of lyrics and music:** Do the lyrics, melody and musical accompaniment complement and/or mutually enhance each other in conveying the song's narrative?
  - **Musicality:** Does the song embrace a varied musical vocabulary, including dynamics (volume), tempo (speed), pitch, rhythm and timbre? Is the melody memorable? Is the melody enhanced with harmonies and/or harmonic progressions?

### Competition prizes

- As well as enjoying the kudos of having their work performed at the live concert, the winner in each category of the competition will be awarded a token prize.

### Rights and permissions

- **Entrants' rights:** Entrants retain full poem/lyric/song ownership rights and all copyrights to all original poems/lyrics/songs submitted and entering the competition does not in any way affect their ownership.
- **Organisers' rights:** By entering the competition, entrants grant permission to the organisers to use finalists' or winners' names, likenesses, recordings, videos and voices for promotional and publicity purposes on Cornerstone Methodist Church's own websites and on other

third-party websites/social apps and in any current/future publicity and promotional materials and press releases relating to the competition. This permission can be withdrawn by the entrant at any time upon written request.

- **Co-writers:** Poems/lyrics/songs may have multiple co-writers. All co-writers' names must be included on the entry form for each submission. To ensure that writers' names always appear correctly on any promotional or other material relating to the competition, co-writers' names should be shown as: first writer / second writer / third writer / and so forth.