

Worship and Music Ministry Team Planning Meeting **January 31, 2015**

Participants: Hyojin Ahn, Karen Lee Banks, Tom Beers, Tim Bensch, Dave Conrad, RoAnne Hartfield, Cheryl Hollar, Kurt Muller, Sharron Sample, Mark Steiner, Melissa Steiner, Pastor Gary Rhinesmith, Don Rich, Kim Watson, Louise Waynant, and Nancy-Pat Weaver, and Fred Wentland.

Welcome and Review of Agenda

Nancy-Pat welcomed the team participants, and opened the meeting with prayer. She reviewed the agenda for the meeting.

Response to Psalms in Worship

Nancy-Pat invited participants to share their reflections regarding how the psalms have helped their worship. Thoughts shared by participants included the following:

- There appears to be significant congregational participation in the psalms during the liturgy.
- One reason congregational participation may be limited at times is that some worshippers lack a comfort level with singing new music. There is less emphasis on vocal music instruction in our schools in the 21st century, and less emphasis on vocal music participation in our current culture.
- Some worshippers prefer to reflect while listening to the psalms rather than participating in the musical response.
- It is helpful for the congregation if there is strong vocal leadership of the psalms from the choir or cantor.
- Currently the choir or cantor sings the verses and the congregation is invited to participate in singing the refrain. The worship booklet usually indicates who will be offering what part of the psalm.
- Psalms have been an important part of worship liturgy since the earliest years of the church. When the psalms were written, they actually were written to be sung.
- Some psalms lend themselves better than others to being set to music, and sometimes the words and music do not seem to “fit well.”
- Tim explained that through the years there have been several styles or forms of incorporating psalms in the liturgy, and different ways to include them in the liturgy.
 - In early editions of the Lutheran hymnal, psalms were to be read responsively.
 - Around 1970-1980, the LBW highlighted intoning the psalms, emphasizing that the psalms, when written, actually were meant to be sung.
 - Later, a responsorial style was introduced in the LBW, with verses sung by a cantor or choir, and a melodic refrain that involved the congregation.
 - Around 1990, church musicians such as Marty Haugen and David Haas were asked to write music for the church year in which the essence of the text of psalms was presented in verse form for the choir or cantor.
 - Although the lectionary has a different psalm assigned for each Sunday, some churches prefer to have a seasonal psalm. For example, the same psalm would be

sung for each of the four Sundays in Advent. In that way, the psalm becomes familiar to the congregation.

- Participants expressed a preference for a “mix” of styles as the variety of styles can refresh this component of the liturgy, making it more meaningful and enriching the worship experience.
- It may be best when the music for a psalm is particularly difficult to have a cantor or very small group lead it rather than having the entire choir do so, and then have a melodic refrain for all to share. This could help with the “energy management” of the choir members.

Liturgy for Lent and Easter

Pastor Gary, Tim, and Hyojin explained that the liturgy for Lent and Easter will be Setting 3 from the ELW, which also is Setting 2 from the LBW. It is familiar, and has been used since 1972. The canticle of praise (This Is the Feast) and the hymn of thanksgiving will not be used during Lent, but will be added to the liturgy during the Easter season.

Pastor Gary expressed appreciation to Tim for adapting the communion liturgy such that the words fit Marty Haugen’s music.

Discussion included the following reflections:

- The liturgical settings change so that each season of the church year is distinct, and the musical transition reflects a new season. However, it is important not to change the liturgical settings so often that it becomes difficult for the congregation.
- Pastor Gary noted that although church membership is stable, actual church attendance is declining as individuals travel for work, family, athletics, vacations, and other commitments. It is important to take this reality into consideration with regard to worship planning and expectations.
- Familiar settings, such as Setting 4 from “With One Voice” that was used for Pentecost invites participation of worshippers.
- Haugen’s “Mass of Creation” is now very familiar to the congregation.

Developing or Selecting Devotions to Post on the Website

Fred noted that since he has been posting Pastor Gary’s sermons and portions of the worship service on the ASLC website, he has been much more aware of the various components of the worship service, and expressed appreciation to all who plan and lead services. Fred stated that he thought music and worship at ASLC have been “just right.” He said he appreciates the variety provided in music offerings, enjoys the instrumental music as well as the vocal music, and appreciates the music leadership. He expressed appreciation for the “coaching” that is offered by the cantors, and how different music leaders appear from time to time.

Fred also noted that on the ASLC website there is a segment on “Devotions” with the last entries being Advent 2012. He suggested that it might be meaningful to have seasonal devotions. For example, devotions for the season of Lent might be offered.

Discussion included the following reflections:

- Participants expressed heartfelt thanks to Fred for the time and commitment he has offered in putting Pastor's sermons and other aspects of our worship experience on the website.
- This is a wonderful opportunity to reach out to the Saints and others who visit the website.
- There are many devotional resources available on the internet that could be cited on the website. It might be useful to compile a listing of these resources and share them on the website.
- It would be important to consider the time required to create "original" devotions, particularly if music were to be involved, and to be certain that copyright restrictions were observed.
- The team will continue to consider and offer suggestions about how best to share devotions through the website.

Organization of Vocal Groups

Participants joined Nancy-Pat, Pastor Gary, and Tim in thanking Hyojin for the excellent music leadership she is providing for ASLC, and the impressive progress she has made in every aspect of her role.

Hyojin explained that she wishes to make the Thursday evening choir rehearsal experience meaningful and helpful for all, and to make best use of time given the busy and sometimes unpredictable schedules of choir members. She also asked for suggestions regarding the following:

- When is it best to have combined choirs at both services?
- When is it best to have separate choirs, but have the same music?
- When is it most appropriate to have "special music" rather than the choir/s?

Additional questions from participants related to when the choir processes and recesses, and when the choir wears choir robes.

Discussion included the following reflections:

- In general, when there are six or more choir members, the choir will process and recess.
- Because the choir members are part of worship leadership, choir members will wear their robes.
- In spite of the desire to attend every rehearsal and be there "on time," life's challenges and responsibilities and unpredictable events interfere. How can we best plan for the "unpredictability" of our lives, and yet be responsive to our calling to worship and music ministry?
- Choir members have been very responsive to requests to participate in both services on "special Sundays."
- It may be helpful for the choirs to have some "favorite familiar pieces" that they know well and that can be offered with two or three individuals so that if, on a given Sunday, there are not enough choir members to offer the chosen anthem, the familiar piece can be substituted.

- Rather than listing the specific anthem in the worship bulletin, it may be best to simply state, “Special Music” so that flexibility exists to offer instrumental music or vocal music by the choir or by a small group or individual.
- Hyojin offered that she will plan for “simpler” music for the 8:30 choir to sing when there are only a few choir members present. She will communicate her intentions to the choir members.
- Pastor Gary offered reflections about how the two services have evolved and changed over the past ten years. The characteristics, energy level, “spirit,” and level of participation for *each* service has changed several times.
- Historically, the 8:30 service at one time had no music, and gradually added hymns and music from the liturgy.
- We need to continue our efforts to reach out to our youth to participate in the music of worship.
- There is a lot of musical talent within the youth of the congregation but they are so tightly scheduled it is very difficult to get them scheduled to participate.
- It is difficult to have a youth choir without a “critical mass” of young people which we do not have at All Saints at this time.
- Perhaps it is best to ask our talented youth to participate on a certain date in a specific way rather than to approach it in an open-ended manner.
- Personal invitations always are the most effective way to get others involved.

The following summary was offered.

Music is very important to ASLC.

Resources are limited.

Special music does not have to involve the choir.

Music leadership is very important.

- The schedule for choir rehearsal will be as follows:
7:00-7:30 – Anthem for 8:30 Service
7:30-8:00 – Review Bulletin, Psalm, Liturgy, Anthem for Festival Sundays
8:00-8:30 – Anthem for 11:00 Service
8:30-8:45 – Soloists/Cantors/Small Ensembles

Other Worship Matters

Requirements for Lectors

A question was raised by a member of the congregation regarding the “appropriate age” for an individual to serve as a lector. The response is very clear: all are invited to serve as lector, regardless of age. Youth are encouraged to participate as lectors. The only requirement is that some training has been provided prior to serving in that role, regardless of the age of the participant.

Information and Training Opportunity for Worship and Music

Nancy-Pat explained that a Worship and Music “information and training day” for all who might be interested in any aspect of WM ministry would be held on Sunday, April 26, after the 11:00 service.

Organ Music in Worship

The nature of the music offered in worship is the determining factor in whether the accompaniment will be done on the organ, the piano, other instruments, a combination of musical instruments, or acapella.

Pastor Gary and Hyojin will collaborate on a possible move of the piano and choir to be closer to the organ.

Involving Children and Youth in Music

The first segment of the Sunday School Hour for children and youth could include involvement in music ministry. Kim, Karen Lee, and Hyojin will collaborate on this opportunity.

Festival of Baptism

Pastor Gary, Tim, and Nancy-Pat offered specific appreciation to Hyojin for making the Baptism of Our Lord a Festival event, and arranging for the beautiful special music that included a guest cellist.

Last Sunday for Choir Participation in Worship for Spring, 2015

The choir will continue to lead music ministry at ASLC through Holy Trinity Sunday on May 31, 2015.

Publicizing the Worship Calendar

Fred suggested that the Worship Calendar for 2015 be placed on the ASLC Website.

Identifying Festival Sundays

Pastor Gary offered clarification about festival Sundays. His clarification is summarized in the chart below.

Tier One Festival Sundays	Tier Two Festival Sundays	Tier Three Festival Sundays
Easter Christmas Pentecost	All Saints Day Transfiguration of Our Lord Baptism of Our Lord	Reformation The Holy Trinity Palm Sunday Christ the King Sunday Christmas Eve

Participants recommended providing this information on the ASLC website, and explaining what a “Festival Sunday” meant for those not familiar with the term in a religious setting so as not be confused with secular festivals.

Instrumental Music for Easter

Pastor Gary advised that Hyojin would determine what instruments would be chosen/invited for Easter worship based on the music selected.

Scheduling

If possible, it would be wise to schedule major Fellowship Events such as Oktoberfest at times that do not back up to festival Sundays.

Replacing Worn Chalices

Nancy-Pat explained that our chalices and other serving items are becoming worn. Metal items are expensive. Could they be replaced with ceramic chalices? More discussion about this question will be needed. Each Sunday can be seen as a “mini Resurrection.”

Special Needs of Single Parents

Sharron encouraged us to give special consideration to the single parents who come to ASLC with their children and may need encouragement and support.

Technology Concerns

It has come to our attention that in a different parish and denomination, some individuals left their church because they felt the technology in the sanctuary was a distraction. Members of our technology team will learn more about the issue and how concerns such as this might be avoided at ASLC.

Vestments for Worship Leaders

Nancy-Pat explained that the matter of vestments for worship leaders had originated from a question from an Assisting Minister who wondered if there would be a time when vestments would not be needed.

Discussion included the following reflections:

- Different people have different traditions, and there is a broad spectrum of response.
- From a parent’s perspective for acolytes, it is better to have the vestment than to worry if one’s child is “appropriately attired.”
- Being vested sets the experience apart as something that is special in “God’s House.”
- Being vested provides a sense of decorum that indicates their contribution to the worship experience.
- As Lutherans, we are a liturgical church and therefore have a structure that more informal, non-liturgical churches do not share.
- ASLC is *intentional* about what happens in worship. That is a very important and valuable characteristic of ASLC. If we change what we do, we must be intentional about it, explaining what we are doing and most importantly, *WHY* we are doing it.
- Continue to offer opportunities for the choir to sit with their families and friends in the congregation.

Pastor Gary’s input from the September 2014 meeting of the Worship and Music Team may be helpful regarding the use of vestments and is included below.

- It is essential to consider the **purpose** for having formal worship attire and formal liturgical practices. It is important to consider **why** we do them. and why we would discontinue their use. *Prior to initiating any changes it would be important to **provide background information about the meaning and purpose of formal worship attire and formal liturgical practices.** For example, albs have been used by worship leaders for over 500 years. The alb covers the worship leader or pastor, thus symbolizing that it is not the leader's word but God's word being spoken and it is not the leader sharing the sacraments but God sharing the sacraments. The assisting minister wears an alb to symbolize that he/she is doing God's work. Choir robes symbolize a unified voice for worship and praise. Precious metals have been used in pouring chalices to symbolize the precious gift of Jesus' blood that was shed for us. Candles became part of worship in the early church as they were the only means of light.*

Thanksgiving and Closing Prayer

Nancy-Pat thanked all who attended and made the meeting a rich and meaningful experience. Having all 17 participants offer thoughtful reflections was truly a blessing.

Pastor Gary offered a closing prayer and benediction.

Next Meeting

The next Worship and Music Planning Team Meeting will be held on Saturday, May 16, 2015. Breakfast will be available at 9:00, and discussion will begin at 9:30. The meeting will be held at the home of Louise Waynant. All are welcome!