

Worship and Music Ministry Team Planning Meeting **August 24, 2013**

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

Opening Meditation

The opening meditation offered the hymn “It is Well with My Soul” and featured a series of visuals, related scripture (Psalm 46: 1-5, Colossians 2: 13-14, and Philippians 4:7), and prayer.

The prayer follows:

Comforting and loving God,

We are blessed with your loving presence and the peace that comes from knowing that we can trust you in all things. Your son, our Lord Jesus Christ, has offered himself for our salvation, and we are surrounded by this love and grace at all times. No matter what troubles and challenges we face, it is indeed possible for each of us to say, “It is well with my soul.” We pray in Jesus’ name, Amen

Welcome

Nancy-Pat welcomed the group and provided a review of the agenda for the morning.

Sabbatical Reflections on Worship and Music

Pastor Gary discussed reflections about worship experiences during his Sabbatical, with emphasis on the experiences he had in Taizé and Wittenberg. He said the most intense experience with worship and music occurred in Taizé. Pastor Gary offered the following conclusions about the experiences.

1. **Having all aspects of the worship service available in one place makes worship accessible for all.** Worship experiences in the afternoons in Wittenberg did not include music, but followed the format familiar to All Saints. Each afternoon, 8-20 individuals from 8 or 9 countries gathered for worship. It became clear that an important part of making the worship service accessible for all was **having all aspects of the worship service available in one place**, such as the worship booklet used at All Saints.
2. **It is important to be intentional about the vocabulary used for components of worship.** Pastor Gary explained that every Saturday evening a full worship service was held in Wittenberg. Music offered that week was provided by the “jazz choir.” In fact, the selections were from *With One Voice*. Words like “praise,” “contemporary,” and “traditional” have different meanings for different people. Clarity about how terms are defined can lead to common understanding and enriched communication.
3. **It is meaningful to have some quiet time to prepare for worship.** In Taizé, bells rang for 10 minutes prior to prayer to help participants prepare for worship.
4. **The use of visuals or icons within the sanctuary can help worshippers focus on key aspects of the worship experience.** In Taizé there always were meaningful images that suggested the theme of the worship experience.
5. **There is a universal quality to music.** Offering songs to God, regardless of the language of those worshipping, is a powerful experience. Pastor Gary explained that in Taizé the accompaniment to singing was very basic and many participants knew the songs by heart.

What was remarkable was that each participant sang in his or her own language, and together it was a moving tribute to God.

Tim offered reflections on the worship experiences of the Saints during Pastor Gary's Sabbatical.

1. **The Holden evening Prayer Service** was beautiful and moving. Many have asked that it be repeated.
2. **Singing a blessing prayer before congregational meals** was well received by participants.
3. **Using repeated refrains in worship** can contribute to the meaning of worship for participants. Sometimes we can "get lost in all the words" of the liturgy or hymns.
4. **Expanding the group of participants in the worship life of the congregation** was appreciated by the council and congregation. Greater involvement of members of the congregation serving as lectors, assisting ministers, and leaders for children's messages has been noticed by the congregation and communicated to the council.

Kim reflected on the positive experience of having the **children's message offered by members of the congregation**, and suggested that from time to time this could be a component of worship. Pastor Gary reflected that it was good for children to see other **models of faithfulness** within the congregation. Ellen noted that participation of members of the congregation leads to **ownership**.

Worship Planning "Homework" for the Advent/Christmas/Epiphany Seasons

Nancy-Pat explained that as "optional homework" team members had been invited to contribute suggestions for worship and music planning for the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Sundays after Epiphany based on the Lectionary readings. The **purposes for seeking suggestions** from the team and others) include:

1. Offering a variety of suggestions and "new ideas" for Pastor Gary and worship leaders to consider as they prepare worship services
2. Providing personal fulfillment for those who participate in creating the suggestions

Examples of planning ideas were distributed and discussed by Nancy-Pat (Advent 1) and Louise (Epiphany 3 and 4). Nancy-Pat offered to provide suggestions for the rest of the Sundays in Advent. **Team members who volunteered to prepare suggestions for other Sundays included Sig and Gary, RoAnne, Don, and Tim.** Tim mentioned that there were many contemporary sacred songs for Advent such as "God of All People" with its repeated refrain of "Come, Lord Jesus, Come." There was some discussion about how the ideas from the "homework" can/will be used. Pastor Gary, John, and Tim all noted how valuable and spiritually refreshing it is for the worship leaders/planners to hear new ideas about the Scripture from the Lectionary. It was mentioned that some of the suggestions might be used as part of the e-pistle or in a Sunday School session.

In response to a question about the use of alternate readings in the Lectionary listing, Pastor Gary explained that the revised lectionary includes some options for congregational use. For example, some options offer the opportunity for greater continuity in use of readings from a particular book such as Isaiah.

Worship and Music Visioning Follow-Up

Topic 1: Enhanced Use of Visual Arts in Conjunction with Worship

A lively discussion was held regarding opportunities, challenges, and cautions related to use of visual arts in conjunction with worship.

Opportunities:

1. Worship can be enriched through including visual arts in worship, with or without music.
2. Images can help to focus the attention of participants on the message of worship. Well selected images can help to highlight important concepts within the lectionary.
3. The talents and experiences of many members of the congregation can be used in the creation of visuals.
4. Meditations involving visuals such as the one used at the beginning of the meeting can be used in a variety of settings such as small group gatherings, evening services, Sunday School sessions, and team, committee, or council meetings. Meditations might be used prior to the beginning of Sunday services to help individuals transition to the worship setting.
5. If appropriate copyright considerations are followed, they can be shared through the Website or Facebook.

Challenges and Cautions

1. Visuals must be sharp and easily seen by participants. If they are “fuzzy” or hard to see, they lose their meaning and effectiveness.
2. A dark setting is needed if the visuals are to be projected clearly.
3. If the screen is small, images get lost.
4. More than one screen may be needed if all are to see the visuals.
5. The music must be clear and well performed.
6. Copyright can be a problem, especially if the music is recorded by a group.
7. Live music used with visuals can be a challenge when matching music with images.
8. Take care that “amateurish videos” do not detract from the gospel message.
9. Do we intend to video entire services? If yes, it would be important to edit them.
10. Someone or a team must do the essential work of planning, creating, and editing.
11. The current projection and sound system at All Saints must be upgraded to provide quality visual offerings for Sunday worship.

Next Steps

- Establish a committee that will create a specific “master plan” for upgrading the projection and sound system at All Saints. Have them include in their plan recommendations for use of visual arts.
- Continue to invite members of the congregation to contribute their ideas and images to the effort.

Topic 2: Preparing for Worship

As a follow-up to Pastor Gary’s discussion of the value of quiet time when preparing for worship, the team discussed concerns about having individuals go into the sanctuary for meditation. Among the concerns are late arriving individuals and having folks in the narthex linger in conversation or activity. Suggestions included:

1. Use bells such as those at Taizé as a call to worship.
2. Use the chimes on the organ as a call to worship.
3. Have young people serve as ushers and have them encourage individuals to enter the sanctuary.
4. Offer a meditation such as the one used at the beginning of the meeting prior to the prelude.
5. Offer “praise choruses” prior to the prelude.
6. Communicate the intent and purpose of the “transition time” to the congregation in various ways, emphasizing the “carrot approach” and not the “stick approach.”

Topic 3: Involving Youth

Throughout the meeting, several references to involving youth were mentioned.

1. Include youth on the team to create a “master plan” for how an upgraded sound/projection system would be used.
2. Involve youth in the creation of visuals for meditations and enhancing worship.
3. Involve youth in creating dramatic presentations to use as part of worship or children’s sermons.
4. Involve youth as ushers.
5. Involve youth as crucifers.
6. Involve youth as lectors.

Note: We should not assume that young people value only contemporary worship. Many also value traditional worship.

Near Term Calendar

Nancy-Pat distributed a draft **Worship Calendar** for the period from Sunday, September 8 through Christmas Day. Pastor Gary described the purpose and schedule for the 16th Sunday after Pentecost, describing the “God’s Work, Our Hands” Service of Commission. There are three components for the day: Sending, Serving, and Sharing. Liz Muller has distributed specific, detailed information to the congregation about the day that includes ten different worship opportunities.

There will be some adjustments to the worship services on and following September 15. Among the adjustments will be use of the alternate set of green paraments.

Appreciation was extended to Don and Nancy-Pat for their work on updating the Worship and Music display for the **Ministry Faire**. A new brochure and set of pictures have been created. John M. will demonstrate tone chimes. There will be an opportunity for members to sign up for the choir and for the tone chimes group, as well as other Worship and Music ministries.

The synod has identified the third Sunday in October as “Community of St. Dysmas Sunday” for congregations to publicize, learn about, and support the community as it ministers to inmates in correctional institutions in Maryland and to those who have been released to return to society. Because that day is Consecration Sunday at All Saints, All Saints will include a focus on **prison ministry** during Epiphany. Pastor Gary noted that All Saints is a leader among synod congregations in its support for prison ministry.

Business Topics/Logistics

Topic 1: Decadal Time and Talent Survey

Tim explained that early in 2014, the Congregation Council has approved a plan to conduct a Time and Talent Survey. This was last done 10 years ago. The survey will include an updated list of ministry opportunities. The purpose of the initiative is to inform the congregation about current opportunities for ministry, and invite and encourage their participation in aspects of ministry that are meaningful for them. The team can contribute to the creation of the survey by identifying the many rich and varied opportunities that exist for participation in the worship and music life of the congregation.

Topic 2: September 22 Recognition/Training Day for Worship and Music Participants

Pastor Gary and Nancy-Pat described the purpose and plans for the September 22

Recognition/Training Day for Worship and Music participants. The event will be held after the 11:00 service, and will include lunch and small group sessions related to worship leadership such as those for lectors, assisting ministers, ushers, and acolytes. The event has these purposes:

1. Expressing thanks for the leadership and participation that has been provided
2. Sharing experiences and offering suggestions
3. Encouraging others to serve
4. Involving youth in many ways

Topic 3: Christmas Planning

Nancy-Pat explained that we would need individuals to help with preparing the sanctuary for Christmas. There will be a 4:00 Family Service and a 6:00 Festival Service. As yet to be determined is whether there will be an 11:00 service. December 29 will be a service of lessons and carols. Tim noted that we also need to decide if we will add mid-week or Saturday evening worship, fellowship, and/or service opportunities during the Advent season as had been suggested during the Sabbatical.

Topic 4: Piano Repair

Nancy-Pat, John M., Hyojin, and Pastor Gary visited the dealership from which the piano in the sanctuary was purchased to discuss warranty and upgrade options. It was noted that the piano, although serviceable, has some problems (action, muddy sound, does not hold intonation for very long) and an upgrade may be a good idea at some point. The group learned that although there are two more years on the warranty, and the piano can be “traded in” for an upgraded model, it will not be at the full value of its original purchase price regardless of whether we still are within the warranty period. A better quality piano eventually will be needed but there is no impending deadline, so that will be a longer term goal.

Topic 5: Sound System

John W. presented results of his initial research on cost for updating the sound system.

Approximate costs for an analog upgrade would be \$3527, and for a digital upgrade costs would be about \$4124. The costs include training. After a thoughtful discussion of issues and alternatives, the following conclusions were reached.

1. Create a plan that identifies the end results we desire. What are our goals? What do we want an upgraded system to allow us to do? What are the steps we can take to accomplish the goals and strategies we have identified? Can this be done in stages? How can we fund it? (For example, create a separate line item in the budget.)
2. Consider this effort as involving every aspect of our mission to gather, worship, learn, and serve. This endeavor is related not only to worship and music. It is a major learning and evangelism tool as well, and enhances our opportunities to serve. (We are marketing our image in the world. This is a 2013 version of “follow me.”)
3. Identify a small group to identify the specific goals, purposes, and desired outcomes of the initiative. Then, identify another group to identify specific costs and timelines.

Individuals who will be part of the small planning group include John W., Gary B., Tim, Pastor Gary, and young adults/youth identified and invited by Pastor Gary.

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 next meeting will be scheduled during the fall and will involve Lent and Holy week planning, as well as an update on matters discussed at this meeting. The meeting ended with prayer and with group singing of “If You Believe and I Believe.”