

Hymnist Patrick Matsikenyiri dies at 83

by [Dawn Araujo-Hawkins](#) in the [February 24, 2021](#) issue



(Courtesy photo)

Patrick Matsikenyiri, a United Methodist hymn writer and teacher, died on January 15 from complications related to COVID-19. He was 83.

Born in Zimbabwe, Matsikenyiri was known around the world for his song leading and his teaching on African music. He gained international recognition in the 1980s through his work planning the worship music for World Council of Churches events. He was an early advocate of including indigenous music in congregational singing.

He spent nine years teaching at the UMC-affiliated Africa University in Zimbabwe. There he developed a four-year music education program—the first such program in the country.

Several of Matsikenyiri's hymns are found in the Methodist supplemental hymnal *The Faith We Sing*, including "Tino Tenda, Jesu" (Thank You, Jesus) and "Jesu, Tawa Pano" (Jesus, We Are Here").

In 1999, Matsikenyiri was recognized as a fellow of the ecumenical Hymn Society in the United States and Canada—the highest honor given by the organization—for his work promoting the inclusion of global hymnody throughout the world.