

## THE FIELDS CHURCH — HYMN OF THE MONTH OCTOBER 2023

## **11 People That On Earth Do Dwell**, like most great hymns, finds its wording, inspiration, beauty, and truth from the pages of Scripture.

Sadly, there was a time when access to such pages was severely limited. For centuries, both songs of praise and the Scriptures themselves became far removed from the public by religious elite. Sparked by the actions of men like Martin Luther, John Calvin, and William Tyndale, many individuals during the Reformation worked to make Scripture and songs of worship accessible to all believers in their language group.

William Kethe was one such Reformer. He escaped persecution in Scotland by traveling to Geneva in Switzerland. With his fellow refugees, Kethe took up the mantle from Tyndale to translate the whole Bible into common English. This Geneva Bible was the very first English translation of the complete Scriptures from the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

Kethe knew that believers needed not only to know, read, and pray the Word, but also to *sing* it. He contributed 25 metrical psalms to the Anglo-Geneva Psalter. These poetic translations of Scripture aimed to be faithful to God's Word and singable for God's people.

Just a few years prior, a man named Louis Bourgeois had worked with Calvin to do the same for French speakers. He wrote a number of tunes that could be sung with these metrical songs. Kethe borrowed his favorite tune from his French colleague to be sung with his lyrics.

In the years that followed, believers across Europe sang Kethe's lyrics for Psalm 100 to Bourgeois's famous tune, aptly named the "Old Hundredth." To this day, "All People That on Earth Do Dwell," is the one of the oldest English hymns still sung today in praise to our eternal, good, merciful, glorious God.

## Scripture to consider:

Psalm 100	1 Corinthians 8:5-6
Isaiah 60	1 Peter 1:3-9
John 10:7-18	