

We Value Music



Core Value

We Value Music.

We value music, which is joyful and diverse, inspiring and comforting to ourselves and others, uplifting and spiritual. Music expresses our worship of God, unites us as a body of faith, and enhances our personal connection to God.

“Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord, let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.”
(Psalm 95:1-2)

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.” (Colossians 3:16)

Introduction

“Variety is the spice of Life”—we’ve heard that saying all of our lives. It shows in the way we wear different clothes, drive various cars and live in many kinds of houses. We each have unique personalities and characteristics. Every individual has her or his own traits and preferences that are different than others.

Do you know why we’re all unique? Because God made us this way. He knew that making everyone the same would soon get VERY boring! If we all looked the same, talked the same, thought the same ways, and behaved exactly alike, God could have just named the world, “Robots, Inc.” and left us alone to go about our predictable, programmed, routine lives.

Bible Study

Music is an important part of our relationship with God. Throughout the Bible we see music as being consistently part of the worship of God by his people. The entire book of Psalms is songs of worship, exhorting the community and praising God. There are a variety of Psalms—some of joy, some of sorrow, some asking for help. God’s people seem to be able to express their feelings in worship through music. Jesus told us to worship “in spirit and truth” (John 4:24), and we just seem to sense God’s Spirit through music, sharing our heart’s needs and desires with God through this vehicle. Just as we have a variety of emotions and needs, we have a whole spectrum of musical styles, instruments, vocal groupings, etc. The scriptures reflect and support using a variety of music in worship.

Psalm 95:1-2

The Psalm was written as a call to worship for the Old Testament Temple (*Wycliff Bible Commentary*), to be used for corporate worship on the Sabbath. The worship leaders announce to the congregation, “O come, let us sing”, a summons probably sung by the Levitical Choir in procession into the Temple. The congregation was then asked to join with the choir as the hymn was “lined out”, repeating each phrase:

Choir: “*Shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation!*”

People: “*Shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation!*”

Choir: “*Come before Him with thanksgiving!*”

People: “*Come before Him with thanksgiving!*”

Choir: “*Extol Him with music and song!*”

People: “*Extol Him with music and song!*”

This opening was probably loud and exciting, using lots of drums and cymbals as the choir processed into the temple shouting these “calls” to worship. As the people gathered and responded, they joined in the procession into the temple.

As the worshipers entered the Temple and got away from the noises of the courtyard, the singing became less responsorial and more hymn-like, as we can see as we read on in this Psalm. In verses 8 (ff.) the Psalm describes why they have come to worship God and how God has led his people as their king, creator, and shepherd. Perhaps the music for these verses was more subdued, using the lyre and smaller hand rhythm instruments for accompaniment.

Colossians 3:16

It has often been said that we have learned more theology from our music than from our textbooks. This scripture passage seems to support the idea that music should be used to teach God’s Word, and that we should use a variety of songs as we teach. A more loosely form of this translation that relates to today’s church would read something like:

“Think about the scriptures often – constantly. Memorize them and let them guide your hearts with their wisdom as you sing and listen to a variety of songs, including sacred songs, church hymns, and praise choruses, giving thanks to God for such a rich blend of music.”

LABC Core Values

Joyful. Part of our weekly worship music should express the joy we have as being a child of God and as the church of God. We should be happy during these times in our services, giving thanks to God for his many blessings.

Diverse. We believe in a BIG God, one who is so much greater than us that we cannot comprehend his greatness. Trying to explain the infinite to the finite is impossible—it would be like a rocket scientist trying to explain rocket propulsion to an ant. Some would try to put God in a box and say God does not appreciate certain styles of music. The truth is that God can appreciate all styles of music as long as they are a worthy sacrifice of praise.

Uplifting. Worship music should help us connect with God. It should enable us to focus on God, leave our earthly trials at the feet of Jesus, and look up into the face of God:

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face—
and the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
in the light of his glory and grace (The Baptist Hymnal, p. 320).*

Many of our choir members give testimony to the fact that they have often come to weekly choir rehearsals from long, tiring days, but left those rehearsals with renewed spirit and energy. Many worshipers have expressed this type of renewal following our worship services. Our worship music should be uplifting and renewing.

Conclusion

As the Minister of Music, I have often received comments following our worship services. Some express the ways they were touched or blessed by certain songs. Some tell stories of certain hymns and what they have meant in their own lives. Others are honest enough to express which of the songs they could not relate to. I listen to these comments and try to learn from them, and almost always try to have the same response to all of them, “Thank you. If you didn’t like the music you heard today, come back next week—it will be different”.

If someone asks you about the worship music at LABC, we hope your response will be, “we have a variety of music ranging from traditional to contemporary. Our music glorifies God.” May we sing, “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs,” and may we sing them with enthusiasm and excellence, knowing that God created it all. May we offer our best gifts of praise to God and reflect his glory as we do so.

References

Wycliffe Bible Commentary. Charles F. Pfeiffer and Everett Harrison, editors (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1963).

“Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus,” *The Baptist Hymnal.* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1991).



Daily Devotionals: Music



Monday: *What Singing in the Choir Means to Me*, by Kathleen Brewsaugh

Scripture Reading: Psalm 95:1-2, Colossians 3:16

Good music is like a compelling force that pulls us together in fellowship and love. When our hearts are filled with joy then music, we have found a wonderful way to praise God. We can take the sadness of the “Old Rugged Cross” and still sing “To God Be the Glory” and be assured that the “Old, Old Story” is true.

Being in the LABC Choir and seeing the beloved faces of the congregation is like holding hands and sharing our faith. This is a truly worshipful experience for me. When I hear Phil sing “Fill My Cup, Lord” or our wonderful quartet singing about holy ground and Steve crying out “I want to see Jesus”, then I feel and know that God is in this place. I know each one of us has been thrilled many times by the music from our beautiful organ and piano. Thank God for our awesome musicians, their talent and dedication. Listen to the Music! “Praise Him, Praise Him”

Tuesday: *God Will Take Care of You*, by Barbara Beck

Scripture Reading: I Peter 5:7

Several years ago I was driving back to Danville on a wintry Sunday morning. There had been a heavy frost, but the sun was shining and glistening on the frost-covered trees. As I was considering possible solutions to some problems, I was listening to a tape of the pianist, Dino Kartsonakis, who is one of my favorite Christian artists. He was playing “God Will Take Care of You”. As I listened and remembered the words, *Be not dismayed whate’er betide, God will take care of you; Beneath His wings of love abide, God will take care of you.* I realized again, that no matter what problems I might have, that God was bigger than the problem and could take care of the problems and me. That frosty morning I believe that God used that song to remind me that He will indeed take care of me.

I love and enjoy everything about our worship services at LABC, but I feel that my real participation in worship comes through the music. A few Sundays ago as we sang “What a Friend We Have in Jesus”, I was reminded again of *what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.* I thank God that He so often speaks to me through music, whether in my car, in a worship service or some other means. Like so many of you, I often say *amen* when music has touched my heart, but don’t be surprised if some day you hear a *WOW* because that is sometimes how I feel when the music has pointed me once again to our **awesome God**.

Wednesday: *Make a Joyful NOISE Unto the Lord*, by Phil Quinn

Scripture Reading: Psalm 150:6 & Psalm 100:1

“*Let everything that has breath, praise the Lord.*” (Psalm 150:6) You don’t have to have a great singing voice to praise God. A friend of mine told me recently, “You know, I believe that God loves it when I sing.” Well, I’ve heard my friend sing, and he’s never going to be asked to sing a vocal solo, but that’s o.k. It’s not the quality of the voice that God enjoys; it’s the attitude of the heart.

Perhaps you've heard the story about the time in heaven when God, surrounded by thousands of angels singing praises, suddenly straightened up, cocked His ear, and asked them all to stop. When all was quiet, He said, "There - do you hear that?" One of the head angels said, "Well, it's just some people down on earth singing an old hymn." And God said, "Oh, but I created them, and I think their voices are beautiful."

God loves to hear us sing to Him. And whether it's a great operatic voice or a slightly off key simple tune, God is blessed by our praises. So next time you're coming home from work, put in your favorite worship CD, and let it go! God will love it, even if the people in the car beside you don't! "*Make a joyful NOISE unto the Lord!*" (Psalm 100:1)

Thursday: *Praising God Through Music*, by Martha Robertson

Scripture Reading: Colossians 3:16, Psalm 89:1

Music has always been part of worship in my life. Some of my earliest memories include hearing my mother sing at church, and my grandfather having me sing for his congregation. He was choir director at his church for 58 years! As a teenager, I played piano for a gospel quartet and my mother was their alto. While other kids were going to movies and visiting with friends, I was touring with the quartet. Those people and their families were MY family. They encouraged me and nourished me through rough teenage years. They helped me to understand that music was something God had called me to do.

Music is how the Word of God dwells in me. Colossians 3:16 tells us to "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Growing up singing the music of the church has placed these precious words in my heart forever. I can't read my Bible without recalling a melody that goes with the words of the particular scripture I'm reading. To be honest, sometimes it gets in the way! The music takes over and I lose my ability to concentrate on the words I'm reading. But I wouldn't have it any other way.

Music is how I am able to "Sing of the mercies of the Lord forever" as the psalmist said in Psalm 89:1. He also admonishes us to make God's faithfulness known to all generations. Music lets me do that! My family passed on a love for the Lord and His word through singing and making music, and I pray that "those who come behind me find me faithful" in sharing God's love through His word in song.

Friday: *Sing Like Nobody is Listening*, by Joanna Kirby

Scripture Reading: Psalm 32:7, 33:1-3, 47:6

If you ever find yourself traveling on US 27 between Lancaster and KY 34 to Danville early any week day morning you will probably pass me driving to work. I will be the person in the truck with her mouth open singing praises to the Lord. I sing all kinds of songs, sometimes I sing along with a favorite CD, other times I sing the song that comes from my heart. You know, the song that you keep playing in your mind over and over and over, until it finally bubbles up out of your throat and becomes real. I try to tone myself down as I approach intersections and stop lights. I really don't want other people to think I am crazy, at least not now. I have my favorite songs close to my heart, "Amazing Grace", "The lord Bless Thee and Keep Thee", "The Old Rugged Cross", "Breathe on Me, Breath of God" and "Just as I Am". I chant with the Monks of Gethsemane, sing country duets with Alan Jackson and help direct at Christmas when I hear the "Messiah". It is all pretty wonderful, songs and praises, prayers and blessings as I make my

way down the road of my life. But there is one important thing that you need to know about me, unless you sit near me in church, I cannot carry a tune in a bucket. Not a single note do I know. I am musically challenged. However, that does not stop me from singing joyful noises unto the Lord. I think he must filter out the tone and only hears my words. I watch Phil very closely as he leads us on Sundays, just in case I am too fast, too loud or too bad. I thank God for the voice that he has given me, I am blessed. So if you are near me some Sunday, join me, let's lift up our voices together to God, Hosanna in the Highest. "Sing like nobody is listening, live like it's Heaven on earth."