Moravian Psalms and Canticles

§0 File name conventions: Here are some typical file names:

Morav Psalm 084 (31) - tune.mp3
This is an audio recording of chant 31, which is one of the chants recommended for Psalm 84.

Morav Psalm 084 (32) - tune.mp3
This is an audio recording of chant 32, which is another of the chants recommended for Psalm 84.

Morav Psalm 084 (31) - organ.pdf
This is the score for the organ of Psalm 84, chant 31.

Morav Psalm 084 (31) - choir.pdf
This is the score for the choir of Psalm 84, chant 31.

Morav Psalm 084 (31) - projector (a).jpg
This is one of the scores for the congregation of Psalm 84, chant 31.

§1 For each psalm and each chant there are three versions:

 (a) For the organ
 (b) For the choir
 (c) For the projector
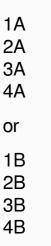
The version for organ (the master-version)

§2 The version for the organ contains the chant with tune only, matched to the text, and the harmonies. If you use a four-hole punch machine and use this to punch three holes into the left and right margin, you can hang two pages simultaneously into a four-ring ringbinder, one on the left and one on the right, enabling you to play two pages at a time without having to turn pages.

§3 The doxology (Glory be to the Father ...) is always written out in full,

adding one or two lines to the score, but making life easier for the choir and for the congregation.

§4 The organ version contains up to six lines of text underneath each line of notes, which makes it fairly easy for the oranist to follow the text and the notes at the same time. When a psalm has more than six verses (or double-verses), it is divided into several pages so that the organist never has to jump over more than 6 lines of text at a time.

§5 At the beginning of each line are numbers and letters, such as:

1A
2A
3A
4A

or

1B
2B
3B
4B

§6 This helps the organist and the choir not to lose the line. The numbers are like the verses of a hymn. First one sings all lines marked with 1: result in verse 1. Then one sings all verses marked with 2; &c.

§7 The capital letters indicate which section of the chant we are singing. A double-chant has four sections, marked A, B, C, D. A single-chant has only two sections, marked A, B.

§8 At the end of each line are marks such as the following:

>2A
>3A
>4A
>1B

§9 The arrow (>) means "go to". The number and capital letter signify the line to which we must go. Thus,

>2A means "go to 2A"
>3A means "go to 3A"
>4A means "go to 4A"
>1B means "go to 1B", &c.

§10 The congregation (projector version) cannot possibly lose the line, because they see only one verse at a time, always only one line of text

underneath one line of music.

§11 The numbers (1, 2, ..., 10, 10, 9, ..., 1) have been added to the organ and choir version in large font for use during choir rehearsals. Before the choir start practising a new psalm or a new chant, they practise chanting the numbers rather than text. Once they know the chant virtually by heart, they start practising the text. (I owe this technique to a colleague in Lancashire, but that was quite a while ago, and I have forgotten his name, his town and his church. Sorry. May God reward him.)

§12 A double-chant uses the numbers 1 to 10 forwards and then backwards. A single-chant uses them only upwards.

§13 Commas have been inserted to break up strings of words into shorter phrases. A short pause should be made at each comma. This enables the singers to take a breath, prevents them from falling over each other in a rush forward, and helps the congregation to take in the meaning of the text.

§14 When one syllable is sung over several notes (usually two notes) the syllable in question has been extended by a long underscore; e.g. "A_____men"

The version for choir

§15 While the organist has up to 6 lines underneath each line of music, the choir never has more than 4 lines. I do not want to make life to difficult for the choir. The clearer the score, the less rehearsal time is needed. Since our choir usually sings melody only, only the tune has been given. By printing on both sides of the paper, paper can be saved.

The version for the projector

§16 This enables members of the congregation to join in with the choir if they feel up to it. They see one verse at a time and only one line of text underneath one line of music. They can not possibly lose the line (e.g. jump from one verse into another).

§17 This version contains all the information needed by the choir (except the chanted count, 1, 2, 3, ...) and is even easier to read than the choir version. Therefore it could be used by the choir instead of their printed sheets, provided the projector and the projectionist can be trusted.

§18 The musical notation is useful even for people who cannot read music because it shows them where the tune goes up and down, or where a string of words is chanted at the same level, and together with their memory of the sound of the chant, it will help them to join in.