

Worship and Music Ministry Team Planning Meeting **October 13, 2013**

Participants: Sig Beecher, Gary Beecher, Tim Bensch, RoAnne Hartfield, Ellen Hug, John Maerhofer, Kurt Muller, Pastor Gary Rhinesmith, Don Rich, Louise Waynant, Nancy-Pat Weaver, John Wenger, and Raymond Wood

Opening Prayer and Welcome

Nancy-Pat opened the meeting with prayer, welcomed the team participants, and reviewed the agenda for the meeting. She explained that the meeting would offer an opportunity to continue discussion initiated at the August, 2013 meeting, and would include specific planning for the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and the Sundays after Epiphany.

Liturgy Settings Review/Planning

The team discussed options for Advent liturgy and hymns. During the second half of Pentecost and Advent, 2012, All Saints used the ELW Liturgical Setting 8. There was limited input from the congregation regarding the setting used, although some individuals expressed initial discomfort regarding the change in setting. Additionally, some congregants expressed a desire to use traditional hymns.

Tim advised that in addition to the traditional hymns that are familiar to the congregation, there are many very beautiful new hymns that could enrich Advent worship. He suggested that we reflect on the “intention” of Advent. This includes preparation for Christ’s birth and anticipation of the second coming of Christ, but also includes a broader dimension that can inform our planning. This broader perspective of Advent involves preparing oneself to receive Christ and participate in the reign of God, focusing on bringing God’s justice to the earth, and moving out of bondage into freedom -- going from darkness into light.

Nancy-Pat offered a brief review of the conclusions of the Alternate Worship Styles Task Force, reminding team members that the congregation expressed a desire to blend traditional worship and music practices with more contemporary worship and music options. Thus, a “blended” service rather than separate services was preferred by the congregation. Additionally, Pastor Gary advised the team that the time frame for Advent and Christmas would be limited, with four weeks for Advent and two weeks for Christmas. He noted that changing liturgies in this brief period would not allow the congregation time enough to become comfortable with the changes.

Given this background, the following decisions were made by the team.

Advent and Christmas

- The ELW 8 setting will be used for the Advent and Christmas seasons. Although we will use the same setting, we will seek to highlight festival Sundays, and the change from Pentecost to Advent to Christmas by exercising some options such as addition of the *Kyrie, This Is the Feast, a seasonal Gloria, and/or a Hymn of Thanksgiving after Communion.*

- Hymns for Advent will include both traditional and more contemporary music. Tim has offered suggestions for more contemporary hymns in the worship planning suggestions he shared with the team. John M. encouraged the team to offer any additional suggestions for hymns for Advent, but emphasized that the suggestions would be needed during the next two weeks.

Sundays after Epiphany

- A different liturgical setting will be selected for the Sundays after Epiphany. This setting also will be used during Lent. John M. and Pastor will collaborate on the selection of an appropriate setting.

Calendar Review and Discussion

Festival Services and Worship Themes for October and November

Nancy-Pat and Pastor Gary provided information about festival services in October and November. Decisions regarding these services are summarized below.

- ELW 8, with appropriate additions, will be used for festival Sundays in October and November.
- For Reformation Sunday and Affirmation of Baptism (October 27), special music will be offered.
- All Saints Sunday, with the remembrance of the faithful departed (November 3) will include commemoration candles in the worship service.
- Martin Luther's Birthday (530 years) will be celebrated on November 10. Recognition of Veterans will occur on that Sunday as well.
- Warm Nights will begin on November 19, and will be noted in the worship service. The 150th anniversary of the Gettysburg Address also will be recognized on November 19.
- For Christ the King Sunday occurs on November 24. We will also mark the 50th Anniversary of the Assassination of President Kennedy. Special music will be offered.
- The worship services on December 15 will feature Advent lessons and carols.

Christmas

Nancy-Pat asked the team to consider the number of Christmas Eve services to be offered, and the best times for those services, based on congregational response and preferences in recent years. It was noted that attendance at the 11:00 p.m. service has declined steadily over the past decade and attendance at the 4:00 Family Service and 6:00 Festival Service has increased. John M. described his experiences with scheduling Christmas Eve services in various parishes, and suggested consideration of an 8:30 p.m. service based upon positive responses from these parishes. After a thoughtful discussion of alternatives and congregational preferences, the team agreed that for Christmas Eve, 2013, services would be offered at 4:00, 6:00, and 8:30 p.m. Congregational response to the new time for the third service will be sought and considered for 2014 Christmas Eve planning.

On December 29, the service of Christmas Lessons and Carols will be led by the Rev. Russell Fink. Pastor Gary will be participating in the baptism of his new granddaughter on that day.

Hymn Sing

The team agreed that in view of having two “Lessons and Carols” services” in December, a separate “Hymn Sing” service would not be recommended at this time.

Preparing for Worship

The team agreed that as a way to encourage the Saints to have a quiet time for contemplation and preparation for worship prior to both Sunday services, the following information would be included in the worship booklet.

“Please use this quiet time prior to worship to help focus on our being in God’s presence. A quiet and calm setting, free of distractions, is conducive to prayer and meditation.”

After a helpful discussion of various ways to offer a “call to worship,” the team supported the recommendation that Pastor Gary’s announcements would be offered prior to the prelude. Then, the prelude could create a quiet time for contemplation and preparation for worship.

Usher Concerns

Ushers for 8:30 Services

Nancy-Pat explained that ushers for the 8:30 service were needed for the second and third Sundays of the month, as well as for months with a fifth Sunday. Ellen graciously offered to assist Nancy-Pat with identifying ushers for those Sundays.

Choir Communion

The team offered suggestions to clarify choir communion procedures. It was agreed that it works well to have choir members commune first so the choir can lead singing during the communion service. As well, it was agreed that having the choir commune on the right side of the altar was appropriate. For non-station services, having the choir approach the altar in front of the piano works well. For station services, having the choir process from the back works best. A tray for used communion cups will be placed in a convenient location for the choir as members return to their seats.

Updates

Sound System

Gary B. and John W. have visited other churches to learn how their sound systems work and discuss the experiences these churches have had with their sound systems. They learned that with current technology, it is now possible to adjust the sound from within the worship area using an iPad. One cannot adjust sound in “real time” from a separate room. Gary B. identified three components of a long range plan and asked the team for clarification regarding priorities. The components are the sound system, video recording, and video projection. The team agreed on the priorities below. Gary and John W, and Sharron will continue their work in view of these priorities.

Component	Priority	Benefits
Sound system	1	Increased clarity of Pastor's sermons; ability to put some sermons and hymns on the website; ability to adjust the sound immediately from within the sanctuary for the congregation's benefit
Video recording	2	Ability to put recorded portions of services and special events and programs on the church's website
Video projection	3	Enhanced and enriched worship experiences

Participation of Youth in Worship

Team members discussed various ways youth could become more involved in worship participation. Rather than scheduling a "Youth Sunday" this fall, the team recommended talking with youth about participating as lectors, acolytes, crucifers, ushers, and musicians. Gary B. has been inviting youth to serve as crucifers for the 11:00 service, and that has worked well. Tim mentioned that there are simple arrangements of hymns that would be appropriate for young musicians; John M will follow-up to obtain copies. At this time there are not enough children available for choir participation to form a separate children's choir.

Closing and Sending

Nancy-Pat thanked the team for their attendance and expressed her appreciation for the interest and support team members have offered. The meeting ended with prayer and with group singing of "If You Believe and I Believe."