

Open Up the Doors



A Personal Hymnal Fletcher Clark



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Acknowledgments

When I settled in Lockhart, I had the intention of visiting a different church each Sunday, beginning with Emmanuel Episcopal, the denomination in which I was raised. I was captivated by the simple elegance of this small chapel with its modest wooden pews, and the casual yet pious demeanor of the congregants. The organist played well the church music on a vintage Hammond B3, but her phrasing made clear the unmistakable depth of her musicality. There was no choir, but everyone sang uninhibitedly. The service seemed familiar, but then the kindly rector completed his straightforward and meaningful sermon in seven minutes! And there was a folk trio making a joyful noise with a simple folk version of an old standard. I was hooked. I set aside my plan of visiting other churches. I had come home. The doors had opened and I walked in.

Fr. Tom Bruns told me in his gentle yet firm voice that music was my ministry - a viewpoint I had never considered. I had written some faith-based songs, but when he asked me to join the Original Sinners, our folk group, I discovered that every note I played on my mandolin had an angelic resonance with the acoustics of the chapel. I seized the opportunity to apply my God-given creative gifts with the guidance of my Higher Power and my Muse. Julie Michie continues to be a musical inspiration for me, with her sense of liturgical propriety and her great skill at the keyboard. My kinship with steadfast Liz McGinty has reawakened ties to my own distant Gaelic forebears. I am indebted to Original Sinners Donaly Brice and Todd Blomerth for making a chair available for me. Very few songwriters can enjoy having an entire congregation sing their songs within days of penning them.

I am further indebted to Bill McNeal, Randy & Julia Sulsar, and Ruth Roecker who were responsible for my finding Lockhart. Thanks to the brilliant C. P. Vaughn for his portrait of me. And of course thanks to my dear friend and associate Hank Alrich. Our long association through Armadillo Music Productions has been the backbone of my work.

Fletcher Clark, 2013

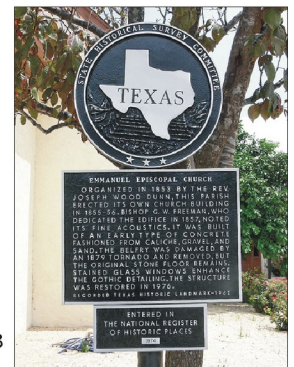
Emmanuel (originally Immanuel) Episcopal Church was organized by Rev. Joseph Wood Dunn on his arrival in Lockhart, Texas in August 1853. Dunn delivered his first sermon to a large crowd on August 21, 1853, in a small schoolhouse borrowed for the occasion. In 1854, after he was informed that the school was no longer available for services, he set about raising funds for a church building.



The structure, completed in 1856, is the oldest known unaltered church building in use by Protestants in Texas. This small, one-story masonry structure has simple Gothic trim and utilizes the basic plan of an entrance vestibule and central nave. The nave is contained in a main rectangular block with pitched roof and at the west end is attached a smaller block with pitched roof forming the entrance foyer. A steeple originally crowned the building on the main facade, refining the proportions of the church, but this bell tower was later removed. A cyclone in 1879 which weakened the tower probably prompted its removal.

A Gothic arch frames the double entrance door and a small pointed arched window is set within the framing of the large gable directly above the ridge of the vestibule roof on the west facade. Along each side of the church are four lancet arch windows divided by small wall buttresses.

In 1964 the church was listed as a Texas landmark, and in 1974 it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1976 an extensive restoration returned the building to its original state. Workers removed the wooden floor and repaired and finished the limestone slabs. Dunn's Bible and Prayer Book are displayed in a glass cubicle in the Parish Hall.



11/1/13



O COME, THOU PRINCE OF PEACE (2012) I could not accept the fact that Christmas carols must be *old*. And I particularly focused on the little-discussed role of Joseph in the Lord's birth and upbringing. Before I realized it, this new carol emerged, and fortunately I was paying enough attention to write it down.

ONE MORE SOUL IN HEAVEN TONIGHT (2013) A dear friend passed away recently. She was, and will remain, a treasured member of our congregation who touched the lives of many, both in her own loving family and her church family. Fr. Tom gave us the news as we were beginning our Wednesday church supper following our customary service. A couple of hours later, in a quiet moment, I could imagine that, though she couldn't join us for supper, there would be one more soul in heaven that night. Two days later, I was privileged to share this song with her friends and family as my own eulogy at the service commemorating her passing. *God Bless You, Ann Metz.*



OPEN UP THE DOORS (2013) A visiting photographer took this shot of the simple front doors to Emmanuel Episcopal, donated by Julie Michie in memory of her aunt, Marguerite McDonald. We have used the photograph on note cards for our church family and visitors, with the caption *Doors of Faith*. Those doors opened for me in 2008, and I innocently entered, completely unprepared for the experiences that would lay therein. They became my symbol for that which is both a threshold and a constraint. I have found myself constrained to open such doors and embrace the grace they promise.

TAKE ME DOWN TO THE RIVERSIDE (2013) I was fast asleep recently, until that little voice said to get up and write this down. I rolled over and noted the time as 4:30am, about an hour earlier than my customary arising. Dutifully, I got out of bed, and without tea or coffee, scribbled down the refrain. Realizing it would take a while to grab manuscript paper, I went straight to my laptop's software to compose (transcribe) the melody of the refrain - with a quick check on the guitar. The verse melody popped up, and I went to Matthew 3 for the text. When finished, I had my tea at the appointed time.



THERE IS A BALM IN GILEAD (2011) The subject of this traditional American Negro spiritual came up in the scripture designated for a particular Sunday. I enjoy reading through the music to songs I have never heard, because the written notes and lyrics are unaffected by whatever treatment has been given them in a particular rendering. The more I played around with this on my guitar, the more it began to have a reggae feel. I half-jokingly refer to ours as a Primitive Episcopal Church - *Why should the Baptists have that to themselves?* - and this is right in that spirit.

Open Up the Doors

Fletcher Clark

Lively (♩ = 100)

G Em C D7 G Em

O - PEN UP THE DOORS, O - PEN UP THE DOORS. O - pen up to

C D7 G Em C D7

leave be - hind my sin. O - PEN UP THE DOORS, O - PEN UP THE DOORS.

C D7 G C G **Fine** D7 G

O - pen up and let this sin - ner in. 1. Such a sim - ple door - way to re -
2. Such a sim - ple path - way to sal -
3. Such a sim - ple high - way up to

D7 G D7

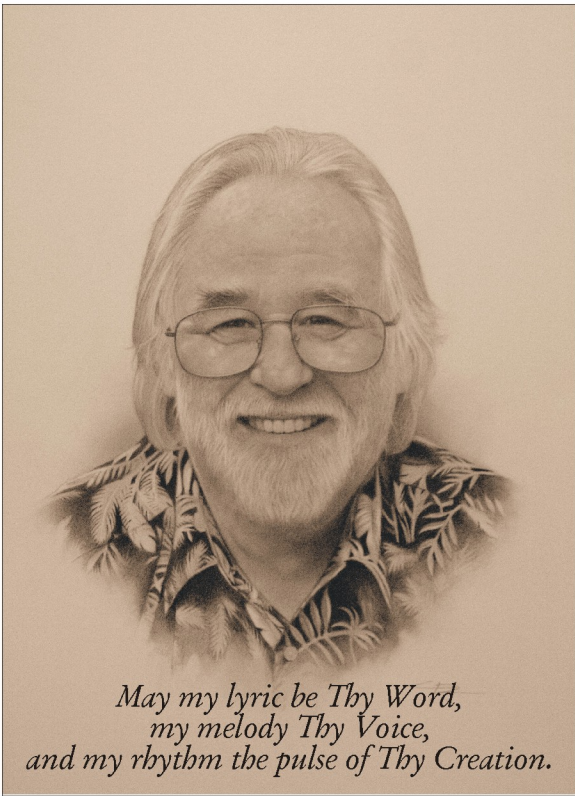
demp - tion o - pened up and let this sin - ner in. There where
va - tion marked for me to tra - vel in The Way. Mo - ments
hea - ven where the streets and lanes are paved in gold. There my

G Em A7 D7

God would ne - ver hold ex - emp - tion, there where I could leave be - hind my sin.
of Thy ho - ly re - ve - la - tion, time to teach my heart and mouth to say:
soul will bide with Thee for - ev - er, nev - er shall I leave a - gain the fold.

D.C. al Fine

About the Composer



*May my lyric be Thy Word,
my melody Thy Voice,
and my rhythm the pulse of Thy Creation.*

The songwriting of Fletcher Clark is influenced by the Texas singer-songwriters for whom he has been sideman or producer (Steven Fromholz, Bobby Bridger, Rusty Wier, Gary P. Nunn, Dee Moeller, Rick Beresford, Kenneth Threadgill, Bill & Bonnie Hearne, *et al*) - as well as by his love of jazz, Broadway, Tin Pan Alley, blues, R&B, rock, folk, bluegrass, country & western, latin, *etc.*, plus the influences from his longtime involvement with the Kerrville Folk Festival. Long ago his Texas show band, *Balcones Fault*, brought all these musics together for scores of sold-out shows at Austin's legendary concert hall Armadillo World Headquarters.

Growing up in San Antonio, Fletcher began playing professionally in high school. Attending Williams College in Massachusetts, although an economics major, he pursued the Honors Theory and Composition program with Prof. Robert G. Barrow. This old-school curmudgeon had himself studied with

Walter Piston, Paul Hindemith and Ralph Vaughn-Williams, so Fletcher was solidly grounded in classical compositional technique to complement his street-smart musical background.

Now in Lockhart, just south of Austin, Fletcher produces and hosts live events for Texas singer-songwriters: *Evenings with the Songwriter* at the historic Dr. Eugene Clark Library and the house concert series *Afternoons of Song*. He attends and regularly participates in the music of Emmanuel Episcopal Church, the oldest Episcopal structure in Texas. As performer, either solo or with sidemen, he appears regularly at area clubs, events, festivals and house concerts.

Also a skilled audio engineer, he continues to write, produce and perform. In 2010, he released a collection of his songs on Armadillo Records. Executive Producer Hank Alrich remarked, "There's just not been another project like Fletcher Clark's *TAKING TURNS*. *Now that's Austin music!*" Fletcher is preparing a companion CD of the songs published in this hymnal.

When Fletcher Clark first appeared at Emmanuel Episcopal Church, it soon became clear he was a musician. He began to play with our small band in church, adding to their hymns songs he and others had written. I told him that his ministry was to share his talent with others. The church began to grow and I believe that much of the growth is the result of Fletcher and our music. Recently, I urged him to collect his songs into a personal hymnal to share with the congregation. He has done so in this manuscript. I warn him that there is no money in a hymnal but of course he is not doing it for that reason - it is simply part of his ministry.



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