



Pastor's Message—*Pastor Micheel*

Really? You want *me* to sing *that*?

Have you had that thought in church? “Really? You want me actually to open my mouth, make my voice heard, and sing? Yeah, um, I don’t do that. And if I ever will, I won’t be singing those weird funeral dirges you call ‘hymns.’ I don’t understand the words, and I don’t like the music. I guess the singing parts of the church service will just be ‘time-outs’ for me.”

I don’t know if any of you really think that way, but some of you might. I notice many of you not singing the hymns and songs in the church service.

Don’t worry—this article is not intended to call you out. It could be that you look at music in a whole different way than I do.

When it comes to how we view music in church, I’d like to get us on the same page if I could. Think about this statement that I’ll go on to explain:

Music in church is not mainly for personal enjoyment; it’s for building up the group.

Music for us, not just for me

Question: Why do you stand up and for the national anthem before a Jazz game you’re attending, and maybe even sing along? Do you say, “I love this song! I’ve got it on my iPod. I listen to it while I work out. It’s got a really good beat, don’t you think?”

Probably not. The “Star-Spangled Banner” is probably not on your list of favorite tunes to listen to.

Then why do we sing it? Because standing up and singing that song is a way of showing that *we are part of something bigger*. We all might have our favorite songs, but that song, our country’s national anthem, is not about “me.” It’s about “us.” We are joined together in one nation.

Music in church is like that. Probably most of the hymns and songs we sing in church haven’t made it onto your mp3 player’s playlist. Most don’t have a good beat that you can dance to. So why sing them? Because singing hymns is not about “me,” it’s about “us.” Music in church is for the group, not primarily for the individual.

When we sing those hymns and songs together, something rare happens. People of different ages, different backgrounds, with different likes and dislikes, all join in doing the same thing. That time is extraordinary. For a few moments, we are setting aside our uniqueness and saying, “We are in this together. It may not look like it, but we are joined by something invisible and powerful. We are part of the family of God. Later, we’ll go back to our individual homes, our individual lives, our individual iPod playlists. But for now, we’re going to do something together: think about and sing the same thing.”

Music for building, not just for enjoying

Music in our culture seems to have one main purpose: it’s for our enjoyment. Can you imagine listening to music that you don’t like? Probably not. And we don’t have to. We can pick our own music. We can download and play only the songs we like.

Then we come to church, and none of this music strikes us as enjoyable. “This is totally wrong!” we think. “Music is supposed to be for my enjoyment, and I just can’t enjoy this music!”

My challenge to you: Think of music in another way. Think of another purpose for music.

Music in church is for building up people’s faith. And that happens, according to the Bible, through God’s Word. Listen to the synergy between music and people’s faith growing: “**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)

Look closely at the hymns we sing. Some we are singing to God, to tell him why we love him and why we are praising him. Other hymns we’re singing to each other, to encourage each other and remind each other of what’s important. In both cases, God himself is at work, through his message, to build our faith. And we are sharing the good news about Jesus with people who are guests at our services. Through the gospel message in our songs, the Holy Spirit is touching people’s hearts.

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Granted, some music in church actually is enjoyable! Sometimes a favorite hymn moves us. A choir piece touches us. Great work on the piano, organ, trumpet or guitar impresses us. But remember, there's more to church music than just "fun." We use it to build each other's faith by using it to proclaim God's Word.

A weird thing I'd like you to try

If you're not a singer, then next time we sing a hymn in church, at least open your hymnal to that page. As everyone else is singing, read the words to yourself. Reread them. What are we saying with these words? Are we speaking to God in this hymn? Are we speaking to each other? What part of the Bible does this hymn reinforce, or look at from a different angle?

One more thing. This sounds weird, but humor me. As you're reading along during a hymn or song, even *try mouthing the words silently*. I know it may sound strange, but if you do this, you can take a step in doing the two things we've just talked about. You can join in doing something together with your Christian family members, as one community. And God's Word will be engaging your mind, your faith, and your mouth while it's doing the same thing to people around you.

Find joy next time you're in church, whether you're singing along or just reading and praying the words silently. Find joy because...

... we are doing something together, as one family in Christ. That's rare.

... we are building each other's faith and sharing the gospel through the messages we sing. That's powerful.

Who knows? You may even start to like music in church! ☺

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TO NOTE ...

- **Advent worship** – We're spending three Thursday evenings this month remembering the reason for this season. We meet for a service of evening prayer at 7:00 on December 2, 9 and 16. This year, we'll be looking at a new/old Christmas hymn that speaks of Jesus. **Question:** Do you want soup suppers before the Advent services? Right now, the answer seems to be, "Not really." Which is okay! We're all very busy, and trying to squeeze in making soup may be too much. Talk to me (Pastor Micheel) ASAP if you would like to help coordinate a supper on Dec. 9 or 16. What we want to avoid is "arm-twisting," leaving only a few people to make soup, set up and clean up, and making them feel obligated to do it. Another question: Would it be easier to have potluck meal, not just soup? Let me know what you're thinking.
- **Children's Christmas Service** – We will again have our children's Christmas service on the Sunday before Christmas. Sunday, December 19, the 10:45 worship service is the children's service; the kids will speak and sing the Word to us. (We will have a regular service at 8:00 that Sunday, too.) *If you would like your children to participate in the service and haven't contacted Mrs. Augustine yet, do so immediately, and bring your child(ren) to Family Bible Hour on Sunday. That's where the kids are practicing for the service We have only one Saturday practice (on Dec. 18), and that one practice will not be enough to learn the service.*
- **Christmas Eve Worship** will take place at 7:00PM on December 24. We will have a service of short devotions focusing on the birth of our Savior. We will sing some Christmas carols, and a small chamber choir is preparing a piece also. The service will conclude with singing "Silent Night" by candlelight. This is a great service for inviting a friend!
- **Christmas Day Worship** will take place at 10:00AM on Christmas morning. (That start time hopefully allows time to open some presents before church!) We will meet our newborn King in his Word and in Holy Communion. As he came in a lowly way in Bethlehem, so he comes in words, bread and wine. Let us adore Him!
- **Special Offering** – A couple months ago, a PoP member family expressed the desire to give a special offering. The Lord had blessed them with special circumstances which made the offering possible. I encouraged making the offering as a matching gift for us all. Why? Because there's part of me that's tempted to say, "Oh, someone gave a big offering. I guess I don't need to give anything!" My hope was that a matching gift would spur many of us on to consider giving special gifts ourselves. No one has to. No one should feel bad at all if they choose not to participate. We are free in Christ! But if anyone chooses to make a special gift, it can be placed in the red gift box at church (special envelopes are available on the hymnal cart in the hallway or beside the box). Gifts before the end of the year will be matched, \$1 for every \$2 given. These gifts will help us catch up on general bills and commitments.

Women's Christmas Party at Sheena Finnigans ~ Tuesday, December 14 at 6:30PM.

All women are welcome! Sheena lives at: 7812 S Roosevelt Street in Midvale (phone 312-608-5034).

Bring an item to dip into fondue & some fleece (if you want) to make a blanket or scarf
that will be donated to someone in need.

President's Report—*Eric Myers*

Fellow Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Is 2010 and this decade almost over? Wow, "...a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day." (2 Peter 3:8). While I am aware of the recent sermon themes of preparing for Judgment Day while planning for Christmas, my motivation for the passage is more immediate.

I love having our fiscal year ending June because it gives us two opportunities to assess our situation. So where are we regarding our goals? If you remember, our goals for this year were to implement a stewardship program and an outreach training program. From a Leadership perspective, we wanted to meet our budget as well as transition into the new organizational format.

As most know, we completed cottage-type Bible studies discussing how the Lord, through Paul, worked with the Corinthians on stewardship and how those same truths apply to us today. Personally, I found the time beneficial and I have received similar feedback from others that attended. There are some follow ups to those meetings currently in process. If you have not already, I would encourage you to put your *Commitment to Christ through Giving* envelope on the altar. Also, as part of that initiative, a matching gift to a special offering has been donated by a member. Let's make sure we take advantage of this opportunity and consider giving a special offering.

Of course, I always make the plug for considering monetary gifts even more at the end of the year since our friends at the IRS give us the added bonus of being able to deduct charitable gifts. And when you do this close to end of year and then get the benefit quickly doing taxes at the beginning of following year, you get the most bang for your buck.

Another follow up on stewardship I know Strategic Planning is working on is doing vocational awareness and training of the activities around PoP where individuals can use their talents to serve the Lord. We realized there are many new people and even long-time members that would benefit from a refresher course on all the things that go on here to see where we have an opportunity to volunteer. Look for that training in the coming months.

The pastors are working on an Evangelism Training program for the second half of the fiscal year. I look forward to working with them on that.

As far as budget is concerned, we all see the numbers and see how far we are behind on what we planned for versus what we have received. Leadership continues to work on ways to close that gap. One small measure we have recently started, and will continue, is getting the information to members on a regular basis. A representative from Leadership will update the congregation the first Sunday of every month after services. This will continue to be an informative exercise so people have the facts of where our ministry currently stands financially.

We continue to work through the transition to the new organizational structure. *(continued on top of next column)*

I have probably confused many people with the meeting changes, but we are getting there. I get excited when I am at a Strategic Planning meeting and there is brainstorming and ideas regarding W.I.S.H. or other areas of ministry. It is fun.

So for a mid-term grade, I would give us a B. There are so many good things that are happening, but there is always room for improvement. I look forward to doing that with you in 2011.



Special Worship Opportunities

Thursday, December 2

Advent Worship ~ 7PM

Thursday, December 9

Advent Worship ~ 7PM

Thursday, December 16

Advent Worship ~ 7PM

Friday, December 24th

Christmas Eve Worship ~ 7PM

Saturday, December 25th

Christmas Day Worship ~ 10AM



Board for Spiritual Welfare—*Brad Gollon*

Seasonal Preparations

The leaves are losing their color and the wind is blowing them off the trees. They drop in the yard and I find myself thinking about clearing the rain gutters and raking the leaves for disposal. As I rake leaves I think about the other seasonal preparations I must make, like putting away the lawn mower and deck chairs, and getting the snow blower ready for service. Thanksgiving is already past and everyone is making seasonal preparations to join with family and friends, and enjoy a festive celebrations to come. But wait, am I really prepared for the season? No, I still need to prepare the "My (Our) Commitment to Christ through Giving" form and envelope, for placement on the Altar.

If I thought I was really prepared for the season, my commitment envelope would be complete, and I'd be thinking about getting ready for a perfect Christmas. I'm already seeing Christmas sale ads in my mailbox to help me prepare a gift list. Several stores already have Christmas decorations on sale so that I can prepare my home for the season. But are those the most important seasonal preparations I need to make to ensure a perfect Christmas? Not really, cause I've got lots of time for those preparations.

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It's so easy to get distracted from the most important seasonal preparations, like worshipping and contributing offerings, regularly. I also find that reading my *Meditations* booklet helps me organize my priorities. On Wednesday, December 8th, the *Meditations* scripture reading will be Matthew 3:3, "Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him." The meditation is titled,

Prepare a Straight Path in Your Heart for Jesus

For at least a month now, you've seen the new "must haves" for the Christmas season. Perhaps some of your kids have their hearts set on some gift that Christmas will be a failure without it. Perhaps you have your own vision of what will make this Christmas perfect.

But there is only one thing that makes for a perfect Christmas season: a straight highway. As we saw last time, John the Baptist was commissioned to go down into the desert region of Judea near the Jordan River, and there he was to preach and baptize. The goal of his preaching and baptizing, to use the words of Isaiah the prophet, was to make a straight path for Jesus to walk on when he arrived.

Create a straight path in the desert! The landscape made that impossible. But John was commissioned to do something even more impossible. The straight path he was called on to build was not a literal road over the ravines and washes of the desert landscape, but a spiritual road on which Jesus could carry his message into the hearts of the Jewish people.

The obstacles John had to clear away in building that road were far more complex and insurmountable than the obstacles normal road engineers face. He had to make a road that spanned the gullies of unrepentance so characteristic of the Jewish people. He had to fill in the ravines of their ignorance of God's promises in the past – promises to send a Savior and to bless all people through that Savior. John had to rebuild an understanding of what the Jewish Old Testament sacrificial laws really meant. He had to blast through hard hearts that were filled with ideas of work righteousness and that viewed the coming Messiah as merely another Lawgiver like Moses.

An impossible task? Humanly speaking, yes. But with God's Word and by the power of the Holy Spirit, John built that road. "Repent," he said. "Here, come to the water and have your sins washed away," he encouraged. By God's grace, John succeeded in building the straight path.

Take John's message to heart. If you do, there will be a straight highway leading from the manger into your heart. And your Christmas will be perfect.

Through regular worship, we hear God's Word and witness the work of the Holy Spirit through baptism. These are the seasonal preparations we need to continue to make to ensure a perfect Christmas.

Girl Pioneers

Tuesday, December 7th at 6:30PM at church

All girls grades 1-8th are welcome to come!

Principal's Update—Jeff Sell

Snippets of School

Christmas Service Info – The Children's' Christmas Service practice (**only 1 this year**) will be on December 18 from 9:30 -11:00AM. If your child attends a school other than Prince of Peace during the week and you would like your child to participate in the service on the 19th, please speak with Mrs. Augustine ASAP. Because there are more unknown songs this year, it is imperative that practice take place at home prior to the practice on the 18th. CD's are available in the office for anyone wishing to work on songs and the words are available from Mrs. Augustine when you speak with her. We would love to know about all those wanting to participate in the service by this Sunday, December 5.

Speed Zapper – News 4 was out on Tamarack Road in front of our campus to try and get people to slow down. The Speed Zapper was able to find many vehicles that exceeded the speed limit. After a short study conducted by the city of Taylorsville, Brian Carlson came back out to interview me and John Taylor, the city engineer. In short, the city of Taylorsville will do a head count of walkers in the spring and determine if a school crosswalk is necessary. If you would like to watch the story, head to our Facebook page and click on the video link.

Special Guests –The children recently had a number of guests come and speak to them about various topics. Mrs. Delores Geiger, having been blessed to live through many events in history, came and spoke to the 4-8th grades about what it was like growing up during the Depression. Nina Han, a student of Nebraska Lutheran High School and a friend of the Brandt girls, also enlightened the children about something which they know very little—South Korea. She spoke about the culture, food and about growing up Christian in Korea. Coincidentally, she happened to be here on the same day North Korea showed aggression toward its neighbor to the south. We thank both of our honored guests!

Playground Update –We have saved for about a year now and have some funds to start moving forward with our playground. As soon as plans are finalized for the placement of the structures, we will proceed with the purchasing. Thank you to all of you who have supported the improvements with donations, ideas, grant writing and Scrip purchases!

Advent/Christmas Bulletin Art – Last year, adults and children were given the opportunity to use their God-given artistic ability by drawing or sketching a bulletin cover. If this is something that interests you, watch for another list of Sundays to be posted on the south bulletin board across from the office. **Until this happens, if you want to provide art for our upcoming Advent/Christmas services, please do so.** There are guidelines on the table under the bulletin board you can take with you as well as the pieces of paper on which you need to do the art. Please sign up on the list of Sundays, once it is posted, or send Mr. Sell an email if you would like to do a cover at jeff.sell@popslc.org.