

*Sing praises to the Lord, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name... (Psalm 30:4)*

Music is something that has affected everyone who has ever lived on this earth. For example, researches have found that even a fetus can hear music. This music affects the growing brain of babies in the womb! After birth, of course, most of us had parents who would sing us lullabies, songs passed down through the generations, silly songs, or even hymns. As we grow, we learned in large part through music – singing our ABCs, days of the week, months of the year, state capitals, and so many others. For most people, the music that was popular in their teen years and early 20s is the kind of music that then sticks with them throughout the rest of their lives – often to the chagrin of their children.

Yet, music can be a surprisingly divisive topic – and I’m not just talking about the differing musical tastes found among different generations. Many argue about how music can function, what words can and can’t be used, what instruments are appropriate in which setting, and on and on. Yes, even in churches there are debates between “traditional” and “contemporary” forms of music, whether they be hymns, praise songs, or something else entirely. (Ironically, what most people assume are the “good old hymns” of often hymns that were written just a few generations ago and were popular when they were children – but that’s a topic for another time...).

Recently, I was thinking about a specific way of making music – singing – and how there are some people who love to sing, some people who bear it, and some people who absolutely refuse to sing, no matter the occasion. But, refusing to sing should not be usual among God’s people! Sure, there may be a lot of excuses not to sing: “I don’t like it.” “I’m no good at it.” “No one wants to hear me sing.” “I’ll only sing if I can do a good job.” “I’m embarrassed.” Maybe you’ve said one of these things, or maybe another excuse altogether. But, singing is central to who we are as God’s people. The people of God sing when God saves them – like in Exodus 15. People sing when they’re full of joy because of God blessing them – like Hannah in Judges 2. People sing even when they’re sad – like any number of Psalms attest. Singing is what God’s people do, because it is yet another gift God has given to us to praise and thank him!

No one knows quite where it came from, but for some time the Missouri Synod has referred to itself as the “singing church.” If you’ve ever been a part of a different denomination – or even simply visited congregation in a different church body – you may have noticed how much more singing is done in our Lutheran churches than in many others. Singing is more than part of our worship, though. Singing is a part of who we are as Christians. In Christ, God has done more than we can express or imagine. Whether you like to sing or not, or whether you think you’re good at it, singing should be a part of living out your faith. And, oh how wonderful it is to sing with other people the praises of God!

-Pastor Squire

“Sing praise to God, the highest good. The author of creation, the God of love who understood our need for His salvation. With healing balm our souls He fills and every faithless murmur stills: To God all praise and glory!”

(“Sing Praise to God, the Highest Good,” *LSB 819*, v. 1)

(On the next page, you’ll find the 10 Commandments hymn I recently finished. We have been learning it at our monthly Prayer and Potlucks. It’s meant to help children and adults alike memorize the Commandments and their meanings. [Commandments 9 and 10 are combined into one in Verse 9. Verse 10 is the conclusion to the Commandments])