

ON Broadway

Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church Newsletter

May 2018

Perspectives on Worship

Tanya Boldenow, Vital Worship Team



Have you ever experienced the gift of being given a completely new perspective on something important? I am sure that for you, like me, this didn't remove the obstacles, the loss or the pain, or suddenly provide all of the previously elusive answers. But, it may have given you the gusto to move forward, to be kind, to ask another question, or to listen a little longer.

As I think honestly about where we are as a worshipping congregation, it has become increasingly apparent that we are coming from two worship services with different norms, different rules, different faces, different songs, different cultures, different ways of leading worship, and different preferences. Bringing these together into one service makes these differences present, tactile, and at times unsettling.

- And yet we share so much in common.
- We serve One Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; we are all in need of His grace and mercy.
- We were created by God with gifts, talents, and experiences that are glorifying to Him.
- We long to use the gifts our God has given us to serve Him and bless those around us.
- We are passionate about honoring God with music.
- We are a multi-generational, multi-racial and otherwise generally very diverse group of people who meet in the same place because we love God and each other.
- We long to welcome others and to be needed.
- We desire to be heard and respected.
- We are a congregation with different musical preferences.

I believe that we have a choice of perspective. We can either see these differences as a threat to the things that we love and hold dear or we can celebrate that God in His infinite wisdom has placed within our community people with preferences, ideas, and experiences different from our own, and celebrate the privilege of trying something less familiar.

It is rare that I listen to a sermon or read a Bible story without having a song come to mind that speaks to the heart of the message. I find that words put to music often speak truth to my soul in ways that other forms of communication rarely do. As a member of the Vital Worship Team, I have been thinking and praying about where God is leading AACRC. Over the past months several songs have continued to speak to me that I would like to share with you.

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The Heart of Worship by Matt Redman

When the music fades, all is stripped away. And I simply come. Longing just to bring something that's of worth. That will bless your heart. I'll bring you more than a song. For a song in itself is not what you have required. You search much deeper within through the ways things appear. You're looking into my heart.

I'm coming back to the heart of worship and it's all about you. It's all about you, Jesus. I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I've made it. When it's all about you. It's all about you, Jesus.

You Move Me by Gordon Scott Kennedy
and Piece Ray Pettis.

The words that keep replaying in my head are *I can't go with you and stay where I am . . . and so You move me.*

If we are truly willing to follow Jesus as a community; we will be changed. I believe that this is true with worship also. Over the past weeks we have seen some glimpses of what this could look like. Maybe, you like me, have sat in the pew imagining what could be with all of the talent around you."

A few weeks ago our youth choir (Savior Servant Singers) sang *We Will Extol You, God and King* by Greg Scheer. The words spoke to me as I heard:

One generation will call to the next 'our God is good and His hand is strong!' All of the world sings His marvelous acts and our voice will join with theirs in the song.

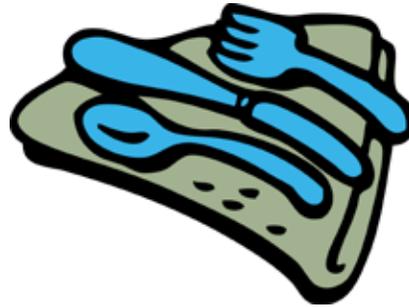
Our congregation is blessed with multiple generations who know and love the LORD. I am so excited to see how God can use us as a congregation to join together in His song.

(Songs used with permission UBP OneLicense A-703004 & CCLI #224005)



Hope Clinic Dinner

The Reiminks



It's Saturday afternoon around 3:45. People are drifting into the Hope Clinic dining area. Some alone, some with families, some needing help. It smells very good because the cooking team

has been working for several hours to prepare the meal. Maybe some kind of chicken or beef dish with good spices for delicious 'come and get it' odors. The cooks are pretty good! By 4:00 the crowd has grown to 30 or 40 people, maybe a few more. Then the AACRC serving team goes to work making up plates of food 'to order' as the guests file past the kitchen serving window. The exchange with the guests is nearly always positive with lots of "Thank You's", and "no carrots, please, but I'll take the salad" or "could I have that big piece of carrot cake?" The meal is complete, delicious, and there is always enough for second helpings. The people keep coming until about 60 or 70 have been served. Then at 5:00 service stops and the clean up begins. If there are leftovers the AACRC team enjoys a plate of the evening dinner and then turns to clean-up chores. Wash the dishes, wipe down the tables and chairs, mop the floors and clean up the kitchen. Make it ready for the next group who will be using the kitchen to prepare another meal on Sunday. Around 6:00 everything is tidied up and our folks head for home.

That is the scene that happens on the fourth Saturday of each month, 12 times each year. Often it involves Thanksgiving weekend and even Christmas ... everyone should have a chance to eat every day. Our church has been participating in the dinner program for over three years and we have a wonderful group of volunteers who faithfully make up our 6-person team each time our turn comes around. We are always eager to add more to that list, so the opportunity can be spread a little further among more volunteers. If joining in sounds interesting to you, call Ron or Sharon Reimink to learn more. Try it once to see how straightforward this bit of service really is. Maybe a fellowship group would like to take this on as a group service project. No training is needed. Just a willing spirit and a few hours on a Saturday afternoon.



Serve 2018—Ready, Set, Go!

Your Serve Leadership Team has been gathering at regular intervals throughout the fall and winter to plan, pray, and implement Ann Arbor Serve 2018. We can hardly believe that it is less than 90 days away.

You'll be hearing from our team in May at the Roots Service (May 13th) and at the Congregation Meeting on May 21st. We are excited to explain our theme of "Love God, Love The World" and brainstorm ways to be involved. We'll need lots of help the week of July 21-27 to pull off a week of this magnitude.

Our speaker for the week is Nick Wolter, he is the Middle School Pastor at Central Wesleyan Church in Holland, Mich. He'll be involved in worship on Serve Sunday (July 22) and will give evening talks and morning devotions. Please pray for him as he prepares and is led by the Spirit.

Our worksites this year have many familiar names as well as a newcomer for Ann Arbor Serve. We are thankful to partner with many ministries with whom our faith community is familiar with. Remember the work of Serve is the work of our church. It shouldn't stand only by itself!

We are firming up partnerships with Food Gatherers, St. Louis Center, Heartland Healthcare, Emmanuel House, Global Health Services Network, Friends in Deed, Hope Clinic, Family Life Services, Detroit Afro-American Mission, and Nardin Park Reformed Church.

Your Serve Leadership Team consists of Ryan Boes, Victor Chen, Darlene De Vries, Sue De Zeeuw, Bill Vander Roest, and Ross Weener. We love talking Serve.

Upcoming Serve Dates

May 13—Moment for Ministry

May 21—Update at Congregational Meeting

June—Sign-ups for food and other materials start

July 18—CONNECT Night to setup for Serve

July 21-27—Ann Arbor Serve

International Students Inc.

(Spring Newsletter from Ginny Champoux)

Thanks for your prayers and financial support, especially these past four years since Paul has passed into glory.

It was a fun and busy Christmas. I hosted parties for my women's Bible study from church, two groups of international ladies and our annual Champoux Christmas celebration. Most recently, we celebrated Easter here as well!

The big event in January was my granddaughter, Molly's wedding to Stephen Whitney. Molly was my housemate for the last three years. I am so happy for her, but miss seeing her smiling face everyday, eating and laughing together.

Another highlight was when my daughters took me to Florida in February for our annual Mother-Daughter retreat. It was so refreshing to walk along the beach, feel the sand between my toes and collect shells. We also had the joy of visiting my niece, Rose and her husband, Ralf who live there.

I praise God for the outreach of International ministry. At our annual Easter dinner program we had about 50 internationals, plus an equal number of Americans, including six professors who made such an impact on the students. They were surprised and impressed to meet professors who were Christians! A testimony was given by a foreign student and a short message on the real Easter story, as told from the Bible. After the meeting, two students indicated that they made the decision to accept Jesus—praise the Lord!

I'm reminded of Romans 12:6-8, regarding the different gifts God has given each of us to use, such as serving, teaching, encouraging, and contributing to the needs of others. This was made clear to me at our last volunteers' staff prayer meeting, held monthly in my home. I praise God for those who:

- Pray
- Take foreign students shopping
- Take groups sightseeing to Muskegon and Holland
- Take students to a Chinese Gospel camp retreat
- Have small group Bible studies in their homes

I am truly grateful for the Cupp family who for years have organized and served the meals at our three annual dinners for the students. They also collaborate with the Cooke family, who open their yard, lake and boats for our biggest attraction of the year—the annual lake party! Also, for all those who cook, help in various ways, drive

students and mingle with the students—many becoming long-term friendships. Thank you to the many others behind the scenes who serve for God's glory.

I cherish your prayers! Please pray for one of my students, C, who recently broke down and shared her painful, abusive past, from parents and her older sister. She had never before shared this with anyone. She finally now received comfort from a loving, accepting, or giving God; a heavenly father who loves her unconditionally. She shared how much our small group Bible study has helped her find peace. Please also pray for Z who emailed me from Iran. She had to return to try to renew her visa. She asked for prayer to get back to the U.S. to finish her degree at U of M. She is a Muslim but had many Christian contacts while she was here.

I leave you with II Peter 1:2 – “Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.” (We are studying I & II Peter in my Korean group.)

Faithfully,
Ginny



For Such a Time as This

Barb Fichtenberg
Social Justice Committee

Most of us are familiar with the Old Testament story of Esther, who was called to stand up and advocate on behalf of her people to the king of Persia. Esther fasted and prayed as she prepared for advocacy with the king.

In our place and in our time, we too, have the opportunity to speak with authenticity, compassion, and directness to those who govern us. For example, we can address the need to maintain and strengthen public policies that promote the common good. A case in point is the opportunity to mitigate hunger and extreme poverty both at home and around the world. Specifically, certain domestic safety net and foreign aid programs have lowered worldwide hunger and poverty rates by 50% during the last 25 years. It is of utmost importance that this momentum is not lost as the result of cuts to key hunger/poverty-reducing programs in the next federal budget.

As we prepare for this year's **Bread for the World Offering of Letters** on **May 13**, let us be in prayer for wisdom to thoughtfully engage with our lawmakers to encourage them to pass a budget that will support the current momentum toward ending hunger and extreme poverty in our world. During adult education we will learn more about this issue and have the opportunity to write letters.

Right now, the biggest threat to those who are confronted with hunger and poverty is the threat of large federal budget cuts to programs that address hunger and poverty. Some people have suggested that churches and charities could, and should, make up the difference. You may be surprised to learn that churches and charities only contribute about 5% of what is needed to help the poor and hungry. In fact, if the proposed budget cuts to our domestic safety net programs are enacted, it is estimated that each church in the U.S. would need to contribute an extra \$428,000 annually for the next 10 years to make up the difference. This is not tenable.

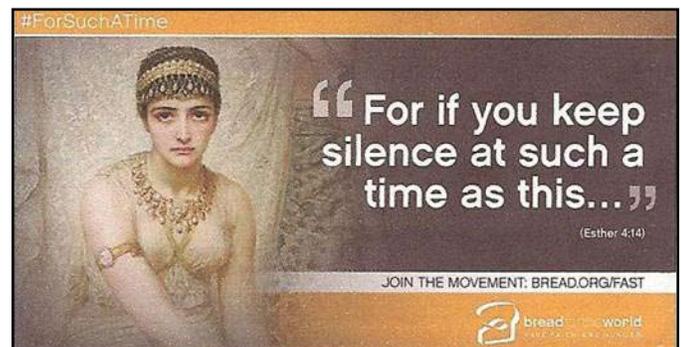
The anticipated proposed deep cuts would affect programs that are vital to helping people who are struggling with hunger and poverty in the United States and around the world. This may include programs such as WIC (Women, Infants and Children) and SNAP (aka food stamps) that provide nutritious food to families in the United States who are temporarily unable to provide

all that their families need. More than half of all SNAP recipients are children or senior citizens.

Congress will also consider cuts to international humanitarian and development assistance programs that fight famines, provide nutrition for mothers and children and help struggling farm families increase their output and incomes.

As we celebrate Mother's Day, let us not forget the approximately 2,740 mothers whose children will die of starvation that day. May we all have hearts for love, justice and mercy as we call on our leaders to ensure that all people, regardless of where they live, have the opportunity to reach their God-given potential.

Source: Bread for the World (a CRC-endorsed resource for hunger and poverty issues)



Thoughts About/From Friends

Maija Kaldjian

A friend of more than 80 years has just moved from her lovely home into a care facility where she can have 24-hour care. Blessedly, I can still telephone her, but the topics of our conversation are limited. I have lost her in all aspects but one - our hope and joy in the telos - the end and goal of our long pilgrimage together. When love, faith, and memories are fading, this hope keeps our friendship alive and gives me joy.

As I was pondering this, another long-time friend sent me the homily she has written for her Benedictine community in St. Joseph, Minnesota. Since Ascension is near and since some of the members of our congregation will remember Sister Renee's radiant faith from the time she attended our Neighborhood Bible Study in the 1970s.

May the Easter joy continue in our hearts, our hymns, and our service through this season of Ascension and Pentecost.



Ascension

Renee Domeier, OSB

"If the word "God" is too small ... Let us use "Trinity" to catch it all ... All the beauty that we can radiant glory." May I repeat Bishop Morneau's words?

I have difficulty with the mystery of Ascension; I;d rather follow the wondrous journey of Jesus from his Resurrection to the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. Is it the imagery OR the words surrounding the Ascension that make me uncomfortable? The ascending "up?" Where is "up?" Was this the way to teach us of trinity-life reunited? In glory? For me, "glory" is an elusive term. Why were Mary and the people of Galilee asked the question, not unlike mine? "Why do you stand there looking up into the sky? This Jesus who has been taken away from you up to heaven, will come in the same way as you have seen him go?"

Such activity on God's part awakens in me unfathomable mystery and makes me wonder the more. I find some comfort in Francis Thompson's words as he humbly exclaims:

Oh, world invisible, we view thee,
Oh, world intangible, we touch thee,
O world unknowable, we know thee
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee.

What were the disciples to do? Would they stay in the field, looking up, feeling deeply their great loss? No! Jesus had told them "go into Galilee and wait." For what? In their resurrected faith, they would be baptized in the Holy Spirit who would send them out to the uttermost parts of the earth, to bear fearless witness, to instruct others about the empty tomb and to baptize others in Jesus' name. In their obedience, as we witness in the Acts of the Apostles, "CHURCH" was born! Right?

So, sisters of our community, why do we stand looking up to heaven?

Whom do we see? What do we hear spoken to us?

Where are we to follow the Spirit?