

ON Broadway

Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church Newsletter

April 2018

Then Sings My Soul

*Jen Boes for the Vital Worship Team
(vitalworship@aacrc.org)*

*Tanya Boldenow, Sue De Zeeuw, Tim Geerlings,
John Groen, George Lindquist, Mike Waldyke*



We dedicated our new grand piano on September 13, 1998. Sometimes I imagine that the last verse of the closing hymn still echoes in the sanctuary with piano, full organ, brass, woodwinds, and strings all on the melody:

Let every instrument be tuned for praise!
Let all rejoice who have a voice to raise!
And may God give us faith to sing always: Alleluia!

We raised the roof as we expressed our thankfulness for God's faithfulness and voiced our hopeful prayers for our congregation and the world, breaking into parts for the final Alleluia!

Rewind to the earlier verses. They tell a story, giving thanks for the gift of music in the church around the world in many languages, even in the midst of trials. We are reminded that we sing Alleluia because Jesus has won the fight against evil.

When in our music God is glorified,
and adoration leaves no room for pride,
it is as though the whole creation cried: Alleluia!

How often, making music, we have found
a new dimension in the world of sound,
as worship moved us to a more profound Alleluia!

So has the church, in liturgy and song,
in faith and love, through centuries of wrong,
borne witness to the truth in every tongue: Alleluia!

And did not Jesus sing a psalm that night
when utmost evil strove against the light?
Then let us sing, for whom he won the fight: Alleluia!

"Let every instrument be tuned for praise" isn't the easiest hymn tune to sing, but for that moment in time, it became the voice of our faith community. The music helped us see and then express our thankfulness for God's gifts.

Music in worship can be both expressive and formative. Through it we offer our praise, our meditations, and our prayers. Through it we remember our faith story, and in the remembering it becomes a part of who we are.

continued on next page

continued from previous page

When the Vital Worship Team asked about songs that have been meaningful to you, several people were particularly drawn to songs that help them remember and meditate on Jesus' sacrifice for us. Kelly Van Ee said that *What Wondrous Love* and *Were You There?* help her reflect on Jesus' love and great sacrifice on the cross. Carolyn Wurster agreed. "If all music were taken from my life, the one hymn I would hope that would remain is *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*. My grandfather was a trained pianist and preacher. To this day I have never heard hymns played as Grampy could play. During the early days of his marriage he traveled as an accompanist with an evangelist. Grampy often said that this hymn told the entire story of his faith and he loved it with all of his heart, just as he loved and served God for his entire life." These hymns not only tell the story but also draw us into a space where we can voice our commitment to follow in humility.

Music also helps draw us into spaces of awe and praise, profound in both simplicity and joyful complexity. Jim Steenstra shared that *Revelation Song* calms him and prepares him to listen and give praise to God. "God's holiness in particular is a worthy focus in an intemperate age" said Karen Meech. She appreciates how *Alleluia*,

for the Lord God Almighty Reigns by Michael W. Smith holds together concepts that are simple and powerful, leading us in praise from accessibility to transcendence and back again. "For me, these songs seem to pierce the veil between the world that we see, and heaven on earth" said Don Streng when sharing how contemporary worship music gives voice to his praise.

Not only do many of us have our own heart songs, we also have communal heart songs at AACRC, songs that when you sing the first few words everyone can join in. Greg Scheer in *Essential Worship* calls them "near and dear" songs. After 25 years of two worship styles we have two intersecting sets of "near and dear" songs. Our diverse personal and communal heart songs reflect the rich harmony of our faith community, each of us with unique stories yet united in our commitment to follow Jesus.

When you are in worship the next time, can you notice how our music, whatever the song or style might be, not only helps us be shaped by the story of Jesus but also helps us express ourselves to God? And if it is not a heart song for you, look next to you and find in the deep worship of your friend and neighbor a way for it to become a song in your heart?



GEMS

Jeanne Palmbo &
Ross Weener

The GEMS participated in World Down Syndrome Day on March 21st by wearing mismatched and crazy socks as part of the #LotsOfSocks movement. In one of their previous meetings, their lesson revolved around learning about those who(m)??? are differently abled

What Does the Bible Say About Justice?

*Submitted by Social Justice Committee – AACRC
Source: CRCNA Office of Social Justice*

From start to finish, the Bible tells the story of God's relationship with the world He has created. It speaks of the creation of all things, the fall of all things into sin, the salvation of all things through Jesus Christ, and the eventual reconciliation of all things in the Kingdom of God. The Bible includes stories that illustrate this Good News — stories about a loving and powerful God who cares for the weak, the sinful, and the powerless, and who will bring justice by restoring a right relationship with His creation (for example, see Jeremiah 9:24). The Bible also includes many commands for living as one of the members of God's creation, teaching us to live in a way that honors and models the way of Jesus. The command over and over is for us to treat other people with love and justice and to act in a way that restores right relationships and honors our loving, powerful, and restoring God. When we do justice we reflect God's restoration work in us and live more fully as the people who God created us to be. In the words of a 2005 Synodical report, "Pull on the string called 'justice' in the pages of the Bible, and soon enough you will get the whole book."

23rd Annual prison Creative Arts Project

*Barb Okonkwo
(From LS&A, University of Michigan)*

The annual exhibition of art by Michigan prisoners is one of the largest exhibitions of art by incarcerated artists in the country. Each year, faculty, staff and students from the University of Michigan travel to correctional facilities across Michigan and select work for the exhibition while providing feedback and critique that strengthens artists' work and builds community around making art inside prisons"

This year's exhibition at Duderstadt Center Gallery is open March 21–April 4 and features work by over 580 artists. Exhibition hours are 12:00–6:00pm Sunday and Monday, 10:00 am–7:00pm Tuesday through Saturday, closed April 1.



Wanted to Borrow

Two infant car seats and one highchair for the month of May when our twin grandbabies will be visiting. contact Barb Okonkwo at bjokonkwo69@gmail.com or 734-476-4440.

The Proud Donkey Matthew 21:1-9

Mary Admiraal

The photos below and on the next page capture the unique experience our children had on Sunday, March 18. Paired teacher to student, parent to child, older child to younger child, and peer to peer our ministry staff used a variety of fun activities to help the children understand that Jesus deserves our praise. What did they do? Well, they ...

Shared their strange and wonderful talents,

1. Read God's word,
2. Used American Sign Language and actions to help tell a story about The Proud Donkey,
3. Participated in a Palm Sunday Relay Race, similar to Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem (Well, maybe...)
4. Gathered materials they placed in a round box to be used alongside a small Holy Week devotional for the family,
5. Assembled a delicious palm sundae to learn about the meaning and symbolism of this Holy Day in a creative way.

Our Children's ministry staff wanted students to leave the event remembering that God is the source of all they have and who they are and therefore, He is worthy of their honor and praise.





Inviting or Invited?

Marilyn Cummins

Most of my life I have waited to be invited—to join a conversation, to speak or participate or even approach to introduce myself, to take on a task. I don't want to intrude, to interrupt, to assume I belong or that I can.

Invited

But if invited, I often respond positively. I was not a member of AACRC but had been in Coffee Break for several years. Then a leader of International women's study group invited me to coffee. We chatted for some time and then she said, "Think about leading an International group." Me? But I was not qualified. Yes, I knew about the Bible and the gospel but I had nothing to prepare me to understand people from another culture, and how do you start with adults who know nothing about God or the Bible? And how do you teach people who struggle to speak a whole sentence in English? How could I be the right person for this calling?

The next couple weeks it seemed two spirits were fighting within me: "You're not qualified. You will turn the women off and they will leave." and then, "You have been blessed with hearing the the Good News and God's story from early childhood. The Lord Jesus' parting message before being taken from earth to the heavenly throne, 'Go, and make disciples of all nations.' " I didn't need to go. The nations had come here. How could I say, "NO?" For the next 20 years, I taught and learned from and was blessed so wonderfully.

Invited Again

Several years passed. Carolyn Watson (now Aukee) was Coffee Break director. We had about five groups of International women. She asked, "Will you be coordinator for the International leaders?" I argued with her and myself: I am not qualified. Other leaders are trained in ESL (English as a Second Language). They have much more experience. Ask one of them.

Carolyn offered her help and then waited. At last I came back—Yes, I'll do it. There was no precedent or job description. I called a meeting of the International leaders, just brainstorming. We agreed to meet monthly over a bag lunch after the morning Coffee Break. We shared what was happening in our classes—the problems and the successes. I visited some classes and saw things helped students to understand, to encourage expressing their thoughts in a tongue foreign to them or learn to support each other. I asked leaders where this happened to share with others. So many of our monthly meetings

Becoming the Inviter

Noticing an Asian woman standing alone and surveying the after-service coffee hour scene, I approached her. "Have you been here before?" "No. I just arrived from China two weeks ago to study. I'm not a believer, but my mother told me to come here. I would find good friends." We talked. I invited. She came to Coffee Break

Dinner for the homeless

There were four of us—all women familiar with the church kitchen—to bring and serve dinner. The meal was ready. The men were arriving and dropping their stuff in the lower level in their bedroom for the night. I had prayed that they would be fed in body and spirit. "Would we have grace?" I wondered aloud. No, they would be straggling in. But soon they were all there and invited to the serving counter. I found myself on their side of the counter saying, "Let's give thanks to the Lord." They stopped in their tracks and listened.

It would have been comfortable to return to the kitchen and converse with the other women. But I had prayed that they would be fed in body and spirit. Hesitantly I asked at a table with one empty chair, "May I join you?" Here are snatches of the conversation: "What was your last job?" "I'm a cook." "I grew up in Chelsea. My dad had a 20 acre farm. He planted it all, at 10 day intervals, to sweet corn. He brought a sample to the Kroger produce manager who bought all of it. I got to pick it. Whew! Was that work!" "When I just sort of forget to pray and meditate, things don't go so well. When I do, it's better." "I have had so many blessings to be thankful for."

How could I be so mindful of my problems while men dependent on others for bed and food could count their blessings? May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart praise my Lord.



The Cadets continued their strong tradition of an event with their mothers. This year was Paint-O-Rama with your Mama. Under the careful direction of a local artist, Cadets and their moms created an evening outdoor scene. The works of art were amazing!

