

Some Practical Directing Notes for this Liturgical Music in an American Folk Style

The pieces are in two, three, and four parts. They can be sung as the choir director decides and as is fitting and needful for the parish, but here are a couple suggestions:

Two-parts: For four-part choirs, these pieces will have a fuller sound if the tenors and sopranos sing the top voice while altos and basses sing the bottom, all in their respective octaves.

Three-parts: These pieces are more like Georgian chant. It would be most fitting to sing them with only three parts and all in the same octave. To accomplish this, for example, a choir mainly composed of women and with only a few men can have the men sing the lowest voice while the women split the top voices. The reverse would also be true. A choir of more equal composition can also have Sopranos and Altos sing the top, Altos and Tenors sing the middle, and Tenors and Basses sing the bottom. Basically, the middle voices can split. The key can be moved as necessary.

With regards to singing style, it should be sung reverently and as is fitting to the parish, but it should be noted that this music is roughly in the lineage of Appalachian Ballads and Sacred Harp. The choir should not be afraid of pronouncing syllables in a more American way. ‘R’s and diphthongs can be sung as they are spoken. If possible, these pieces should be sung with a straight but full tone and more forward in the mouth.

A few little notes:

- There are no troparia, kontakia, or other more strictly intoned hymns in these arrangements, as there is no American folk-style tonal system. They will have to be sung in pre-existent tones.
- Choir directors can edit/alter/arrange the music as is needful and helpful.