

# Blessed Be

More Songs by Michael Stern



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## FOREWORD

For over two decades now, Mike Stern and I have been fortunate to participate in an annual **Song and Story Fest**. Each year in a family camp setting, musicians and storytellers work to match words, images and music in a manner that invites young and old to accompany each other on a spiritual journey. When Mike asked me to write reflections to accompany this songbook, I took this as an invitation to accompany him on such a journey. I read the biblical texts that inspired Mike's creativity. Then setting my audio player to repeat I let myself be immersed in Mike's music. What emerged for me were images that at times were familiar and, at other moments, surprising. Who could have guessed that pineapple upside down cake and octothorpes could provide sparks of light to guide my path? As you experience this music in your own voice, let melody and images guide your own imagination. As the music comes to life in and through you may the Spirit guide your own journey through the biblical narratives that continue to both challenge and nurture us on our journey of faith.

Jonathan Hunter

## INTRODUCTION

My previous songbook, **Stand Up** featured 21 songs about justice, peace, wonder, compassion, and love. **Blessed Be** has 22 additional originals which are all based on biblical images about faith and action. Here it's the Old Testament prophets who cry out for justice, and refrains echo from the Psalms. Here it's Jesus who calls us to be peacemakers and show compassion towards the poor.



My hope is that these biblical references will help guide your selection and use of the songs, and facilitate planning for worship. For the same reason, we've paired a brief vignette with each song to prompt your own reflections on the song and its scriptural allusions, and to prepare you for singing.

The printed music is presented in a format that is accessible, readable, and singable for a variety of folk musicians, singers, and song leaders. The scores are simply melodies with chords, not fully arranged for piano or four-part harmony (though a few have been more fully arranged and are available elsewhere.) We have left the printed music open to individual interpretation, creativity, and unique skill sets.

Included are fretboard diagrams for less familiar guitar chords. I've also made a few program notes which will help you learn by playing along with the **Blessed Be Songbook Collection** album which is available at: <https://www.mikesongs.net>.

Put these songs and stories in your own voice. By doing so, I hope that you, too, will be blessed.

*Michael Stern*

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Enjoy your preview of Michaels new songbook! Each song is scripture-based and includes reflections for worship preparation. More from Michael at: [https://bppub.net/Michael\\_Stern](https://bppub.net/Michael_Stern)

# BLESSED BE GOD'S NAME

MICHAEL STERN

(Psalm 72:3-19, Psalm 73:8-9)

Intro A7sus D A7sus D A7sus D A7 G/B D A7 G D A7

8 A7 D/B A/C# D D/C# G/B

1. Like the sun and the moon love will en -
2. Let the moun - tains and the hills bring a mes - sage of
3. De - fend - ing the poor and the chil - dren in
4. Ad - vo - cates of force will shrink from love's
5. Repeat first verse.

12 Em7 D/F# G A D A7 D

dure. bless - ed be God's name. From age un - to  
 peace, bless - ed be God's name. As wel - come as  
 need, bless - ed be God's name. Re - deem - ing their  
 pow'r, bless - ed be God's name. Love's har - vest a -

18 D/C# G/B Em7 D/F# G A

age, and shore un - to shore, bless - ed be God's  
 rain that falls on dry soil, bless - ed be God's  
 lives from ex - ploi - ta - tion and greed, bless - ed be God's  
 bun - dant, lux - u - riant in flow'r, bless - ed be God's

Listen to a Preview!  
Or listen at:  
[https://bppub.net/Michael\\_Stern](https://bppub.net/Michael_Stern)



Sunset from Skyline Drive,  
Shenandoah National Park  
Photo: Kathy Guisewite

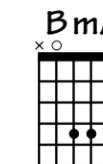
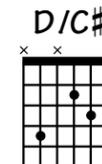
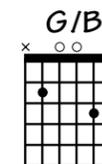
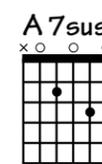
The Psalmist offers a prayer which lays out the agenda for ruling authorities: take pity on the weak and rescue the vulnerable from oppression and violence. It is by living in righteousness that a government is both blessed and becomes a blessing. By living faithfully, a ruler praises and blesses the eternal name of the divine.

One of the greatest descriptions of democracy was set forth by Abraham Lincoln when he declared this government was "of the people, by the people, and for the people." If we accept the mantle that we ourselves are the ruling authority, then the Psalmist's mandate becomes our mandate. To live faithfully in righteousness is to bless God's name by being a blessing. Then the sun and the moon, and the mountains and the hills will bring forth a message of peace.

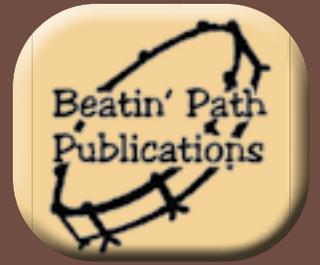
Jonathan Hunter



From a series of paintings Under One Sky  
Painting: JoAnn Sims



# Songs of Faith and Action



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Printed and Distributed by  
Beatin' Path Publications LLC  
302 East College Street  
Bridgewater, VA 22812  
[www.beatinpathpublications.com](http://www.beatinpathpublications.com)