Cover photo by Kylie Johnson
In the summer of 2014, ALCM regions crafted and convened four regional conferences. Region 1 gathered July 14–16 in Baltimore, MD, to explore “The Three Days—Singing Salvation History.” Scott Weidler offers a summary of his plenary presentations centered in the rich liturgical practices of the Three Days. Mark Oldenburg shares “Confession and Forgiveness” language specially composed for Maundy Thursday liturgies for each of the three years of the Revised Common Lectionary cycle.

Region 2 gathered June 30–July 2 in Charlotte, NC; the conference theme was “Many Voices—One Choir.” Keynote presenter Paul Soulek offers his reflection on worship leadership in a time of congregational conflict. Additionally, workshop presenters Mark Mummert and Sarah Hawbecker summarize their workshops on working with the opposite ends of the age spectrum of musical voices: the aging and the young in our midst.

Region 3 gathered July 28–30 in Kansas City, MO, under the theme, “Setting the Table Well: Feeding Hungry Worshippers in a Fast Food Culture.” Keynote speaker Peter Marty offers a summary of his plenary presentation wherein he invites us to awaken with wonder in worship.

Region 4 gathered June 15–18 in Portland, OR, and considered “Emerging: Living and Serving on the Hinge of Change.” Plenary presenter Paul Hoffman explores wonder, love, and praise centering on a line from Charles Wesley’s great hymn, “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling.”

In a musicological exploration rooted in the Region 1 conference centered on the triduum, Chad Fothergill explores how J. S. Bach’s Passion works shifted the Good Friday worship

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Region 1

Held July 14–16 at Christ Lutheran Church on Baltimore’s Inner Harbor, Region 1 focused on “The Three Days—Singing Salvation History.” The opening worship service, beginning with “Bless Now, O God, the Journey” (ELW 326) to set minds and hearts toward all that was to come, focused on the Sunday of the Passion, followed by the liturgies of the Three Days fully and faithfully realized. The Great Vigil was divided into three sections—light, word, and water—before making the procession into the church to the singing of “Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia” (ELW 364, LSB 466). This was followed by Richard Hillert’s great Te Deum (“You are God, we praise you” [LSB 939]) and eucharist, all capped by the singing of “Thine the Amen” (ELW 826, LSB 939). The conference closed with a simple Easter Day service, and participants were sent on their way to the singing of “Christ Jesus Lay in Death’s Strong Bands” (ELW 370, LSB 458, CW 161).
Region 2 (submitted by Rob Gerlach)

“Many Voices—One Choir” was the theme for the conference June 30–July 2 at the new state-of-the-art Christ Lutheran Church in Charlotte, NC. Region 2 teamed up with Augsburg Fortress Publishers for an outstanding conference of worship and music. Dr. Paul Weber and his students from Lenoir-Rhyne University led the opening worship. The inspirational plenary “Your Song, My Song, Our Song: Equipping God’s People to Confess the Faith in Worship and Life” was presented by Paul Soulek. Hymn festivals and new music reading sessions were led by Mark Mummert, Robert Hobby, and Jeremy Bankson. A variety of workshops was offered. Mealtime at Christ included lively entertainment, and the conference banquet at the Waldhorn restaurant featured German fare.

Region 3

Held July 28–30 at Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral in Kansas City, MO, this conference was dedicated to “Setting the Table Well: Feeding Hungry Worshippers in a Fast Food Culture.” With keynote presentations by Peter Marty, workshops included sessions on liturgical art, engaging all ages in worship, a presentation on the Saint John’s Bible by Ellen Spake (who trained at St. John’s Abbey in MN), and a presentation by John Ferguson on “Music as Exegetical Art.” Ferguson also led the hymn festival that closed the conference; the festival was divided into “A Time for Reflection and Confession,” “A Time for Stories of Hope and Faithfulness,” and “A Time for Prayers.”

Region 4

The Region 4 conference, “Emerging: Living and Serving on the Hinge of Change,” took place June 15–18 at Portland, OR, at Concordia University, St. Michael’s Lutheran Church, and St. James Lutheran Church. Highlights included a roundtable discussion on the

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Editor's note: The theme of the 2013 ALCM biennial conference was “God Is Here: Worship in a Wireless World.” The closing plenary is presented here, edited for print.

Introduction: Technology Is Changing Our Lives

Oh, no! A plenary without PowerPoint, YouTube, WiFi, video, Twitter feed, or high-tech sound and projection. Just you and me: our bodies, this space, and an old-fashioned handout. Can we do it? How long will this last?

It has changed my life. I'm not talking about a religious conversion. I'm talking about my personal relationship with my iPhone and the power and mystery of the Internet. Can you believe that ten years ago these things did not exist: Facebook, Twitter, 4G, iPhones, iPads, ubiquitous wireless, Skype, smartphones and their apps, and of course, the Cloud?

What amazing times in which to live. We love our smartphones and laptops. Our iEverythings and our eLives. They are awesome, magical, cool, fun, and constantly at our fingertips. They have changed our lives.

For example, after hearing a new wonderful choral piece at a live concert, I can go home and listen to it instantly on Spotify. On Christmas Eve morning, we can download the program for the King’s College Lessons and Carols and have the full texts and art. I have a meditation app with me everywhere I go, with soothing sounds of bells and gongs. I can come out of a movie and wonder if it goes with the upcoming Mary and Martha text and then check a lectionary app to see that that lesson is scheduled for July 21.

What amazing times in which to live. We love our smartphones and laptops. Our iEverythings and our eLives. They are awesome, magical, cool, fun, and constantly at our fingertips. They have changed our lives.

Is this a good thing or a bad thing? Let's just be Lutheran and answer “both.” Here's how technology both sank and saved me a
week ago. Somehow, when working on my computer, in a manic wave of making a new folder, changing a file name, moving files, deleting files, and then remembering I hadn’t emptied my trash in a long time and doing just that, I realized I had permanently deleted the file for this presentation. “Take a breath,” I said. “It will be OK.” Hours and hours later, after downloading a file recovery program that didn’t seem to work and then spending a couple hours updating an earlier version of the file, I talked to my young nephew. He knows everything tech and usually can solve most of my computer problems. He said the Apple Time Machine had everything from the past couple days, even if you weren’t connected to an external hard drive (i.e., back-up). Sure enough, the file was there. The moral of the story: call my nephew first. Or really, there were too many lessons to even name. It was one of those “the worst of technology, best of technology” stories.

We have lost the ability to daydream. Our brains need downtime to recharge, reset, reflect. However, our default setting rarely does that. At any free moment, I seem conditioned to reach for my iPhone: waiting for the elevator, standing in the supermarket line, idling in stopped traffic, spending time during an intermission, even walking down the street.

But what does that mean for downtime—what we used to call quiet time—before worship? Or the few moments that you work with the tenor section and the rest of the choir isn’t involved? Or a sermon that doesn’t connect? What will happen when we start wearing Google glass and we have the Internet on our bodies continuously? It looks like the soprano is paying attention. She is grinning. But she’s probably reading a text, checking Facebook, or taking a picture of you. And you won’t be able to tell.

Our daily routines are changing so quickly that it feels like we haven’t been able to catch up with them. And so I wonder: is the meaning of being human changing?

It isn’t popular to name some of these concerns about the digital revolution. It feels a little risky for me to talk about this. I don’t think my teenaged niece and nephew have any concerns. And the last thing I want to be is a grumpy old middle-aged man whining about the dangers of technology like our forebears did when radio and television were invented. That’s why I made sure I first told you all the things I love about my iLife!

You might think a conference about worship and technology would focus on creative ways to use screens in worship or to have worshippers text a question or comment to the preacher or to text a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” after an anthem, sermon, or hymn. But today we are going to focus more on the effects of technology on our lives today and what that might mean for worship, ministry, spirituality, even theology.

In the mid-1990s the Lutheran World Federation published a document on worship and culture called “The Nairobi Statement.” Many of you know it. It was foundational as the ELCA developed its Principles for Worship and then eventually Evangelical Lutheran Worship. The Nairobi Statement defines worship as contextual, transcultural, crosscultural and
countercultural. We’re going to focus on the countercultural part today.

In short, worship is countercultural when it challenges the idolization of the self or the acquisition of wealth at the expense of the care of the earth and its poor. So how is worship countercultural in our wireless world? Try on these five ways.

1. Worship Moves Us from Entertainment to Enchantment

Several years ago Daniel Lyons noted, “We may not believe in God anymore, but we still need mystery and wonder. We need the magic act. Five centuries ago Spanish missionaries put shiny mirrors in churches to dazzle the Incas and draw them to Christianity. We, too, want to be dazzled by shiny new objects. Our iPhones . . . have become totemic objects, imbued with techno-vooodoo.”

Well, we’ve lived through several decades of worship wars. How many of your congregations have had those difficult conversations about traditional versus contemporary worship? Should we do Sunday mornings the way Jay Leno does late night talk shows? Will contemporary services “attract” young adults or those outside the church? Will they help us grow? Should we resist our culture’s obsession with cult personalities, amusement, popularity, and success? Should worship be countercultural and challenge the individualism and idolatry in much of our entertainment-driven society?

Going to the Apple store is a magical experience for many. You can watch a toddler swipe the screen of an iPad and discover surprises and delights. And speaking of young adults and how they find enchantment, I say that High Mass in my church’s neighborhood is 11 p.m. on Saturday nights when thousands and thousands of young folks gather at bars for food and drink. There’s ritual and there’s community.

Here’s the question for us: can worship enchant people today? Can it inspire a sense of awe and wonder? Can it entice people to God’s mercy and grace?

I hope so. But it may demand that we use fewer words; that we engage bodies more; that we use all five senses; that we leave space for silence and mystery; that pastors and worship leaders plan and practice their gestures, movements, and words as carefully as musicians rehearse theirs.

Consider: does corporate, embodied worship have the potential to enchant us even in a digital age of gadgets, YouTube, video games, and the ubiquitous voice of Siri?

2. Worship Moves Us from the Individual to the Community

If you have a smart phone, get it out and open up your map app. The little bubble will show you where you are, right here in Valparaiso, IN. Now zoom. Can you see all of Indiana? Maybe someone next to you will need to help. But the bubble is still there and you are still the center. OK, all phones away or I will lose you, as happens to all of us in the middle of choir rehearsals or classes or, I fear, worship services.

I have to admit, I used the map app quite a few times while in New England last week when I was lost or needed help getting from point A to point B. Years ago I would have been the stereotypical male who did not stop and ask for directions. I just went by intuition, which got me, well, nowhere.

Simon Garfield, author of a book about maps, grieves that we are losing the beauty and romance of paper maps, including the tactile joy of folding one up. But this quote from a National Public Radio interview with him haunts me: “the other thing . . . we lose, is a sense of how big the world is. Because now we look at our map, there’s a real sense of, ‘Get me to where I want to go.’ Now you get the feeling, actually, ‘It’s all about me’ . . . . One of the biggest, if not the biggest impacts of the digital and technological revolution—is how we see ourselves in the world.”

Consider: are there some things the church could learn or borrow from technology that could deepen community, including communal gatherings for worship?

Most of the new members of my congregation are in their 20s and 30s. When I ask them what percentage of their friends and colleagues attend church or synagogue, the
answer is usually under 20 percent. So then I ask them, “What are you doing here?” The most common answer revolves around community.

We are stronger together. As people worship, sing, and pray together, something happens. Can this communal bond give perspective to the rest of life? Can it open us up to the needs of others? Can it deepen commitment to the common good? Can it inspire us to work for justice and peace in all the earth?

Consider: are there some things the church could learn or borrow from technology that could deepen community, including communal gatherings for worship?

3. Worship Invites Us from Hyperconnectivity to a Balance of Work and Rest

Most of us are rarely “unplugged” these days. We receive a continuous stream of texts, Tweets, news feeds, e-mails, and status updates. Speaking of such, how long has it been since you checked your e-mail? I’d rather we all do it at once, so go ahead. Since I don’t have a PowerPoint with visuals, ALCM has sent you something for your little screen. Go ahead, take a look and share with someone near you.

Now, can you resist temptation and renounce the force of instant gratification and all its empty promises? In other words, I hope you can put the phones away.

Jaron Lanier is a computer scientist and pioneer in digital media. In his book You are Not a Gadget (New York: Knopf, 2010) is this amazing quote: “When developers of digital technologies design a program that requires you to interact with a computer as if it were a person, they ask you to accept in some corner of your brain that you might also be conceived of as a program”(4).

In less than a generation, it is as if we have merged with our machines. Many Americans stare at screens for more than eight hours a day, more than any other activity, including sleeping. And by carrying communication devices on our bodies, there is no longer a clear line between work and the rest of our lives. One study showed that 80 percent of people check their work e-mail on their so-called vacation.7

I just read a riveting new book by Douglas Rushkoff called Present Shock: When Everything Happens Now (New York: Current, 2013). Rushkoff, a media theorist, contends that we are living in the future we have been waiting for. But no one has time to live it. We strove for an instantaneous network where time and space were compressed. It’s not a Zen sense of the present moment that we are living, though. We have lost a sense of narrative, he says. Everything is a CNN feed. “People meters” track our reactions to politicians or news before we even have a chance to think about something.

Rushkoff goes on:

Our digital universe is always-on, constantly pinging us with the latest news, stock quotes, consumer trends, email responses, social gaming updates, Tweets, and more, all pushing their way
to our smart phones. There are so many incoming alerts competing for attention that many phones now allow users to swipe downward to reveal a scrollable screen containing nothing but the latest alerts pushed through. Everyone and everything intrudes with the urgency of a switchboard-era telephone operator breaking into a phone call with an emergency message from a relative, or a 1960s news anchor interrupting a television program with a special report about an assassination. (73)

The distinction between work and rest—central to Jewish and Christian understandings of worship—is breaking down. No wonder people are turning to spiritual practices like meditation to deal with the stress of our fast-paced lives.

A number of voices are suggesting we simply turn off our phones or shut off our e-mail once in a while. Yet our smartphones have become like appendages. And some of us aren’t able to live, sleep, or go a couple hours without them.

One blogger notes that we like to peer into other people’s lives and compare ours to theirs.8 Sounds like Facebook. Sometimes it is JOMO: The Joy of Missing Out. “Sure glad you’re all having a good time. Glad I’m not there.” Or other times it’s FOMO: The Fear of Missing Out. You’re home alone watching your friends’ status updates of something great happening. And you wish you were there.

Should we consider worship on the Lord’s Day as the primary “spiritual practice” for Christians? A number of writers are now encouraging an occasional fast from technology for an hour, a day, or even longer. Could we do it? If people are losing the ability to unplug and reflect on their lives, can worship teach new spiritual patterns and form us in alternate ways? Can the gospel be a countercultural message in our time, reminding us that our identity is in who we are, not in what we do to fill up every spare moment?

Body/Breath/Voices Break

OK, it’s time for a body break and a breath break. These plenaries are a lot to take in. Our minds wander. Our butts get tired. Let’s reset. Stretch. Roll your shoulders back. Plant your feet firmly on the ground. Stand the way you would sing. Now relax. Let your arms relax. Or assume a yoga prayer position. Or liturgical orans position. And slow down your breathing. Be present to your bodies. To this community. To this moment. To the breath of God within you . . .

(Bell [from an app] begins. A minute of silence . . . bell ends . . . then someone starts singing “Beautiful Savior,” leading all to sing it twice a cappella.)

That communal experience needed bodies, voices, a community, and acoustics. Worship is one of the few times that we sing anymore. To some, worship may seem like a group of individuals coming together to get their individual needs met. But what if we helped people to see worship and its music making as a communal, countercultural, bodily gathering in real space and real time?

If people are losing the ability to unplug and reflect on their lives, can worship teach new spiritual patterns and form us in alternate ways?

4. Worship Moves Us from the Virtual to the Bodily and the Earthily

The line between our virtual and real lives seems to be blurring. Some say we are becoming cyborgs. One ultraefficiency advocate teaches workers how to hack sleep by taking naps every four hours. It is like treating the human body as a lithium battery, an approach used by several high-tech CEOs. Rushkoff, whom I quoted earlier, notes that we are trying to bring human evolution up to the pace of Apple system updates. Internet workers are expected “to accept the cyborg ethos” as a given circumstance. Some phones vibrate when there is incoming information. No wonder people experience a phantom vibration syndrome even when there is no phone in their pocket.

Rushkoff goes on to say that there is a dissonance between our analog bodies and our digital lives: our analog bodies evolved over millennia and are conditioned to circadian rhythms—to changes in sunlight, seasons, moon cycles, even ragweed in the air. And the digital, virtual realities sometimes seem like they are trying to defeat these natural rhythms.
Our virtual lives enjoy a freedom from time. But our bodies still age, and feel the effects of stress and attending to the demands of our e-lives.\textsuperscript{10}

In other words, the essence of being human is sometimes being defined as information or consciousness. I read a \textit{New York Times} article on the front page of the business section\textsuperscript{11} speculating about avatars with uploaded contents of our brains that could live on forever—until someone hits the delete key by mistake, I suppose.

A book about our e-personalities called \textit{Virtually You} (Elias Aboujaoude \textit{[New York: Norton, 2011]}) notes that our e-personalities cannot tolerate downtime. There is always more fun to have, something to discover, a connection to be made. Yet ironically, the author suggests that we are losing the “ability to enjoy things or immerse ourselves fully in them, one at a time and for a prolonged time” (271). What we lose is the ability to reflect on our lives, to know ourselves. His advice: think before you click. Proceed with caution in the virtual world.

How strange that we are becoming more virtual after many of us have been trying to learn how to become more at home in our bodies. Recent theology has been trying to counter centuries of dualism that valued the soul over the body.

So what does it mean to be an embodied human being in this virtual day and age? And what does it mean for worship? From Martin Luther’s vantage point, it is not possible to be “spiritual” without bodily participation. If Luther insisted on the real bodily presence of Christ in Holy Communion, he would be baffled that many postmodern people call themselves “spiritual” rather than “religious,” contending that they can be Christian by merely being good and believing in God. Luther would deem it impossible to be Christian without the body of Christ—that is, the physical reality of Christ’s presence in the eucharist and in the gathered community.

Think of the popularity of yoga, meditation, tai chi, and other spiritual experiences that connect mind, body, and spirit. Perhaps the more virtual our lives become, the greater the need for experiences in real space and time. Here’s what I wonder: can embodied worship ground us in incarnation, in bodies, in the earth, in nature, and in the cycles of the sun and the moon?

5. Worship Leads Us from Consumerism to a Sense of Mission and Vocation

Do you have your calendar or e-mail set to send you reminders? Do you get blinks or pings or dings when you have a new message, Tweet, text, or friend request? We get reminders to do things and to be places. And we get reminders to buy things: ads telling us what we need to be happier, sexier, thinner, richer, cooler, calmer.

Even religion has become something to buy, a commodity. No wonder we shop for churches. The way we order customized drinks at Starbucks is the same way many people approach religion and spirituality these days. Choice is the order of the day. A coffee executive revealed to Diana Butler Bass that at his establishment there are 82,000 possible drink options and combinations available from his menu. According to Bass, “Choosing faith is now a bit like ordering off the menu at a high-end coffee shop.”\textsuperscript{12}

In the midst all of all the choices we make of what to buy and how to invest our time and money, the Sunday assembly reminds us of our baptismal vocation: worship and mission. Or as we say in the baptismal rite, offering praise to God and bearing God’s creative and redeeming word to all the world. Can we be formed in these values without going to church? It’s possible. Yet Eleanor and Alan Kreider propose that we cannot participate in God’s mission without worship because “we are not strong enough or clever enough.”\textsuperscript{13}

Doesn’t it seem that people want to make their lives count? Can the baptismal life join them to something greater than themselves? Can we encounter in worship God’s passionate desire for our world in such a way that it transforms lives?

It may very well be that digitization and virtuality are changing what it means to be human. Our iThings and eLives have many, many amazing, awesome, magical things about them. Thomas Friedman says this about the digital revolution of recent times: “The
A combination of these tools of connectivity and creativity has created a global education, commercial, communication and innovation platform on which more people can start stuff, collaborate on stuff, learn stuff, make stuff... with more other people than ever before.14

My point is that there are also concerns to name and monitor. There will be plenty of other conferences, workshops, and books about how to use technology in churches. Here we are considering another side of the coin. Perhaps our communities of faith are places to help people reflect on the need for balance, for downtime, for rest, for face-to-face encounters, for tech-free experiences in nature. Perhaps we as church leaders can attempt to model a healthy relationship with technology.

What I am suggesting is this: that worship (and thus other spiritual practices) help to refocus our lives, moving us:

• from entertainment to enchantment;
• from the individual to community;
• from constant stimulation and connectivity to times of unplugged rest and renewal;
• from virtuality to experiences of the body and the earth; and
• from consumerism to lives of vocation and mission.

How can church leaders articulate why worship in real space/real time matters in our wireless world? Should we be talking about this in sermons, classes, choir rehearsals? How?

**Recommended Reading**


**Craig Mueller** is pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Chicago, IL.

**Notes**


9. Rushkoff, 95.

10. This is basically the thesis of the entire book, but one could consult especially ch. 2, 69–130.


Prelude  continued from page 2

emphasis from the actions surrounding the suffering death of the man, Jesus, to a deeper exploration of the salvific meaning for the listener. In so doing, Bach’s works offer a model of theological and contextual intentionality for worship planning attentive to the biblical witness and the assembly’s response.

Finally, this issue looks forward to the upcoming 15th biennial ALCM conference in Atlanta, GA, July 19–23, 2015. Make your plans now to attend and to experience the outpouring of wisdom yet to come.

Many thanks to all who planned, led worship, offered musical leadership, and gave presentations and workshops, and to all who attended these lively ALCM conferences. The wisdom and giftedness of the community of Christ abundantly overflows throughout these gatherings. For that, we give thanks and praise to Christ, our Lord!

2014 ALCM Regional Conferences  continued from page 4

state of worship organized by Phil Brandt of Concordia’s theology department and featuring LCMS Northwest District President Paul Linnemann, ELCA Southwestern Washington Synod Bishop Richard Jaech, and the Rev. Susan Kintner, assistant to the bishop of the ELCA Oregon Synod; the use of a new Holy Communion liturgy by Tacoma’s Kenneth DeJong (just published in set 3 of Augsburg’s Assembly Required series); a dinner cruise up the Willamette River into the country and back; a compline service in Portland’s Sunken Rose Garden; and the premiere of a newly commissioned work, “From Darkness, Lord, You Authored Light,” from Kristine Kuhn (text) and Scott Hyslop (tune and setting; tune name: REGION 4), along with sectionalso devoted to text writing and composing.

Nancy Raabe is the minister of music at East Koshkonong Lutheran Church in Cambridge, WI.
Editor’s note: The theme of the Region 4 conference was “Emerging: Living and Serving on the Hinge of Change.” The keynote presentation was in three parts, all of which are presented here, edited for print.

Introduction

These three presentations are wrapped around a set of charged and richly loaded words from Charles Wesley’s magnificent and beloved hymn text, “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling.” Specifically, I’ll focus on three nouns from the last line of final stanza of the hymn: wonder, love, and praise. In order to get the essence and full range of the power of these words, you have to go back to the beginning of that stanza. The entire final stanza is, if not a single sentence, then certainly a single line of thought:

Finish, then, thy new creation,
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee!
Changed from glory, into glory,
till in heav’n we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise!

(ELW 631, LSB 700, CW 365)

It’s not simply wonder, love, and praise. It’s lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Part 1: Wonder

At the church I served as pastor in Seattle, we used an amazing method of Sunday school instruction called Godly Play (www.godlyplayfoundation.org). One of the central strategies of this method is discussion on the comment “I wonder . . . .” At the center of each reflection on the Bible story for the day, the leader encourages the students to reflect on the text—whether it’s on the story of Noah’s ark or the treasure hidden in the field—using a series of “I wonder” questions.

And so, I wonder: I wonder what would happen if we grounded this conversation about emerging and living and serving on the hinge of change in the baptismal font. I wonder what would happen if we started in that watery home, where we all began this vocational walk as pastors and musicians of the ALCM. What would happen if we started in the water?

Let’s just cut right to the chase with this beautiful, difficult quote from Cyril of Jerusalem, 4th century bishop:

The waters of baptism are at once your grave and your mother.1

Isn’t that a startling, terrifying image? Your grave and your mother. Here lie interwoven images of death and new life, just like it says in the Bible—inextricably united.
Bishop Cyril was not just making this up. He was grounding it in solid biblical language and imagery from Romans 6:3:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? (New Revised Standard Version)

That’s the grave part. And then from Romans 6:5:

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. (NRSV)

And there is our mother.

Writing in 2 Corinthians 5:17, Paul puts it a slightly different way:

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new. (NRSV)

In baptismal waters we are born again. The font is the womb, our mother. But first it is our grave.

This runs against the grain of our usual sensibilities. Certainly it runs against the grain of the forward motion of a great piece of music, a beloved hymn text, or a wonderful anthem. We like those things to go like this: beginning, middle, end. A good choir rehearsal or even a decent sermon follows that paradigm, right?

But this is not baptismal living. Baptismal living rather goes like this: end, beginning, middle. Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Grave. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. Mother. End. Beginning.

So this makes me wonder: what in us—in order for us to emerge—needs to die? What of our wonderful music making and preaching, our planning and our leading? What of all that we love and hold so dear? What in us needs to die if we are going to emerge and live and serve on the hinge of change? This is the starting point. The end.

And here’s just one more piece of evidence that this is our baptismally ordained pattern to follow. We dwell in our Lord Jesus Christ in whom we proclaim: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. End, beginning, middle. Emerging should not frighten us. It is what Christians do. Because it is what Christ did. What Christ does. It is the baptismal pattern of our faith. It is the baptismal pattern of our living and serving.

We cannot have a meaningful beginning if we have not embraced the truth of our faith’s starting point. I wonder: what in us needs to die? Hold on to that thought—ponder it a bit—while I share three stories from the life of a real parish where dying to something old made way for being raised to something magnificently, challengingly new. In other words, stories where first there was an end and then there was a new beginning. They are stories of God’s people lost in wonder.

1. One Wednesday evening at choir rehearsal several of our high school women were distraught at the news of the suicide of one of their school friends. Sensing a need for conversation and ritual, the choir director invited them to stay after closing worship, dimmed the lights of the sanctuary and invited the four of them to gather around the baptismal font. As their time together concluded, one of the girls said, “I think I’m beginning to understand what those words mean now.” The director asked, “What words are those?” “Mourn in lonely exile here,” she replied. End. A Sunday or two later, that same young woman sought out the director again. She said, “But I think I’m also beginning to understand these words, too: ‘O come, O Key of David, come and open wide our heavenly home.’” Beginning. Conversation, ritual, prayer, baptismal remembrance, and the gift of song helped this young woman to get back into the middle of life. End, beginning, middle.

2. In her final years, an elderly member of the chancel choir acquired the habit of fainting. Often right in the middle of an anthem or a prayer—boom. She went down and was
out cold. End. Without fail, by the time the paramedics arrived, Josephine had regained consciousness. I can only imagine that looking up at the army of uniformed, muscled healers hovering over her, she was sure that she’d been born again! Each time, her protests against being carted off to the hospital prevailed. Even the most seasoned paramedic couldn’t argue with, “How can I keep from singing?” Josephine hit the floor. End. Josephine awoke to the vision of paramedic angels. Beginning. Josephine pleaded to sing the Lord’s praise and prevailed. Middle—right back into the middle of life and what she loved.

3. A newly baptized adult challenged the congregation when we discussed and debated about whether or not we could muster the courage to invite a community of homeless people to live on our front lawn for 90 days. To her ears, the debate was ludicrous. She said, “I thought that you told me when I was preparing for my baptism here that this is exactly what my baptism would mean. Are we not called to help those in need, to reach out to the poor and homeless? If we can’t issue this invitation, I’ll have to leave this congregation and worship somewhere else, because what you have taught me here will have become a lie.” Believe me, something in our congregation died that day. We died to our own fears, and—through the gospel proclaimed through Kathryn—we were born again to a new way of seeing. The end and the beginning that she provided sent us into a new and unimagined middle of serving those in need. Tent City lived among us from the beginning of Advent until the Transfiguration of Our Lord. We were the ones to whom Christ came anew that year. We were those who were transfigured by Christ’s amazing end, beginning, middle.

Here’s the thing—and it’s a really important thing: we have to help people connect the dots. We who are called to the high and holy calling of planning worship week in and week out—we help the people we serve connect the dots. We are the ones upon whom others count to assist them in making sense of this when they come in front of us to listen, to sing, to play, to pray.

Western Mass were the words “for you” in the distribution of the bread and cup of Holy Communion. He believed to the core of his being that, without each child of God knowing that the very bread they held in their hands and the very wine they drank from the cup was “for them,” the possibility of being formed in the faith of Jesus was lost. What good is it, after all, to take these precious gifts but not be confident of the Lord’s promise that they are “for you”? Those are dots that need to be connected—dots between a Scripture text lived out in a vibrant, inspiring liturgy, and the real life into which the assembly’s participants will go to live and serve in the week that lies before them.

We who are called to the high and holy calling of planning worship week in and week out—we help the people we serve connect the dots. We are the ones upon whom others count to assist them in making sense of this when they come in front of us to listen, to sing, to play, to pray.

In a very similar way, I suggest to you that faith is formed from the sacred words of Scripture and the rituals that they engender when and only when the worshipper can take away from the liturgy and into the world the absolute confidence that the words proclaimed are “for you.” We have a robust theology that says that all vocational callings end and then are born again through the font. Luther’s rich baptismal theology of vocation is a birth rite that we as Lutherans among all the Protestants can and should espouse and employ with gusto. There’s no vocational theology quite so rich and practical anywhere else across the denominational spectrum.

And so I ask again: as dot-connecters—as interpreters—what needs to die, so that all the people of God might live? I wonder: what in us needs to die? The answer is as simple and as complicated as this. What needs to die? We do. We need to die.

Your death will not look the same as mine but there are probably some common themes.
Perhaps, in order to emerge, we need to let go of some of our old ideas and ways of doing things. Maybe singing Handel’s Hallelujah chorus every Easter now that the choir is down to six people and no tenors is not such a good idea any more, even though it’s tradition. Perhaps there is a unison hymn in one of our wonderful new hymnal resources that would do the trick just the same, maybe even better. Maybe a death could be a grudge you hold against that hooting soprano that seems to ruin every well-nuanced anthem you’ve spent hours choosing and preparing. Perhaps giving her the opportunity to sing a solo would be the gateway to new life in Christ for both of you. Maybe our dying could be to the death grip that the church seems to have on who is welcome and who is not welcome at the table.

By the most modest of estimates, there are a thousand ways we all could die. You know them better than I do. But I promise you this: for every death we die, Jesus Christ will roll away the stone that has been blocking us and give us a resurrection. This baptismal renewal first will be a grave. But then it will be a womb, our mother. Our dying will give birth to something new, something fully, richly infused with Christ. We will be born again.

Therefore I make a modest proposal that all our music and all our ritual flow from the font to the world and back again. That is to say, any music, any ritual, any action, any decoration, any innovation, any sermon, any prayer—anything that we might do in this glorious calling of ours that does not immerse the people we serve in our rich baptismal theology of dying and rising may just not be worth doing.

This is not to abandon any of the classic categories of theological wisdom that we all love and cherish so much: law and gospel; sin and grace; repentance and forgiveness; soprano, alto, tenor, bass. They are all there in the font. It is not to abandon these categories at all. It is, instead, to embrace them and to be absolutely certain, to the best of our abilities, that these classic categories are doing nothing less than serving the saving gospel, for the sake of the transformation of the world. I wonder: what would the church be like if this was the way we lived out our vocation?

It is in this way that we emerge. We emerge from the waters of the font into a new creation, a world of wonder. This is the gift of Jesus in his own emerging, his emerging from the tomb to bring life in its abundance to all people.

And we do this, just as our theme suggests, on the hinge of change. The world is changing. Christians are no longer the dominant force in North America. A great deal of the world that we serve, particularly here on the West Coast, is ambivalent, apathetic, or openly hostile to the news we have to share about God. We no longer live and serve in the kind of surrounding culture in which most of us were raised.

But let’s not kid ourselves. Change is nothing new. Charles Wesley, according to John Julian in A Dictionary of Hymnology, wrote over 6,500 hymn texts in his 81 years between 1707 and 1788. He did this in an age of change, both personal and global. He grew up as one of 18 children. Charles got off to a pretty rough start, having been born prematurely and appearing to be dead. He lay wrapped in wool for weeks before he rallied and began to thrive. As an adult he wrestled with his own conversion. He strove to honor his marriage. He studied. He traveled. He served a minority church in a time of challenge and transformation. He did so at a period in English history that included the Earthquake Panic (1750), rumors of an invasion from France, the defeat of Prince Charles Edward at Culloden, and the Gordon riots. In other words, Wesley lived and served on the hinge of change.

Through it all Wesley remained centered in his baptism. He was attentive to dying and rising. He understood and leaned into his end in order to cherish and live out of Christ’s wonderful gift of an ever-new beginning.

Is it any wonder, then, that he was able to leave us with these magnificent words of hope, by which to emerge and do our own living and serving in a changing, wonder-filled world?

Finish, then, thy new creation, pure and spotless let us be; let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee!
Changed from glory, into glory,
till in heav’n we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise!

**Part 2: Lost in Love**

I open by suggesting that *living* is the great beginning that baptismal immersion promises. Having died to ourselves in the watery grave of baptism, God raises us up to living even as God raised up Christ. It is our new beginning. Following Luther, we think of it not only as a once-and-done thing on the day of our actual baptism but also as a daily renewal. To say it another way, following the Nicodemus story in John 3, we are not merely born again. We are born again and again and again and again and again and again. Every day. Beginning. A new beginning with every waking. To use a sophisticated analytical and theological term: pretty cool.

Following the example of Jesus, our new beginning—our *living*—is exemplified in love. In loving. Actively loving. To live in Christ baptismally is to love, not merely survive.

In an April 2008 women’s softball tournament game between Central Washington and Western Oregon universities, love became incarnate. It took on flesh and blood. A Western Oregon senior, who had never hit a home run in her college career, knocked one out of the park. Her fame and fortune was short-lived, however, because as she turned the first-base corner to head for second, she tore her ACL and went plummeting to the ground in pain. The umpire ruled that she could only receive the run if she completed the pathway around the bases, touching each one, all the way to home. It was not going to happen.

A couple of her teammates asked if they could carry their teammate from base to base and thereby award her with her first-ever homer and earn that extra run for the team. The umpire checked the rulebook and answered, “No.”

But then, those women from Central Washington did the unthinkable. They went to the ump and asked the same question. Could they, her opponents, carry her from base to base and thereby earn their soon-to-be best friend the first home run of her career? The ump replied, “There is nothing in the rule book to prevent it.”

The opposing team scooped her up and carried her to second base, where with her good foot she touched the bag. She touched the bag likewise at third. And then she was brought to home base. It seems to me that this was an expression of the wonder of love.

We live in a time when there are many ways of understanding love, many ways of living it out. I’m going to illustrate the two extremes of how the world in which we live understands love using two hymn texts.

The first hymn is by Roberta Flack (1972):

- Where is the love
- You said was mine all mine
- Till the end of time
- Was it just a lie
- Where is the love?

The second hymn is a little older: St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians a few decades after the resurrection:

- Love is patient; love is kind;
- love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude.
- It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.
- It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

(1 Corinthians 13:4-7; NRSV)

I think it goes without saying that love as the world understands it is much more like Roberta Flack’s version of things than St. Paul’s version of things. Mine, all mine. It’s all about me, right? A popular refrain of the world might be, “If I’m not getting anything out of it, then why am I in it?”

But St. Paul and the Central Washington women’s softball team of 2008 seem to present us with a different option of love. A love that is kind. Love that does not insist on its own way, is not irritable or resentful, does not rejoice in wrongdoing, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

As pastors and musicians who live and serve on the hinge of change, I wonder what it would be like if we went about our ministries together as the women on the Central Washington and Western Oregon softball teams did: linking
arms, even with opponents, and making our way around the bases for the sake of others. In other words, there is at least a part of Roberta Flack’s hymn that I think serves us well. It’s this part: Where is the love?

First and foremost, where is the love between the pastor and the musician or musicians of a congregation?

Maybe it’s just me, but that sounds a little bit like end, beginning to me. Love is putting an end to our old way of doing things as if everything revolves around only us and then stepping into a new life that is all about the “other,” whether that “other” be our colleague or our world.

And speaking of our world, the people of the world have kind of caught on to the fact that we congregational folks are not always the most loving bunch of people you could hang around with. Somehow the word has slipped out from beneath the doors of the church that we don’t all get along, that there is more than just spiritual warfare being waged behind church doors. There is real, painful, hurtful stuff that Christians do to one another.

It all goes back to the question we talked about previously: what in us needs to die? What are we willing to let go of in order that the “other”—the world around us—may begin to find an answer to the question: where is the love?

It cost those softball players from Central Washington University something to extend themselves for the young woman from the opposing team from Western Oregon who wasn’t able to run the bases on her own. The game was not yet over. They weren’t just being nice, they were taking a risk that by helping her score a run they might lose a game in a championship tournament. They took the chance. They extended themselves in love. They lived into its wonder. Knowing the next right thing to do, they did it, and they were lost to themselves in helping a neighbor in need. Sounds almost biblical, doesn’t it?

I wonder: what would it be like if we extended ourselves to one another in love like that? What if that kind of extension of love started in the working teams that we have as musicians and pastors in our local congregations?

Can I tell you something? Pastors are kind of scared of musicians—at least a little bit. We don’t know all the secrets of those organs you sit in front of, those stops you pull, those key signatures through which you modulate. We don’t know the directing patterns of 4/4 or 6/8. Some of us don’t know the difference between a siciliano and a chorale. In fact, you can get all the way through seminary and not even hear those words. Pastors don’t necessarily understand that it takes six weeks to get an anthem ready or that you’re always planning ahead. Pastors don’t necessarily understand that rescheduling the Rite of Confirmation from the 8:30 service to the 11:00 service on the Wednesday before confirmation is going to take place is a serious challenge for the conscientious choir director or organist who plans and rehearses with those sorts of liturgical nuances in mind.

Here’s where my dual citizenship as both pastor and parish musician comes in handy. On the flip side of the coin, I can tell you another little bit of truth in this mystery we call the church: musicians are a little scared of pastors, too. We all fear the unknown. Not every musician has heard the word “prolepsis” or could explain what it means. Parish musicians are sometimes confused about the order of the books of the Bible, particularly when you get deep into the Minor Prophets. (And why are they called “minor,” anyway?) How long does it actually take a pastor to write a sermon? As long as it takes to learn a new chorale prelude? Less? More?

Here’s a way out of those deep dark woods. What if we prayed together? What if we sat in front of the Scriptures together? What if we took five minutes out of every staff meeting (maybe first actually we’d have to have a staff meeting) for a pastor’s in-service moment, then did the same for the musicians? What if we started with love? The wonder of love? What if the relationship between pastor and musician was grounded in God’s love as revealed to us in shared Scripture, shared prayer, and mutual esteem? What if the wonder of being lost in love as a pastor-and-musician team oozed out (that’s another great theological word, isn’t it?) into the rest of the congregation and its ministries? What about that?

It cost those softball players from Central Washington University something to extend themselves. It will cost us something to extend...
ourselves to those with whom we serve. We will have to drown a little in the baptismal grave. But we will be raised up to something so new and amazing that it will be worth getting wet.

I mentioned earlier that word has leaked out into the world that we don’t always get along inside the church. I don’t think that’s ever been a very well-kept secret across the history of the church. But news travels faster these days. Did you know, for example, that you can read a Yelp review of your church that anyone at all who wants to post online can simply put up? It might read something like this: snobby people, those Lutherans at First and Maple, downtown. I went there Sunday and they were some of the most unwelcoming people I’d ever seen.

The Millennial generation is particularly good at sniffing this stuff out. They’re really good at the Roberta Flack question, “Where is the love?” They come looking for:
• a transformational experience;
• meaningful ritual;
• intellectually satisfying biblical truth; and
• a place to serve.

But what most Millennials of any age find if and when they do muster the courage to come among us is:
• business as usual, not a transformational experience;
• insider traditions, not meaningful ritual;
• church jargon, rather than biblical truth; and
• an inward focus on institutional survival rather than an outward-directed intention to serve the world.

Ann Weems captures it so well in her brief poem, “Forgive, O Holy One”:

The people come to be comforted
and are quickly put into committee.
Forgive, O Holy One,
Our weariness with your Word,
And with your world.

I believe that when we—who are the first to put our fingerprints on the liturgies that will enact the love of God for the world—are ourselves in study and prayer together, then we will be equipped to lead others in study and prayer for which they so fervently long.

Another story: The Rev. Dr. James Forbes (former pastor of Riverside Church in New York City) grew up in a family of eight children—so ten around the dining room table for every meal. Before table grace, his mother would ask, each and every time, “Are all the children in the house?” Beautiful sentence, isn’t it? “Are all the children in the house?” And if anyone was missing, before grace was said, a plate was fixed for that missing one and placed in the oven for whenever they returned, whenever they were able to receive their family dinner. Then grace was said, and all at the table were fed.

Fixing a plate for the missing ones first. Taking care of ourselves second. That is the sort of living and serving on the hinge of change that could really get the attention of the world that we are called to serve. If more of that were going on among us, then perhaps we would all be more familiar with the wonder of love. Maybe we could even get lost in it.

Part 3: Lost in Praise

For the insights that lie in, with, and under this presentation, I’m indebted to the work and mentoring of the Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee, Bishop of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod of the ELCA, and to Diana Butler Bass, a prophetic writer and teacher in the church.

It was from Bishop Satterlee that I first gained this insight about the church gathering to worship and to praise: in worship, God is the actor.

My first response to the thought of God as the actor in worship was, “Who knew?” Certainly not me.

My first response to the thought of God as the actor in worship was, “Who knew?” Certainly not me. I began my life as a church organist in the eighth grade. Even in the eighth grade I had mentors and teachers wise enough to instill in me that my playing was not a performance but a gift, an offering, praise.

I was wise enough to know that no part of my leadership in Sunday liturgy was a performance. But I certainly came to believe that I was an actor in a wonderful drama that I would later learn is called “the work of the people.” The more I did it, the more I came to believe that I was an actor, a doer.

As my life wound its way into college and seminary and I moved from the organ console to
the table and the pulpit, I carried that idea with me that as a preacher or a presider I was the one doing the acting in worship. I was leading people in praise, in offering our worship to God. I don’t think it’s an unusual point of view.

But then I began leading in a catechumenal congregation, and little by little I began seeing the value of changing my mind about who is the actor. Even in worship—perhaps especially in worship—it is God who is the actor and we, God’s people, who are always on the receiving end of God’s grace and mercy. We are not the doers at all but the done-to. God is the actor.

It all begins with the biblical text. Every week God cracks open that text as a pattern for the assembly. It becomes a pattern by which we are called to live our faith—our journey toward the world—in the week to come. Now don’t be mistaken: God uses us—all of us—to put on this cosmic play week in and week out. God uses each and every one of us in the assembly to bring the powerful, life-giving word of the gospel to life again and again in our shared praise.

We are who we say we are: the people of God, doing the work of the people. God is mediating faith through us. This is an important, pivotal, incarnational piece of theological understanding. God uses us, the body of Christ.

God comes to us through one another. I recently heard a lecture by the Rev. Dr. William Willimon in which he said, “there is no God but a mediated God. God only comes through a Nazarene Jew named Jesus, and now God comes to us in the power of the Spirit by the Church that is that Nazarene Jew’s body in the world.”

God is free to show up wherever and whenever God pleases. However, if you want to be sure to know where God is then look to the assembly at praise, the place in which God shows up in the words and in the meal, in the water and the wine, in the prayers and in the fellowship of one another. God comes to us. God is the actor. Even our praise is a wonder, a holy, life-giving mystery.

This is not to say that God is somehow self-praising. It’s more mysterious than that—it’s Luther-in-the-third-article-of-the-creed kind of stuff:

I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and makes holy the whole Christian church on earth.

There it is, a 500-year-old Lutheran re-assertion of an ancient understanding of our faith. God is the actor.

I wonder: what would it be like if we understood our role as a bit more like setting the stage? What would it be like if our opening act in the grand drama of liturgy would be an act of welcome? More than any generation of people in recent history, God’s people come to worship these days seeking first a place to belong. Setting the stage with welcome is tantamount.

Diana Butler Bass’ work in Christianity after Religion (New York: HarperOne, 2012) is helpful and informative to us. While previous generations of Western Christians invited people first to believe, then behave, and finally to belong in congregational life, she suggests that this pattern must be reversed. People today come first seeking to belong. It is through belonging to the community of praise that newcomers will find—and those who’ve been around for a long time will rediscover—what are the behaviors in a community of praise. It is through belonging and behaving that belief will be sparked, formed, and nurtured.

To “believe” is a modern, scientific-method, industrial way of understanding the world. And it is rather uniquely Western. Relying again on the work of Butler Bass in Christianity for the Rest of Us (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006) as we trace back the roots of the Latin word credo, you can see how our English language has let us down. Translations of credo in languages antecedent to English had much less to do with intellectual assent and much more to do with what one found beloved, about which one was passionate. So take that idea now—of that about which we are passionate, of that which we “be-love”—and apply it to the creed:

I “belove” God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I “belove” Jesus Christ, God’s only Son our Lord.
I “belove” that Christ was born of the Virgin Mary.
I “belove” the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life of the world to come.

Even in the creed God is cracking open a word of gospel truth for us that our lives, inspired by the good news swirling all around us, can and will lift our voices in shared praise. In fact, so cracked open, when we will let it happen, that we will even be “lost” in praise. What a wonder.

We are a church that has taken on many of the earmarks and characteristics of our surrounding culture. We are so much about strategies and techniques. But our always-acting God is not tied to our strategies. God is not bound by our techniques. Our God is not a God of strategies and techniques but a God of signs and wonders.

So here we are: born again, having come to our baptismal end, raised up in an Easter resurrection to a new beginning. Here we are: thick in the middle of our lives and the lives of others, living and serving on the hinge of change, a praising people.

And still, in our feeble way, we cry to the One, the only One who can and does act first, who makes any of this ending, this beginning, this middling possible at all. In stanza three of Wesley’s brilliant text (“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”), it is reaffirmed: God acts first to come among us, to deliver us from ourselves, and to fill us with baptismal life. Then and only then do we praise God without ceasing. The witness is in the text:

Come, Almighty, to deliver;
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
nevermore thy temples leave.
Thy we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

It is in the Westminster Catechism (1646), in the very first article, that the church reaffirmed the understanding of the ancient people of God: “What is the chief end of humankind? Our chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy God forever.” In short, our response to the cosmic actions and the cosmic actor is to get lost in praise: to glorify and enjoy God forever.

I hope that in some small way these three presentations will bring you a sense of renewal and hope for the work you do when you return to your places of ministry.

And I hope it helps, too, in some small way to know that your work is honored and appreciated. What you do is important. It is of eternal and universal value. Never doubt that. Never doubt that while we might be lost in the wonder, the love, and the praise of our generous and compassionate God, we are never—ever—lost to God.

Paul Hoffman has been an ordained Lutheran pastor for 32 years and recently retired from active parish ministry at Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church in Seattle, WA. His work in adult faith formation is chronicled in two books he’s authored: Faith Forming Faith and Faith Shaping Ministry (both Eugene, OR: Cascade, published in 2012 and 2013, respectively).

Notes
6. Martin Luther, Small Catechism, in Evangelical Lutheran Worship (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006), 1162.
7. Westminster Shorter Catechism (London: s.n., 1646; reissued as The Westminster Shorter Catechism in Modern English, ed. Douglas Kelly and Phillip Rollinson, Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishers, 1986). This catechism was written with the intention of bringing the Church of England into greater conformity with the Church of Scotland.
The Three Days: Singing Salvation History
(Plenary Summary, Region 1)

by Scott Weidler

GATHERED AT HISTORIC CHRIST CHURCH
(Inner Harbor) in Baltimore, MD, ALCM Region 1 hosted a gracious conference focusing on the liturgies and music for the Three Days—the triduum.

Although most Lutheran congregations in North America have always held worship services on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, over the past 45-plus years there has been an ecumenical recovery of understanding that the days from Maundy Thursday evening through Easter Day are a distinct unit, known simply as the triduum: the Three Days. But they are not just any three days. This small but powerful “season” sits at the center of the church year, holding together all that comes before and all that follows, boldly proclaiming and enacting the heart of the Christian faith. Everything that happens in worship throughout the year is modeled, often in a big way, in the liturgy of these days.

But they aren’t just any old liturgies. To fully embrace the Three Days means more than simply offering worship—whatever it is—on these particular days. In addition to treating the days themselves as a unique season, the ancient rites of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Vigil of Easter have also experienced a renaissance. A renewed look at these rites has occurred in all denominations that call themselves “liturgical,” as well as in a few that do not. A remarkable convergence is evident in the worship books of our various traditions.

However, just because the denominations haveboldly reintroduced these services to their church does not mean that all congregations have wholeheartedly hopped on board and fully embraced them. Since worship on these days has always held a cherished place in the hearts of many worshippers, making changes to recent practice (that is, perhaps, practices of the past 1,000 years) is often difficult. It is a fine balancing act to find the sweet spot between “every congregation must do things in a particular way” and “do whatever you want; it’s all okay.” But it is that sweet spot—between valuing and loving the historic liturgical and musical traditions of the church, with their particular theological emphases, and enacting these rites in a way that is bold, loving, full of integrity, and planned particularly for your unique context—that we should all be striving to attain. That is what we tried to do in Baltimore.

Of course, a brief article cannot fully articulate everything we talked about, sang, prayed, and experienced in Baltimore. However, a few overarching themes may offer a glimpse.

An old Sunday school song sums up the first point best:
Love, love, love, that’s what it’s all about.
’Cause God loves us we love each other,
every sister, every brother.
Everybody sing and shout, ’cause that’s what
it’s all about.
It’s about love, love, love. It’s about love,
love, love.
(Orlando Schmidt [ed.], Sing and Rejoice!
[Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1979], #68)

Ultimately, all that goes on in the liturgies of the Three Days is about expressing various aspects of God’s love poured out on the world and how the Christian life is lived in response to that gift for the life of the world.

We talked about numbers. Does it matter that Lent is 40 days long, that the Three Days are, well, three days (or are they?), and that Easter is a season of 50 days? It was argued that, yes, it matters, and that, no, you really shouldn’t take time to try to count too carefully. Take Lent, for example. If you consider the Three Days as a season distinct from Lent (some would argue that we shouldn’t), then Lent ends at sundown on Maundy Thursday. This means that you can’t really get 40 days, unless you agree that Lent originally began on a Sunday, like most Christian seasons, and the additional days—back to Ash Wednesday—were added at a time in history when Lent had become far more penitential than its earlier baptismal roots. Of course, then you have to include Sundays as part of Lent in order to get to forty. And then someone says, “But I thought Sundays were not really part of Lent.” Well, you get the idea. The numbers we use to count and name these seasons are symbolic. They are full of deep meaning and, therefore, important. Just don’t get hung up on counting.

A stanza from a different song, “Great God, Your Love Has Called Us” by Brian Wren, sums up the next point:

Great God, in Christ you call our name and then receive us as your own,
not through some merit, right, or claim, but by your gracious love alone.
We strain to glimpse your mercy seat and find you kneeling at our feet.
(ELW 358).

These liturgies—indeed, all of Christian worship—are not about re-enacting something that happened centuries ago. We are not creating a dramatic representation of Jesus’ life, no matter how engaging a good play might be. We are not pretending that we walk in Jesus’ feet in Palestine, although the path of Jesus to the cross is, indeed, a powerful model for the Christian life. Instead, these liturgies are about singing us into salvation history and seeing that Christ is present in our assemblies, whether in Baltimore or Boston, Detroit or Albany, or wherever you may be. It’s about Christ being present in our liturgies and lives today. There is a fine line present in this way of understanding worship that is challenging. When does dramatic worship become drama? When do ritual and ceremony become acting? When does a straightforward reading of Scripture lull us into boredom? When does a creative telling of a biblical story highlight the method more than the message? Does including a donkey in your Palm Sunday procession make it clear that this is about Jesus coming into your neighborhood today? These are tricky questions, and they probably won’t be answered in the same way from congregation to congregation.

In addition to spoken and sung words, the liturgies of the Three Days are packed full of action, of people doing things together. The theological emphases of these days are enacted, not simply spoken, sung, or thought about. Some actions are done by the ministers (lay and ordained), the choir, or others. But ideally, all the people present (to the extent that they are able) move, process, bow, kneel, wash, reverence, shiver, sweat, sing, splash, hug, kiss, taste, and listen. When done fully, there might be a sense of holy exhaustion. No one ever said being a Christian was going to be easy, although being a Christian in our culture has become pretty easy for most of us. Perhaps challenging your congregation to fully embrace the liturgy of these days and to experience some of that holy exhaustion could be a positive thing. It would be even better if it were extended beyond the liturgy. Experiencing God’s love in the liturgy and taking it into the world—that is what it’s all about.

At their best these liturgies make clear and even value the presence of tension in the Christian faith. Death and resurrection are both present throughout every liturgy. Certainly the
focus shifts from Thursday to Friday through Saturday night into Easter Day and throughout the church’s year, but Christ—crucified and risen—is present in all of it. We do not go to the cross on Friday pretending we don’t know about the resurrection. We do not shout “Alleluia” ignoring the realities of Jesus’ death. We do not chant the solemn Easter Proclamation as if it is still Passion Sunday, with its emphasis on the suffering and death of the human Jesus. Rather, we sing “This is the night” fully believing that “Jesus Christ is risen” while still reveling in the Good Friday message that the cross is the tree of life for the healing of the nations and anxiously awaiting the proclamation of the Easter gospel. On Good Friday, we preach and sing Easter. On Easter, we preach and sing Good Friday. We can sing “There in God’s garden stands the Tree of Wisdom, whose leaves hold forth the healing of the nations . . . . This is my ending, this my resurrection . . . . All heav’n is singing, ‘Thanks to Christ whose passion offers in mercy healing, strength, and pardon’” (ELW 342) on both Friday and Sunday. The death and resurrection of Jesus are always present in every Christian liturgy. The two cannot be separated.

Finally, the challenge of contextualization was addressed. While we were together in Baltimore, we engaged in plenary presentations focusing on these unique liturgies, workshops on various practical aspects of making them come to life in diverse congregations, along with exploring other musical topics, sharing meals and fellowship, networking, and browsing the exhibits. Most importantly, however, we actually worshipped, experiencing these rites together and then spending time in reflection following each service.

It was critical to remember that these were particular contemporary manifestations of the ancient liturgies, prepared for a specific context:

- in Baltimore;
- out of season;
- with a group of church musicians, primarily;
- in the splendor of Christ Church’s nave and in other places on their campus, including a spectacular fountain and labyrinth on their plaza; an older chapel; and a very modern, flexible worship space; and
- led by pastors and musicians who have a lot of experience with these rites.

None of this describes your context. Digging deeply into ancient traditions and fully understanding why, how, and for whom rites developed over the centuries, held in tension with the realities of your unique congregation—including its physical spaces, history, pieties, demographics, musical resources, and skill of available leaders—is an important task that needs to be done in order to fully embrace, experience, and love these liturgies, these treasures of the church.

However worship on the Three Days looks and sounds in your context, make sure it reveals one thing: God’s love is present. Here. Today. For all.

Scott Weidler is the program director for worship and music of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
Maundy Thursday
Confession and Forgiveness
(Worship, Region 1)

by Mark Oldenburg

Editor’s note: At the Region 1 Conference, the theme of which was “The Three Days—Singing Salvation History,” the Maundy Thursday liturgy began with Confession and Forgiveness using words composed by Mark Oldenburg. Conference participants found the liturgical language engaging and rich in biblical imagery and asked for permission to use the petitions in their home congregations. Here Oldenburg shares the Confession and Forgiveness used at the conference as well as Confession and Forgiveness for the other two years of the Revised Common Lectionary cycle. These liturgical texts are offered for use in your congregation. When reprinting, indicate “Confession and Forgiveness by Mark Oldenburg, The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (PA).”

IN ONE PERSPECTIVE, THE FINAL ACT OF LENT is seen as being the service of Confession and Forgiveness that begins the Maundy Thursday liturgy. It makes sense for this service to be fairly substantial, not only because it sums up much of the introspection and self-examination that is a discipline of Lent, but also so that our concern for our own unworthiness not stand in the way of the marvelous news we will be receiving in the great Three Days.

For the last few years, as a way of tying this service to Lent, the community of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (PA) has been using confessional prayers based on the gospel readings for the Lenten Sundays. Since the opening service at this summer’s ALCM Region 1 gathering used next year’s Passion Sunday readings, we began the Maundy Thursday liturgy with the confessional prayers written for Year B. All three years of confessional prayers are provided here.

Year A
We have been more interested in our bodily desires than in your word. We have been eager for worldly power and glory. We have used the dependability of your love to follow our own desires rather than your commands.

Have mercy on us, O God. (Lent 1—Matthew 4:1-11)
We have resisted your new birth and sought to escape your Spirit’s freedom, preferring the familiar and comfortable. (Lent 2—John 3:1-17)

Have mercy on us, O God.
We have allowed prejudice, shame, and old enmities to staunch the flood of your love. (Lent 3—John 4:5-42)

Have mercy on us, O God.
We have closed our eyes to your wonders. We have darkened the joy of others.

Have mercy on us, O God. (Lent 4—John 9:1-41)
We have despaired of the new life you offer. We have kept ourselves and others bound by our own expectations. (Lent 5—John 11:1-45)

Have mercy on us, O God.
We have praised you when it suits our purposes and cursed you when you call us to the cross. (Sunday of the Passion—Matthew 21:1-11; Matthew 27:11-54)

Have mercy on us, O God.
Year B
We have been more interested in our bodily desires than in your word. We have been eager for worldly power and glory. We have used the dependability of your love to follow our own desires rather than your commands.

Have mercy on us, O God. (Lent 1—Mark 1:9-15)
We have sought our own gain and denied your call to take up our cross to follow your Son. (Lent 2—Mark 8:31-38)

Have mercy on us, O God.
We have cluttered your promised presence in our midst with our own desires, prejudices, and barriers. (Lent 3—John 2:13-22)

Have mercy on us, O God.
We have resisted your new birth and sought to hide ourselves in the darkness rather than coming to your light. (Lent 4—John 3:14-21)

Have mercy on us, O God.
We have been reluctant to present others to you and have not lifted you up before others. (Lent 5—John 12:20-33)

Have mercy on us, O God.
We have denied you because of our lack of courage and avoided the suffering you take on because of our lack of trust.

Have mercy on us, O God. (Sunday of the Passion—Mark 14:1–15:47))

Year C
We have been more interested in our bodily desires than in your word. We have been eager for worldly power and glory. We have used the dependability of your love to follow our own desires rather than your commands.

Have mercy on us, O God. (Lent 1—Luke 4:1-13)
When you would gather all your children together as a hen gathers her brood, we have not been willing. (Lent 2—Luke 13:31-35)

Have mercy on us, O God.
We have not recognized our need to repent and bear good fruit.

Have mercy on us, O God. (Lent 3—Luke 13:1-9)
We have taken and squandered the inheritance you have left us. We have not rejoiced at the return of those whom you have embraced.

Have mercy on us, O God. (Lent 4—Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32)
We have greeted the exuberance of others’ love for you with sullenness and suspicion. (Lent 5—John 12:1-8)

Have mercy on us, O God.
We have praised you when it suits our purposes and abandoned you when you call us to the cross. (Sunday of the Passion—Luke 19:28-40; Luke22:14—23:56)

Have mercy on us, O God.

Mark Oldenburg is dean of the chapel and Steck-Miller Professor of the Art of Worship at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, PA.
Your Song, My Song, Our Song: Equipping God’s People to Confess the Faith in Worship and Life
(Plenary Summary, Region 2)

by Paul Soulek

Background
My musical formation began at an early age. My dad was a pastor and my mom was the dedicated pastor’s wife who said to her son, “Paul, you will not be a distraction! You will participate in the liturgy! You will sing!” And so I did. Looking back on my childhood in Round Lake, MN, I realize that we didn’t have any sort of leadership in church music and we struggled through the hymns. I began playing organ and piano by ear and playing for services in early elementary years.

At the college level, building on these musical skills seemed like the right thing to do. I enrolled at Concordia University, NE, and enjoyed a wonderful college experience—especially learning to read bass clef! I received two church music position offers to parishes in the spring of my senior year but declined both. I’m not sure why. God didn’t whisper some mystical instructions in my ear, but the calls just didn’t seem to fit. I moved home with my parents. In August of that year I received a call to be the music director at St. John Lutheran Church and School in Seward, NE. This time I answered the call.

St. John is a large congregation, with 2,600 baptized members on the books and an average weekly worship attendance of 1,100. St. John’s 135-year history as well as its proximity to Concordia University means there is a wide range of congregants on any given Sunday, whether they be white collar, blue collar, farmer, college student, high income, low income, or no income. St. John viewed itself with a great deal of pride—some of this pride healthy, some not. Its K–8 school won national awards, its teachers and staff led workshops throughout the country, and it possessed the financial and personnel resources to accomplish any task.

However, this utopian view was shattered when allegations of sexual abuse were brought against two long-serving teachers in the early 2000s. This part of St. John’s history is not a bright and shining one. God’s grace, strength, and forgiveness in Christ were still present, even though it may have seemed so distant at the time. After several staff changes over the subsequent years, St. John took a leap of faith in hiring me, a new college music graduate, despite there being no full-time pastors on staff.

I would love to tell you that I came into this situation with a perpetual smile, perfect patience, and understanding that would change the world. But that would be a lie. As I got to know the congregation and community, the depth and scope of hurt became all too apparent. Satan had certainly done his worst amongst these people in this place. A place with so much good and so many resources had been turned upside down. The focus for many was not on Christ and his gifts but on grinding axes, finding justice, and being right.
Sin and Grace in the Community

It is into situations like this that Christ is pleased to come. He comes only for sinners: that includes all of us. Christ’s mercy and grace confront the gravest of sins—those done and left undone; those thoughts, words, and deeds of which we are ashamed—and comes to those still praying “Cure Your children’s warring madness; bend our pride to Your control” (LSB 850; ELW 705; CW 523). We are those children who often miss the kingdom’s goal.

We can be made forgiving people only by formation in the biblical narrative and by immersion in Christ’s forgiveness. It will not come through our own striving, programming, or methodology. We rest secure in the knowledge that the church will never perish and in remembering Christ’s promise, “I am with you evermore.” The mercy and grace of Christ moves us to lives of repentance and grace, realizing that we are also among those who have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and are justified freely through His grace.

“generally we all nod our heads in agreement at this point. the ideas and theories presented—that of law and gospel, sin and grace—are shared among our Lutheran churches. the elephant in the room, however, seems to be the way that these beliefs and teachings find their place in our congregations in our actions toward one another and our worship.

My words to you today are in the nature of “thoughts to ponder.” How do our words and actions confess the biblical teaching of the church and its ministry? How do we do this together as a community even in the midst of conflict and discontent?

The title of this presentation is “Your Song, My Song, Our Song.” This is a phrase that we use at St. John to describe our movement into a unified worship life. Worship in the church is so much more than yours or mine: it’s God’s.

The rhythm of liturgical worship is first from God to us, then from us to our neighbor. The overarching motivation for St. John to unite together in worship was not to try and fix our myriad problems or try to create the perfect church. What we did will not necessarily work for other congregations. But, as a staff, we chose to emphasize the greater nature of our song—yes, our song.

“you mean we’re not going to use the hymnal for everything?” this is correct! The measure of theological and liturgical appropriateness is not the color of the hymnal binding, whether that happens to be cranberry ELW, burgundy LSB, or the rest of the rainbow. A phrase like “we’re going to give it a great try” or some other encouraging word goes very far. By focusing on content and singability rather than style we were able to enjoy singing old and new treasures together: resources from our hymnal, other composers, and community musicians found their place side-by-side.

“We’re using the hymnal? I thought we moved past that!” The hymnal is an awesome book, and it contains musical expressions that have been around a long time. The book supports our singing together, especially singing in parts. We want to teach all of our members, both young and old, how to use all the great resources in the book, not only here on Sunday morning, but also in the home during the week. The hymnal is a matter of gospel gift, not law. We’ll do our best to make sure everyone knows what’s going on, but we also believe in the gift of reading and the way that printed materials help us to see what’s happening with the music.

Relationship over Titles and Names

Often the words we use to describe our services are the first point of contention. Often when a “contemporary” service is started, the “traditional” service remains right where it was. The priority is often shifted to the new, hip, and happening. In the same regard, the “traditional” people often are very unwilling to share space and resources. The divide is troubling especially when it places labels on people and places expectations on their wants and needs. We need to be vigilant against petty attitudes and this type of territorialism.

At St. John we moved through this divide by reconfiguring the worship space and sparking lots of conversations. The labels “traditional” and “contemporary” can be fighting words, and I will admit that cutesy words are not my thing, whether that be “Classic Grace,” “Vintage Worship,” “CrossWired,” “LifeLine,” “Faith 2.0,” or whatever else. Personal relationships, not labels, will engage people of a particular
demographic. If you want to get the young people involved, then meet them, talk to them, be genuine, be who you are.

**Moving into Our Song**

The heart and soul of our music selections begins with dwelling in the word in personal and corporate study of the word of God. When we choose music, conduct rehearsals, or lead the congregation in song, we are wiring a live electrical outlet! “The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword” (Hebrews 4:12a; NRSV). Do we first read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest these sung words of our Lord? Or do we allow them to be one more blasé song in the middle of the world’s humdrum melody? We are sharing a bizarre, unchanging, and true story with a world in desperate need. Do we understand the message and the content before attempting to teach it to others?

Yes, I said *teach*. For the moment, put aside the notion that teachers are only those whose coursework included educational psychology and those who find their vocations inside classrooms. All of us engaged in music making within the Christian community are also teaching and confessing the church’s living history through song. Any good teacher can tell you that simply placing a book (or iPad) next to the eyes and ears of a student will *not* lead to absorption of the material. However, we often treat the music of the church in this way. We go on autopilot, doing what we need to do to get the job done. Does the congregation understand *what* we’re singing? Have they been taught the *why* of what we’re doing in worship? As congregational musicians, are we accessible—in our personalities and presence of time—to accept questions and even criticism from our members? Constant assessment, honest feedback, and mutual support and encouragement are essential to our lives as teaching musicians among God’s people.

I’ve often thought it would be helpful to introduce myself at conference gatherings by saying, “Hi, I’m Paul Soulek, and I have an opinion.” My personality overflows with sarcasm and cynicism, and as fun as it is to get the laughs, this can be a very, very dangerous thing if left unchecked. I’ve had to learn to corral my every thought, examine the bigger picture, and strive for the greater good.

Being open to dialogue and discussion with a wide range of people in your congregation and community is a *good* thing. Don’t be someone you are not. Have genuine relationships with those around you with whom and to whom you’re called to serve. *Know* your people. *Love* your people. Seek forgiveness when you’ve hurt them and share Christ’s forgiveness in your interactions with them. This is very hard to do and will not be executed perfectly this side of heaven. It will not create the utopian church culture that we all so desire. But it is what Christ gives us to do right now with real people. We need real grace: a bleeding, dying Savior, prophesied of old, made flesh, for us and for the world. Chief of sinners, though I be, Jesus shed his blood for me!

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**Paul Soulek** serves as cantor and director of parish and school music at St. John Lutheran Church in Seward, NE. He is a 2007 graduate of Concordia University, also in Seward, where he majored in parish music with a concentration in organ. Paul is finishing studies in the Master of Church Music program at Concordia University Chicago.
Imagine a world with nothing left to wonder about. No jaw-dropping sights to catch our breath. Everything seen by our eyes would be a given or a right we believe we deserve. All mysteries would be known. All problems would be solved. For the few elements of creation for which there was no reasonable empirical explanation, there would be no corresponding curiosity either. A world of know-it-alls, burdened with a boredom created by their own taken-for-granted attitudes, would reign supreme.

Thankfully, we are not yet living in such a wonderless world. Even the daily flood of new technologies, stealing and flattening out our awe for big and little things, has yet to undo every impulse for delight. Still, we are, in the words of Barbara Brown Taylor, “a little short on on reverence these days” (Journal for Preachers XIX, no. 3 [Easter 1996]: 31). We talk about God in overly chummy ways. We speak of Christian love as if it were sentimental ooze.

The late Robert Capon once spoke of this gradual loss of reverence as a fight between dullness and astonishment. “We have lost our astonishment,” he wrote. “The Good News is no longer good news, it is okay news” (The Astonished Heart [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996], 120).

If it is true that our capacity for wonder is what sets us apart most uniquely from other life forms, as I believe, what might we do to foster a greater sense of wonder? If no other species can ponder the complexity of the universe or the meaning of its own existence quite like we humans do, how do we teach our friends and neighbors to spend more energy appreciating and adoring life, instead of just evaluating and measuring it?

The answer to this query has roots that eventually must be situated in the soil of worship. And the “we” who have a teaching role to play refers to those of us who plan and lead worship on a regular basis.

John Henry Jowett, the noted British preacher of a century ago, described the battle with dullness in this way: “We leave our places of worship, and no deep and inexpressible wonder sits upon our faces. We can sing these lifting melodies, and when we go out into the streets our faces are one with the faces of those who have left the theaters . . . . There is nothing about us to suggest that we have been looking at anything stupendous and overwhelming” (Arthur Porritt, John Henry Jowett [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1924], 97).

As church musicians, pastors, and others engaged in the worship arts, we must decide what kind of people we want to be. The deep impulses of God that move and stir us internally deserve to be evident externally. If the impulses within us are so faint, it might be best if we up and quit our profession to start driving a cab, selling coffee, or sitting behind a desk. Fine people do these things, too. If, on the other hand, we see ourselves as stewards of the mysteries of God, or what I want to call “practitioners of wonder,” our own faces have a lot of say for the way other faces leave worship. So do our energies.

We may have to stand still every so often and relearn how to be astonished. We probably could afford to notice more things that the eyes of our hearts tend to dismiss. And we certainly would benefit from trying to regain the wakefulness of others who are unfamiliar with our tradition. But all these things—and more—are within reach. Our responsibility to reflect the glories of God through worship is too great to do otherwise.

Peter W. Marty is senior pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Davenport, IA.
“Called to Be a Living Voice: Vocation, Reformation, Mission”

ALCM Biennial Conference & ELCA Worship Jubilee

July 19–23, 2015, Atlanta, GA

**HOW IS GOD CALLING** the church today? And to what are Christians called? These fundamental questions will be taken up by those who come to Atlanta in 2015, gathering as worshipping people: those who make music, those who preside and preach, those active in worship ministries in their communities, those simply curious, and all who seek the ongoing renewal of worship for the sake of the gospel and for the life of the world.

For the first time, two major national events will come together in overlapping conferences. The Association of Lutheran Church Musicians will meet Sunday through Wednesday of this week. The third Worship Jubilee of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (the first two were held in 2000 and 2007) will meet Monday through Thursday. Participants may register for one or both events, which will feature leading voices, practical workshops, diverse worship expressions in several of Atlanta’s city churches, and rich conversation.

A common theme runs through the entire week. One of the key phrases that emerged from the Reformation, which is approaching a milestone 500th anniversary, is *viva vox evangeli*, “the living voice of the gospel.” Interpretation of the Bible, the kerygmatic nature of preaching, the proclamatory role of music and the arts—these are among the ways the mission of the gospel is expressed in and empowered by Christian worship. Heirs of the Reformation emphasize *vocation* as our calling by the *vox Dei*, “the voice of God,” to make this good news come alive, again and again. We become God’s voice, calling out to re-form a fractured and changing world.

The ALCM portion of the conference will include plenary sessions led by Dr. Eileen Guenther and Dr. Paul Westermeyer. Together they will explore the role of church musician as a vocation. Guenther is a professor of church music at Wesley Theological Seminary (Washington, DC) and has just concluded three terms as president of the American Guild of Organists. Her recent book *Rivals or a Team: Clergy–Musician Relationships in the Twenty-First Century* (St. Louis: MorningStar, 2012) explores the importance of teamwork, identifying ways in which musicians and clergy can exercise their separate roles effectively. Westermeyer is Emeritus Professor of Church Music at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN, where he also served as cantor and directed the Master of Sacred Music degree program in conjunction with St. Olaf College (Northfield, MN). He has been choirmaster and organist at churches in Illinois, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland and, in addition to teaching at Luther Seminary and St. Olaf College, has taught at Elmhurst College (Elmhurst, IL), Yale University (New Haven, CT), and Brite Divinity School (Fort Worth, TX). His publications relate to his lifelong interest in theological, musical, and liturgical intersections.

Plenary sessions during the combined portion of the conference will be presented by Professor Maggi Dawn and Rev. Guy Erwin. Professor Dawn has taught at Yale University since 2011. Prior to that she served as a chaplain and taught theology at the University of Cambridge (UK) for a number of years, after an earlier career in music. An ordained priest in the Church of England, Professor Dawn has written several books and articles and is a composer of many contemporary songs and hymns. Rev. Erwin is bishop of the Southwest California Synod of the ELCA. He earned a doctorate and two master’s degrees at Yale University and a bachelor’s degree at Harvard University (Cambridge, MA).
He engaged in seminary studies at Yale Divinity School and the universities of Tübingen and Leipzig in Germany. Most recently he was the Gerhard and Olga Belgum Professor of Lutheran Confessional Theology at California Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks, and also served as part-time interim pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in Canoga Park, CA. He has served as the ELCA representative to the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches since 2004.

Wednesday afternoon will also include a plenary session for ALCM attendees led by Rev. William Weedon, who will discuss the ongoing worship renewal efforts taking place in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Rev. Weedon serves two roles at the LCMS International Center (IC), one as the synod’s director of worship and the other as the IC chaplain. As director of worship Weedon is responsible for proposing and creating programs that carry out the purposes and aims of the synod in matters of worship. As chaplain he works with the office of the president in planning and supervising all chapel services at the IC as well as offering informal chaplaincy and counseling services to employees as requested. Weedon has more than 25 years of ministry experience. Most recently he served as pastor at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Hamel, IL, a position to which he was called in 1992. From 1986 to 1992 he served as pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Burlington, NC.

The ELCA Worship Jubilee portion of the conference will have plenary sessions led by the presiding bishop of the ELCA, Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, who will discuss ongoing renewal of worship in the ELCA. Bishop Eaton earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in music education from the College of Wooster in Wooster, OH, and a Master of Divinity degree from Harvard Divinity School. She served in various roles in a number of Ohio parishes: assistant pastor of All Saints Lutheran Church in Worthington; interim pastor of Good Hope Lutheran Church in Boardman; and pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church in Ashtabula. She was elected bishop of the ELCA Northeastern Ohio Synod in 2006 and re-elected in May 2013 before being elected as the ELCA’s fourth presiding bishop at the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

In addition to the above sessions presented to the full assembly, attendees will have the opportunity to select from a wide variety of smaller “forum” sessions led by many of the most prominent voices active in worship renewal today. The presenters will be Dr. James Abbington, Mr. Tony Alonso, Fr. Jan Michael Joncas, Rev. Dr. Kathryn A. Kleinhans, Rev. Leila Ortiz, Rev. Emily Scott, Rev. Harvard Stephens, Jr., and Dr. Timothy Wengert. Their biographies can be found on the conference website: www.LivingVoice2015.org.

This being a church music and worship conference, there will of course be ample opportunity for worship in a variety of styles in several locations throughout Atlanta. Numerous practical workshops and small group discussions will round out the schedule.

The conference will be headquartered in the Marriott Marquis hotel in downtown Atlanta. In addition to having indoor access to the MARTA train from Hartfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, the hotel is conveniently located for visiting many of Atlanta’s most popular destinations, including the Georgia Aquarium, World of Coca-Cola, CNN Center, the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, and the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site.

Worship and music practitioners are invited to gather in Atlanta in 2015, to listen to one another, to join our voices in worship and song, and to be renewed in our calling to be God’s living voice today.

David Ritter
Chair of the ALCM Conference Planning Team
Director of Music, Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Chicago, IL

Martin Seltz
Publisher for Worship and Music,
Augsburg Fortress
Minneapolis, MN
AS THEIR LIFE SPANS LENGTHEN, adults remain active in choral singing, even in older age. Many church choirs have a large percentage of singers over the age of 60. Working with people who have aging voices is easier when one understands the physiological changes that naturally occur for men and women and when one creates a helpful rehearsal and performance environment.

Not all singers as they age will exhibit vocal dysfunction. Those who are in good physical health, in excellent aerobic conditioning, and who have used excellent vocal technique throughout their lifetime can sing without compromise well into older age. However, there are natural changes that do happen to the body over time that challenge good vocal health.

Over time, as people age, these anatomical changes often occur: lung tissue loses elasticity, vocal folds thicken, ligaments of the vocal box atrophy, and bodies create less saliva. In women the average fundamental frequency of the voice lowers over time while simultaneously women lose the ability to phonate in the chest register. The most dramatic changes in women’s voices usually occur around menopause. Women are also more susceptible to developing a vocal tremor or jitter, which is more than vibrato, often compounded by a lack of breath support to the voice. As women age their voices usually tend to become more husky sounding. Men’s voices lower over time through age 50, but then rise increasingly as they reach age 60 and older. Men’s voices tend to get breathier as they age, and often men experience glottal gaps, especially after age 70.

Faced with these physiological realities, choral directors who work with aging voices should encourage good vocal health for everyone in the choir, especially the older adults. All singers should be invited to drink plenty of clear liquids each day, avoiding coffee and other diuretics that rob the body of fluids. Older singers should be encouraged to sing a little every day, thinking of the voice as muscles and ligaments which, when unused, begin to atrophy or dysfunction. Rehearsals with older singers should be shorter with more breaks (a water break!) and, if possible, the rehearsals should be more frequently offered. For instance, you might get more from a choir of aging voices with a 90-minute rehearsal on a weeknight and a 60-minute rehearsal and warm-up before worship, rather than a 120-minute weeknight rehearsal and a quick warm-up before worship.

Each rehearsal should start with a planned vocalization, beginning with sustained inhalations of air and steady exhalations of air. The sense of suspension, or the feeling of being “on the breath,” can be practiced by inhaling over four beats, “holding the breath” (without clamping or tightening) over four beats, then exhaling over four beats. Then add...
a pitch to the period of “holding the breath,” singing the numbers “one, two, three, four” in sustained unison. After good breathing has been established, “hook up” the breath to sound with voiced consonants (mm’s, nn’s, zzz’s, etc.) or lip trills (the lips making a pitched motorboat sound). Singers who cannot do a lip trill are often not singing on their breath. After hooking up the breath to sound, always begin singing in the mid-range in a legato style, first checking that vowels are tall and forward, and then seeing that each singer matches the vowel sound in the ensemble. Once vowels are in line, add exercises that promote flexibility, such as arpeggios. Melismatic phrases could first be sung with a “D” or “T” before each note, then take away the consonant on small groups of notes, then finally remove the consonants altogether. Scan the repertoire for musical phrases that could be used in the vocalization to make creative use of time, rehearsing challenging intervals, odd harmonic shifts, or phrases with difficult diction.

Choose repertoire for choirs with aging voices carefully. Challenging repertoire in 2-part mixed voicing (sopranos and altos duetting with tenors and basses), with thought-provoking texts, interesting rhythms, and limited use of melisma or a wide vocal range may work best. Choose music that does not ask the women to sing too high or the men to sing too low. Be careful not to recycle music too often as aging singers will experience frustration that they cannot sing the work as they once did. Instead, teach a new song that is within their capabilities.

At first thought, working with choirs with singers of older ages might seem a daunting task. But with careful planning, constant encouragement, clever programming, and a willing spirit, singing with people of all ages can be joyous and profoundly life-giving.

Mark Mummert is director of worship at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Houston, TX.

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AS CHURCH MUSICIANS we fall short when we teach only anthems to our children. There is a growing need for deliberate and intentional spiritual and worship instruction. I no longer assume that the children entering into my choir are familiar with the Lutheran liturgy and standard hymns, even Christmas carols. I believe that there are three main reasons:

Church choir is no longer supplemental to elementary music education; in many cases, it is a child’s only music education.

Families attend worship less often than even ten years ago. Children attend Sunday school while parents attend church, or families worship together but weekly attendance is not the norm.

Families have choices of worship times and styles, and many are attending “alternative” services, which do not share a common repertoire of hymns, songs, and liturgy.

My main goal in a music ministry with children is to enable children to become lifelong, full participants in worship. I know they are not all going to be music majors or even adult choir members, but they all should be taught how to participate in worship.

We need to create participants, not audience members or consumers. How do we accomplish this? Here are five practical suggestions.

1. Constantly teach the parents, children, and congregation that when the children’s choir sings in worship they are worship leaders, not entertainers.

Explain to the children and parents at least once a year, perhaps in a face-to-face meeting or an e-mail, that the children’s role is leading the song of the assembly, including hymns and sung or spoken responses.

Have the choir wear robes. Explain that we all look alike by wearing special “servant uniforms” to draw attention away from ourselves and toward God.

Have them sit together as a group for the entire service. Parading them in to sing and then out again sends the message that their offering is a special interruption and not really an integral part of worship.

Let them sing other parts of the service in addition to an anthem. They can serve as cantor for the Kyrie or a psalm or sing a descant on a hymn.

2. Teach liturgy and hymns at every single rehearsal.

Physically use the hymnal. Make it into a game. Practice looking up page numbers, psalms, and hymns. Teach them in age-appropriate ways how to use the indexes. Explain all the
information on each hymn page. Talk about the author of the text and the composer of the tune and when they lived. Teach them about tune names and hymn meters.

Use hymns to teach music reading and vocal techniques. A hymn refrain can be a great vocal warm-up. Ask questions about a hymn: Are there two lines of music that are the same? Does the melody go up or down on the third line? Is that a half note or a whole note on the word “grace”? When singing the hymn, strive for beautiful tone, accurate rhythm, and good diction.

As much as you practice reading fluency, memorize some things, too. The result is that, even when minds wander during worship, they will come back when they hear, “The Lord be with you,” and the children can easily respond, “And also with you.” If you have taught them Lamb of God, they will sing it from memory when they hear it.

3. Challenge your singers! There is nothing in the hymnal that they cannot learn.

We teach them how to say the Lord’s Prayer and the Apostle’s Creed before they understand what it all means. Teach a hymn, along with age-appropriate concepts. Yes, poetic texts can be difficult, and there will be many new vocabulary words. Talk about what the text means.

4. Be choosy with anthem texts.

The typical children’s church choir will sing only a few anthems each year. Select only the best. What better texts are there to teach our children than words of Scripture? Take time to select quality anthems. These are words that will be memorized; make them count!

Many children’s musicals are based on entire Bible stories. Choose one and your singers will know the story thoroughly.

I have started incorporating songs like The Wise Man and the Foolish Man and Who Built the Ark into my rehearsals. Even though we will not sing them in a lectionary-based liturgical service, these songs have value in learning the biblical stories which may not be taught elsewhere.

5. Include a devotion and prayer in every rehearsal.

I also find a sung benediction each choir year to close every rehearsal. It’s important for children to sing words that they will hear again in worship.

Everything worth learning takes work and time. Approach it intentionally and these young people will gain skills and develop their faith in ways that will stay with them for a lifetime.

Sarah Hawbecker is organist and director of children’s music at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Atlanta, GA.
Singing Salvation History: A Reflection on Bach’s Passion Chorales

by Chad Fothergill

Editor’s note: Although not presented at the Region 1 conference, the article that follows is an outgrowth of that conference’s focus.

FOR THE PASTORS AND MUSICIANS who gathered in July this summer at the Region 1 conference in Baltimore, the worship, workshops, and conversation around a midsummer version of the triduum were guided by an emphasis on “central things.” Rather than dispense prescriptive bullet points, presenters thoughtfully unpacked layers of history, tradition, and practice in order to elevate the important questions leaders must ask about the Three Days at the center of the Christian year: what is central? what is contextual?

Discussion about Good Friday, in particular, pointed to the diversity of liturgical and musical practices that have come to be associated with the Passion, death, and burial of Christ. The spectrum ranges from a simple reading of the gospel with little or no music to chanted or dramatized Passion histories to Tenebrae services to the Passion oratorios of J. S. Bach—the John Passion (BWV 245), the Matthew Passion (BWV 244), or the recently reconstructed Mark Passion (BWV 247).

Today we are more likely to hear Bach’s Passions in the concert hall (e.g., there are three performances of the Matthew Passion scheduled in Philadelphia in 2015) or in private listening. Their less-frequent inclusion in the liturgy is not entirely surprising given the technical, logistical, and monetary resources needed for even a few choruses or arias, especially if assets and precious rehearsal time have already been leveraged toward festival Easter music. And in other contexts the inclusion of concerted music may carry unwelcome connotations of performance instead of worship.

The focus in this article, of momentarily bringing these chorales into relief, is not to prescribe their use but to think broadly about the perspectives they offer about the “central things” of salvation history on Good Friday, across the triduum, and throughout the liturgical year.

However, too swift a dismissal of Bach’s Passions may risk our glancing over their treasury of chorales and the theological, textual, and musical dimensions they enfold. The focus in this article, of momentarily bringing these
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chorales into relief, is not to prescribe their use but to think broadly about the perspectives they offer about the "central things" of salvation history on Good Friday, across the triduum, and throughout the liturgical year.¹

**Context: The Shape of Good Friday in Leipzig**

When Bach (1685–1750) assumed the post of Kantor at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig in May 1723, he stepped into a vibrant liturgical community. The faithful who gathered in the city’s principal churches—as many as one-third of the 30,000 inhabitants on a given Sunday—were, according to Günther Stiller, “fully aware of their faithful nurture of the Reformation heritage and all the liturgical details.”² The deep Reformation-era roots were visible in the city’s two Good Friday liturgies, a morning service and an afternoon vespers that still used 16th-century resources by Luther’s colleagues and students. The morning service included the singing of John’s Passion gospel by Johann Walter (1496–1570) as printed in the 1682 *Neu Leipziger Gesangbuch,*³ a publication edited by the Kantor of Leipzig’s Nikolaikirche, Gottfried Vopelius (1645–1715).⁴ At the conclusion of this service the congregation usually sang “O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig,” a versification of the Agnus Dei by Luther’s student Nikolaus Decius (ca. 1485–after 1546).⁵

Not long before Bach’s arrival, the Good Friday afternoon service of vespers had become a sort of musical centerpiece after the *tempus clausum* of Lent, a “closed time” wherein figural or concerted music was curtailed. In 1717 Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767) presented the first instance of concerted Passion music at the city’s Neukirche. By 1721, a growing disparity in Good Friday attendance between the Neukirche and the Thomaskirche (attributed to this Good Friday afternoon musical presentation) had prompted Bach’s predecessor, Johann Kuhnau (1660–1722), and the Leipzig consistory to offer the first concerted Passion at the Thomaskirche.⁶ The resulting work, Kuhnau’s Mark Passion of 1721 (now lost), was divided in two parts around the sermon in the general pattern for Good Friday vespers (see Table 1).

From this general outline and slight variations mentioned in extant sources, it appears that the congregation’s Good Friday singing mainly served as either amplification or duplication of the Passion narrative with a strong funerary emphasis. The 23 stanzas of “O Mensch, bewein” published by Sebald Heyden (1499–1561) in 1525 form a rhymed composite of the Passion history according to all four evangelists, and Rist’s “O Traurigkeit” had appeared in 1641 with the description, “a sorrowful funeral hymn on the mournful entombment of our Savior Jesus Christ, to be sung on Good Friday.”¹¹ That the Leipzig faithful seemed to wallow in the macabre—as imagined bystanders to

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Table 1. General outline of Good Friday vespers in Leipzig at the time of Bach’s appointment in 1723.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HYMN</td>
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<tr>
<td>PASSION MUSIC, PART I</td>
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<tr>
<td>SERMON</td>
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<td>PASSION MUSIC, PART II</td>
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<td>MOTET</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRAYER, BENEDICTION</td>
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<td>HYMN</td>
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Jesus’ trial, inquisition, torture, execution, and burial—may relate to the simple fact that public executions were not far removed from the residents’ collective memory. In his 2007 Bach biography Peter Williams perceived that the Passion history, both before and during Bach’s tenure, “was being told for a Lutheran congregation by a group of performers who had all witnessed public executions.” Moreover, revised city statutes from 1721 directed “that a procession of heavily armed soldiers was to accompany the ‘poor sinner’ to the place of execution outside the gates . . . and at certain moments in the formal procedures the choristers sang Sterbelieder (hymns for the dying), as they had done for many years.”

The tendency to fixate on physical flesh—Jesus’ lacerated and bleeding body in Jerusalem and, simultaneously, the nature of the Old Adam presently seated in a Leipzig church—was also a common element of early 18th-century Passions set to music. Scholars tracing the antecedents of Bach’s Passions have come to the consensus that these earlier works were mostly morbid and mawkish. Describing some of the extant libretti, John Eliot Gardiner has remarked that they are “physically explicit, garish, and saccharine by turns” with “drastically realistic descriptions of Christ’s torture,” their efforts coordinated to arouse and “enlist the deepest sympathies of the listener.”

**Content: Bach’s Passion Chorales**

One must wonder, then, what the people of Leipzig expected as they gathered for Good Friday vespers on 7 April 1724 at the Nikolaikirche, the pre-announced venue for that year’s Passion music according to John’s gospel. From the moment of Bach’s arrival the previous May, the new Kantor at the Thomaskirche had presented a steady flood of new and emended cantatas, many of their movements incorporating familiar chorale texts and melodies. Even the cantata composed for Bach’s Thomaskirche premiere (“Die Elenden sollen essen” [“The wretched shall eat”], BWV 75) was threaded with stanzas of the chorale “Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan” (“What God Ordains Is Good Indeed”), an integration that Alfred Dürr called “a direct product of the exegesis of the Sunday Gospel.” Throughout Bach’s first Leipzig cantata cycle, chorale-based movements were an assumed component, either as stand-alone harmonizations or nested in textures framed by instrumental ritornelli like the lilting triplets of “Jesu, Joy” (last movt. of BWV 147).

For the Leipzig congregations, chorales in Bach’s vocal music served as familiar landmarks that brought the meaning of the choruses, recitatives, and arias into focus. Perhaps they even served to quell the commotion resulting from late arrivals and chatter through an inviting moment of personal familiarity inside the large Thomaskirche or Nikolaikirche, each church seating approximately 2,500. Considering the vocal ranges, melodic variants, seating arrangements, and coordination required for congregational singing in these large spaces, the common view held by present-day scholars is that the Leipzig congregations did not join in singing the cantatas or Passion chorales themselves but entered into meditation or reflection as they were sung by the choir. With respect to the chorales in Bach’s Passions, Jaroslav Pelikan has opined that Bach “was able to weave the chorales into [them] as themes and variations, with the expectation that they would be recognized easily and that their pertinence to the Gospel story would be grasped instantly.” Such conclusions are given amplification by Gardiner:

[The Passion chorales] stand out as islands of musical sanity . . . pulling the action into the here and now, confirming, responding to, or repudiating what has just happened in the narrative, and obliging one to consider its significance . . . . [They provided] a cultural framework and moments for the contemporary listener to make instantaneous connections between the unfurling of biblical events and the reassuring recognition of familiar verses and melodies which were accepted as the direct forms of address between the believer and [her] God.

To its first listeners, the opening moments of the John Passion must have immediately signaled the familiar pathos of the Good Friday vespers in Leipzig: turbulent upper strings billow over jabbing and insistent eighth-
notes in the bass, all beneath an anguished counterpoint between two wind parts locked in biting minor seconds and wincing tritones. But as that sequential motion gives way to the cadential passage (mm. 16–18), the chromatic descent of the bass and second wind part traverse a sudden, glimmering jolt of G major that, with the three choral exclamations—“Herr!”—adapted from Psalm 8, majestically affirm God as “Lord, our governor.”

Thus, at one minute into a two-hour musical journey—maybe a three-hour journey, counting the sermon between Parts I and II—Bach had already signaled a shift in emphasis away from the previous Good Friday pattern. Instead, the music of the John Passion—like the gospel itself—would be held together by strong dualities and contrasts of character. Unlike the Synoptic Gospels, John layers the divine majesty of Christ and triumph of the cross over the various scenes: though Jesus is mocked and abused he affirms his kingship before Pilate, he offers care for his mother and followers, and he models a serene confidence in becoming obedient to God’s will.20 And just like the cantatas of the previous months, many of these theological underpinnings would be reinforced in the chorale texts: stanzas selected for their exegetical value, questions, thanksgivings, and focus on central things.

Even with the first chorale (movt. 3), Bach pauses not to reiterate the action, but to reflect on its significance for the listener. With the text “O große Lieb,” the third stanza of Heermann’s “Herzliebster Jesu,” the congregation is invited to recall that God’s love for them has brought Jesus along this path of martyrdom. (See Table 2 for a list of chorales used in the John and the Matthew Passions and their appearance in present-day Lutheran hymnals.) This is the same Wunderlieb—“wondrous love”—exclaimed in the third stanza of Paul Gerhardt’s “Ein Lämmlein geht” (“A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth”). One translation of this stanza places Christ’s Passion within the broader timeline of the Christian liturgical year, looking both backward toward the Nativity and forward toward Easter, seeing all of salvation history:

\[
\text{. . . Oh, wondrous love! Oh, loving might!}
\text{To right what mortals cannot right}
\]

the Son was sent from heaven.

What love, O Love, who came to save by loving even to the grave until the stone was riven.

(ELW 340, st. 3)

The second chorale of the John Passion (movt. 5), extracted from Luther’s “Vater unser im Himmelreich,” moves the perspective from God’s love to God’s will and Jesus’ obedience in bearing the cup given. Closer to the end of Part I, the emphases of the chorale movements shift toward the individual: in “Wer hat dich so geschlagen” (movt. 11) the sinner’s culpability in Christ’s suffering is presented as a parallel to the suffering servant of Isaiah 53. In the final chorale of Part I (movt. 14) the listener’s perspective is filtered through that of Peter’s shameful denial. Brought lower still by Peter’s weeping and remorse at having abandoned Christ, the final phrase of Part I, “rühre mein Gewissen”—“stir my conscience”—is a not only a plea to turn away from sin and denial, but an exhortation to prepare for the sermon.

As in Part I, Bach’s choice and placement of chorale stanzas throughout Part II calls listeners toward self-reflection rather than passive observance, consistently applying the death of Christ to the life of the believer just as Luther had frequently done in his own writings.21 After the sermon, the chorale “Ach großer König, groß zu allen Zeiten” (movt. 17), while again pointing to the kingship of Jesus, asks hearers about their own responses and actions:

\[
\text{. . . How shall I spread abroad thy wondrous story?}
\text{How shall I find some worthy gifts to proffer?}
\text{What dare I offer?}
\]

(LSB 439, st. 8)

Throughout Part II Bach also stretches the temporal focus beyond just Good Friday. Not only are listeners placed at the scene and asked to reflect on its contemporary significance, but Bach also opens exegetical windows to other parts of the liturgical year, indeed to the whole Christian life. The text “In meines Herzens Grunde” (movt. 26), a Sterbelied stanza written by Valerius Herberger (1562–1627) after an outbreak of plague, asks that Christ’s “name and cross shine at all seasons and hours.”22 The tune used at this moment, Valet will ich dir geben (a melody not associated with “All Glory,
Table 2. Concordance of stanzas set by Bach throughout the John and the Matthew Passions. Hymnals are abbreviated as: TLH (The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941); SBH (Service Book and Hymnal, 1958); LBW (Lutheran Book of Worship, 1978); CW (Christian Worship, 1993); LSB (Lutheran Service Book, 2006); and ELW (Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 2006).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movt.</th>
<th>John Passion, BWV 245</th>
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<th>Matthew Passion, BWV 244</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incipit and Source (Author)</td>
<td>Tune Equivalent (Composer)</td>
<td>Hymnal and Hymn Number: Direct Stanza Correlation [Hymnal Category]; Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>“O große Lieb, o Lieb ohr alle Maße” from “Herzliebster Jesu, was hast du verbrochen,” st. 7 (Johann Heermann, 1585–1647)</td>
<td>Herzliebster Jesu (Johann Crüger, 1598–1662)</td>
<td>TLH 143:7 [Lent]; SBH 85 [Good Friday]; LBW 123 [Holy Week]; CW 117 [Lent]; LSB 439:7 [Lent]; ELW 349 [Holy Week, Three Days]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>“Wer hat dich so geschlagen” from “O Welt, sieh hier dein Leben,” st. 3, 4 (Paul Gerhardt, 1607–1676)</td>
<td>o Welt, ich muss dich lassen (attr. Heinrich Isaac, ca. 1445–1517)</td>
<td>TLH 171:3, 4 [Good Friday]; CW 113 [Lent]; these stanzas omitted LSB 453:3, 4 [Holy Week]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>“Petrus, der nicht denkt zurück” from “Jesu Leiden, Pein und Tod,” st. 10 (Paul Stockmann, 1603–1636)</td>
<td>Jesu Kreuz, Leiden und Pein (Melchior Vulpius, ca. 1570–1615)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>“Christus, der uns selig macht,” st. 1 (Michael Weisse, ca. 1488–1534)</td>
<td>CHRISTUS, DER UNS SELIG MACHT GOTTES SOHN (from Latin plainchant, as adapted in a period hymnal of the Bohemian Brethren)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>“Ach großer König, groß zu allen Zeiten” from “Herzliebster Jesu, was hast du verbrochen,” st. 8, 9 (Heermann)</td>
<td>Herzliebster Jesu</td>
<td>TLH 143:8, 9 [Lent]; SBH 85 [Good Friday]; LBW 123 [Holy Week]; CW 117 [Lent]; LSB 439:8, 9 [Lent]; ELW 349:5 [Holy Week, Three Days]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>“Durch dein Gefängnis, Gottes Sohn,” non-chorale poetry by C. H. Postel, 1700, set to the melody Mach’s mit mir, Gott of Ebenach (Bartholomäus Gesius, ca. 1555–1613)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>“Im meines Herzens Grunde” from “Valet will ich dir geben,” st. 3 (Valerius Herberger, 1562–1627)</td>
<td>VALET WILCH DIR GEBEN (Melchior Teschner, 1584–1635)</td>
<td>TLH 407:3 [New Obedience]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>“Er nahm alles wohl in acht” from “Jesu Leiden, Pein und Tod,” st. 20 (Stockmann)</td>
<td>Jesu Kreuz, Leiden und Pein</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>&quot;O hilf, Christe, Gottes Sohn&quot; from “Christus, der uns selig macht,” st. 8 (Weisse)</td>
<td>CHRISTUS, DER UNS SELIG MACHT GOTTES SOHN</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>“Ach Herr, lass dein lieb Engelein” from “Herzlich lieb hab ich dich, o Herr,” st. 3 (Martin M. Schalling, 1532–1608)</td>
<td>Herzlich lieb hab ich dich, O Herr (Bernhard Schmid, Tabulatur, 1577)</td>
<td>TLH 429:3 [Trust]; LBW 325:3 [Christian Hope]; CW 434:3 [Trust]; LSB 708:3 [Trust]; ELW 750:3 [Prayer]</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>“Ach Herr, lass dein lieb Engelein” from “Herzlich lieb hab ich dich, o Herr,” st. 3 (Martin M. Schalling, 1532–1608)</td>
<td>Herzlich lieb hab ich dich, O Herr (Bernhard Schmid, Tabulatur, 1577)</td>
<td>TLH 146:1 [Lent]; SBH 70:1 [Lent]; LBW 111:1 [Holy Week]; CW 268:1 [Hymns of the Liturgy]; LSB 434:1 [Lent]; ELW 357:1 [Holy Week, Three Days]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Chorale superimposed above figural music</td>
<td>O Lamm Gottes unschuldig, st. 1 (Nikolaus Decius, ca. 1485–ca. 1550)</td>
<td>O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig (Decius)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TLH 146:1 [Lent]; SBH 70:1 [Lent]; LBW 111:1 [Holy Week]; CW 268:1 [Hymns of the Liturgy]; LSB 434:1 [Lent]; ELW 357:1 [Holy Week, Three Days]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3  | "Herzliebster Jesu, was hast du verbrochen," st. 1 (Heermann)  
**Herzliebster Jesu** | TLH 143:1 [Lent]  
SBH 85:1 [Good Friday]  
LBW 123:1 [Holy Week]  
CW 117:1 [Lent]  
LSB 439:1 [Lent]  
ELW 349 [Holy Week, Three Days] |
| 10 | "Ich bins, ich sollte büßen" from "O Welt, sieh hier dein Leben," st. 5 (Gerhardt)  
**O Welt, ich muss dich lassen** | TLH 171:5 [Good Friday]  
CW 113:3 [Lent]  
LSB 453 [Holy Week] |
| 15 | "Erkenne mich, mein Hüter" from "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden," st. 5 (Paul Gerhardt, 1607–1676)  
**Herzlich tut mich verlangen or Passion Chorale** (Hans Leo Hassler, 1564–1612) | TLH 172:5 [Good Friday]  
SBH 88 [Good Friday]  
LBW 116, 117 [Holy Week]  
CW 105 [Lent]; this stanza omitted  
LSB 450:4 [Holy Week]  
ELW 351 [Holy Week, Three Days] |
| 17 | "Ich will hier bei dir stehen" from "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden," st. 6 (Gerhardt)  
**Herzlich tut mich verlangen or Passion Chorale** | TLH 172:6 [Good Friday]  
SBH 88 [Good Friday]  
LBW 116, 117 [Holy Week]  
CW 105 [Lent]; this stanza omitted  
LSB 450 [Holy Week]  
ELW 351 [Holy Week, Three Days] |
| 19 | [T Aria] "Was ist die Ursach aller solcher Plagen" from "Herzliebster Jesu, was hast du verbrochen," st. 3 (Heermann)  
**Herzliebster Jesu** | TLH 143:3 [Lent]  
SBH 85:2 [Good Friday]  
LBW 123:2 [Holy Week]  
CW 117:3 [Lent]  
LSB 439:3 [Lent]  
ELW 349 [Holy Week, Three Days] |
| 25 | "Was mein Gott will, das gescheh allzeit," st. 1 (Albert of Prussia, 1490–1568)  
**Was mein Gott will** (Claudin de Sermisy, ca. 1495–1550) | TLH 517:1 [Cross and Comfort]  
CW 435:1 [Trust]  
LSB 758:1 [Hope and Comfort] |
| 29 | End of Part I  
"O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde groß," st. 1 (Sebald Heyden, 1499–1561)  
**O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde gross** (Matthias Greitter, ca. 1495–1550) | n/a |
| 32 | Part II, after the sermon  
"Mir hat die Welt trüglich gericht" from "In dich hab ich gehoffet, Herr," st. 5 (Adam Reusner, ca. 1496–1575)  
**In dich hab ich gehoffet, Herr** (Davids Himlische Harpffen, 1581) | TLH 524:5 [Cross and Comfort]  
CW 448 [Trust]; this stanza omitted  
LSB 734 [Trust]; this stanza omitted |
| 37 | "Wer hat dich so geschlagen" from "O Welt, sieh hier dein Leben," st. 3 (Gerhardt)  
**O Welt, ich muss dich lassen** | TLH 171:3 [Good Friday]  
CW 113 [Lent]; this stanza omitted  
LSB 453:3 [Holy Week] |
| 40 | "Bin ich gleich von dir gewichen" from "Werde munter, mein Gemüte," st. 5 (Johann Rist, 1607–1667)  
**Werde munter, mein Gemüte, or Jesus bleibet meine Freude** (Johann Schop, ca. 1590–ca. 1665) | n/a |
| 44 | "Befiel du deine Wege," st. 1 (Gerhardt)  
**Herzlich tut mich verlangen or Passion Chorale** | TLH 143:4 [Lent]  
SBH 85:3 [Good Friday]  
LBW 123:3 [Holy Week]  
CW 117:4 [Lent]  
LSB 439:4 [Lent]  
ELW 349:3 [Holy Week, Three Days] |
| 46 | "Wie wunderbarlich ist doch diese strafe" from "Herzliebster Jesu, was hast du verbrochen," st. 4 (Heermann)  
**Herzliebster Jesu** | TLH 172:1, 2 [Good Friday]  
SBH 88 [Good Friday]  
LBW 116, 117:1 [Holy Week]  
CW 105:1 [Lent]  
LSB 450:1 [Holy Week]  
ELW 351:1, 2 [Holy Week, Three Days] |
| 54 | "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden," st. 1, 2 (Gerhardt)  
**Herzlich tut mich verlangen or Passion Chorale** | TLH 172:9 [Good Friday]  
SBH 88 [Good Friday]  
LBW 116, 117 [Holy Week]  
CW 105:6 [Lent]  
LSB 450:6 [Holy Week]  
ELW 351:4 [Holy Week, Three Days] |
Laud, and Honor” until the mid-19th century), was also often paired in Bach’s time with the Advent chorale “Wie soll ich dich empfangen” (“O Lord, How Shall I Meet You”) and may have functioned as a fitting seasonal allusion on the part of Bach. In comments about the John Passion architecture, Gardiner touches upon the strands of time and chronology that interact throughout the work and its chorales:

Thus time is always moving on two planes, the present implying (as well as reacting to) the past and the past conditioning the present. Once more it is the judicious choice and placement of chorales that provide the essential scaffolding and punctuation of the narrative and that simultaneously articulate the underlying theological themes.

Even in his Easter cantata, “Christ lag in Todesbanden” (BWV 4), Bach pointed back in time to Genesis and to Good Friday, electing to set Luther’s stanzas about the firm grasp of death and sin (movt. 2) and to Christ “hoch an des Kreuzes Stamm” (“high on the trunk of the cross”; movt. 5) giving salvation to all.

A final theological theme to mention is that the John Passion chorales also provide instruction for *ars moriendi*, “the art of dying.” Several stanzas are lifted from familiar *Sterbelieder* which, as previously mentioned, carried associations with natural death and public execution. The final chorale from Schalling’s still-beloved *Sterbelied* (movt. 40) leaves the Passion narrative completely, points to the end of earthly life, and lifts up the resurrection promise assured through Christ’s victory over death and the devil: “that he, who by a tree once overcame, might by a tree be overcome.” This is the same emphasis in the Matthew Passion: after Christ’s bodily death, the choir responds immediately with a stanza of Gerhardt’s “O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden”:

> Lord, be my consolation; shield me when I must die; remind me of thy passion when my last hour draws nigh.

> These eyes, new faith receiving, from thee shall never move; for all who die believing die safely in thy love. (ELW 351, st. 4)

**Central Things**

Once more, this is *not* to say that the Passion chorales used by Bach are the only options or best choices for Good Friday: for starters, the assembly should participate in the singing! Issues of range, translation, rhythm, harmonic complexity, and general familiarity also introduce a host of additional challenges and considerations that may or may not be appropriate in a given context. Through the work of the Spirit, the church has been blessed with beautiful texts and music from gifted poets and composers that allow images, themes, and meanings to interact: the songs of salvation history were not written exclusively between 1517 and 1750.

What Bach’s Passion chorales collectively offer, then, are models of liturgical planning that keep the “central things” central: the biblical narrative is present and the assembly responds in ways that unpack important meanings in a given context. Note, for instance, how many of the Passion chorale texts are found within present-day hymnals, and not just in the hymns for Lent, Good Friday, or Holy Week, but in sections marked by words such as Cross, Hope, Comfort, Trust, Prayer, Guidance, and even Obedience. Bach’s model challenges our tendency toward simple keyword association and classification while encouraging deeper reflection, even adaptation of local tradition as necessary. The layers of relationships extend outward from Good Friday to the triduum, to the liturgical year, and to all of salvation history that can be sung on Good Friday and Easter:

> This is my ending, this my resurrection; into your hands, Lord, I commit my spirit. This have I searched for; now I can possess it. This ground is holy. (ELW 342, st. 5)

**Chad Fothergill** holds an MA in organ performance from the University of Iowa, where he has also completed residency requirements toward a PhD in musicology. He currently serves as cantor at University Lutheran Church of the Incarnation, Philadelphia, PA, and is a visiting faculty
member at the University of Delaware, where he teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in music history.

Notes

1. I am grateful to Scott Weidler, plenary speaker for the Region 1 gathering, for prompting the questions explored here. Because the Revised Common Lectionary appoints the Passion according to John for Good Friday, attention is given here to the chorales of Bach’s John Passion before those of the Matthew Passion. Additional details about their composition, structure, revision history, context, performance practice, and symbolism can be found throughout the sources cited in the notes that follow.


3. A facsimile is available online at http://reader.digitalesammlungen.de/resolve/display/bsb10592508.html.


5. See TLH 146, SBH 70, LBW 111, CW 268, LSB 434, and ELW 357 for various translations and harmonizations.


7. Ibid., 256. A facsimile is available online at http://gdz.sub.uni-goettingen.de/dms/load/img/?PPN=PPN527303135&IDDOC=307555.

8. “The righteous perish, and no one takes it to heart; the devout are taken away, while no one understands. For the righteous are taken away from calamity, and they enter into peace; those who walk uprightly will rest on their couches.” (NRSV)

9. Stiller, 70.


13. Ibid.


15. See TLH 521, SBH 582, LBW 446, CW 429, LSB 760, or ELW 776.


17. See Tanya Kevorkian, “The Reception of the Cantata during Leipzig Church Services, 1700–1750,” in Bach’s Changing World: Voices in the Community, ed. Carol K. Baron (Rochester, NY: Univ. of Rochester Press, 2006), 174–89. Kevorkian reminds us that we are heirs of 19th-century concert culture, its emphases on punctuality and silent observation quieting the more relaxed attitudes of previous centuries. Bach’s cantatas probably fell on attentive ears along with a number of other sounds: period sources complained that parishioners arrived and departed as they pleased and, even when present, gossiped during singing and preaching. Less frequently but no less distracting, students were reported to have tossed objects from the balconies and flirted with unmarried women in the nave below.


20. Gail Ramshaw and Mons Teig, Keeping Time: The Church’s Years (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2009), 102–3.


22. Paul Westermeyer, Hymnal Companion to Evangelical Lutheran Worship (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2010), 146.


WE ATTENDED THE INSPIRING ALCM CONFERENCE at the Baltimore Inner Harbor July 14–16; the theme was “The Three Days—Singing Salvation History.” We attended for three reasons:

• to have an opportunity for both of us to build on our partnership for the music ministry in the community in which we serve;
• to see what ideas and materials we might return with that would help us plan for the Three Days (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil); and
• to be inspired and uplifted by wonderful worship, preaching, teaching, singing, and conversation with church professionals who faithfully serve music ministries in our congregations.

The leaders of the conference were very knowledgeable in their field and shaped the conference to be experiential. Each of the three worship services was preceded by a plenary where the history of the service was given along with ideas of what might be tried in one’s home church. Questions/comments by the attendees were welcomed and received warmly by the leaders. Opportunities for workshops were available to learn more about the Three Days.

The worship services for the Three Days were ethereal. The leaders guided us through dynamic and inspiring worship with spirit-filled preachers, worship leaders, and musicians. As regular worship leaders, we found it so nice to be “fed” during worship without the responsibility of leading the assembly.

We were filled with practical ideas to adapt for our unique congregational setting. For our congregation’s Maundy Thursday worship service, I am drawn to the practice of providing the opportunity for the congregation to come forward after the confession to receive forgiveness at one of four stations with the laying on of hands. Foot washing was included, and I liked very much how we did it in Baltimore. However, I’m not sure how it might happen in congregations. There might be as many as four stations. One member would sit and have her feet washed. Then she would stand and wash the feet of the next seated person in line.

The Good Friday service included the chanting of Psalm 22. The cantor chanted a verse and we chanted back a phrase that the cantor had given us. Back and forth it went. It was very freeing and helped us meditate on the text because the assembly did not have the printed words of the psalm in our hands. The gospel was also chanted rather than being read. Chanting the parts of the Narrator, Jesus, Pilate, and Peter was very effective in discerning the various voices of the narrative. However, I’m not sure every church has four cantors in their choir to do this. One could also have four good readers do the same thing. Lastly, when the cross was brought in and when the service
concluded in silence, everybody was invited to come forward and make signs of devotions: kneel and pray, bow.

Like the Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services, the Vigil of Easter was powerful and meaningful. The service was one of movement. We began the service with lighting the new paschal candle from an outside fire and blessing it. We moved to the dramatic reading of some of the assigned scriptures and the chanting of the liturgy in the chapel. We moved to another location for the remembrance of our baptism. Finally, we entered the sanctuary for the celebration of the eucharist, with the whole assembly gathered up in the chancel. It was powerful and beautiful. It was priceless.

The ALCM Region 1 conference was time—and continuing education funds—well spent. We highly recommend that more church musicians and clergy take advantage of these well-planned conferences of the ALCM. You and your church will find it well worth it.

Charles E. Romanowski is the pastor and Judith Love is the director of music at St. Mark Lutheran Church, Pennsburg, PA.
ROBERTS ASSERTS A SIMPLE MODEL for vital churches: great preaching and great music. In this book he offers practical guidance to clergy on matters musical. Roberts wrote this book as a seminary musician and professor. He realizes that music is a minimal, if not absent, part of most seminary curricula. Thus the purpose of this little book is to provide guidance to clergy in articulating the purpose of music in worship, to list those attributes successful church musicians possess, to show models of healthy clergy-musician relationships, and to indicate potential offerings found in a strong music program.

Roberts begins by explaining the linguistic nature of music. Music is a language with vocabulary, syntax, and grammar. It can be learned by anyone. Unfortunately, most music is experienced today as a commodity rather than a participatory event. Because this impacts the church in a significant way, clergy and musicians must be attuned to it. He also emphasizes the importance of the use of indigenous music so that people can participate. It is helpful for clergy to understand music in this way, even if they themselves are not musically trained.

Roberts identifies three specific roles that a successful church musician must embody: pastoral, teaching, and performance. To speak of a pastoral role in the church musician’s work may sound foreign to some clergy, but there is a pastoral role in church musicians’ work for the simple reason that they work with people and prepare them for service in the congregation. Church musicians are also teachers, working with individuals, larger groups (such as the choir), and the entire congregation. They must have a firm grasp of how to cultivate the musical life of the church. Finally, musicians must be performers; they must have the musical “chops” to get the job done well.

Building on the church musicians’ defined role, Roberts presents a helpful chapter on the relationship of clergy and musicians. This begins with clergy seeing the musician as a colleague in ministry who is working toward the same goal. One of Roberts’ helpful insights is his discussion of the difference in educational routes: for clergy, the usual route is attendance at a seminary specific to one’s denomination, while for musicians the routes are much more varied and often not denominationally specific. Sometimes the musician’s training includes theology and sometimes not, a fact that needs to be taken into consideration when developing a position description. Roberts advocates full-time positions in the church, arguing that if a musician has to work several part-time positions he or she will probably move on. Offering full-time positions attracts the best candidates to the job and has the best chance of retaining them.

Roberts sets aside one chapter to address the contrasting styles of music for worship. He intentionally does not assert one over the other but tries instead to reframe the discussion by dividing music into two camps: cultivated or classical music and vernacular or popular religious song. The label “cultivated” implies that an appreciation and understanding of music must be learned; this entails musical education. Musical literacy is not something our society

values and in many schools it is not taught. In regards to his category of pop religious song, he uses a liturgical paradigm developed by the Belgian theologian Edward Schillebeeckx (in *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology* [New York: Seabury, 1979]) to categorize music: (1) ephemeral history (temporary), (2) conjectural history (has survived a generation, but has not been solidified in the canon), and (3) structural history (has stood the test of time and is in the canon of hymns) (47). I find this paradigm helpful in judging whether or not music should be used.

Numerous times Roberts points to the paucity of musical literacy in contemporary society. With his lament comes a chapter addressing music ministry and children. This is the obvious avenue to counter the musical illiteracy trend. He begins by discussing the psychology of children and music, arguing that their participation in worship is not intended to be cute but that their contribution can be significant. This paradigm of children’s music ministry is accomplished by securing a professional to train the children and give them a steady and nutritious diet of quality music. He directs the reader to the Royal School of Church Music in America model, including their training series *Voice for Life* and their annual summer courses for choristers, adult singers, and church musicians.

Toward the end of his book Roberts addresses two issues about which many clergy and other church leaders have little knowledge or experience: money and hiring. He points out the advantage of developing financial resources to employ a full-time musician and other positions to support programs, the necessity of acquiring and maintaining musical instruments, maintaining a choral library, and paying the appropriate copyright fees for music and liturgical resources. He also outlines the process for conducting a search and what to look for in potential candidates. The book concludes with a brief commentary on the need for musical vision for the staff and congregation and the ways in which an intentional vision can benefit a church and its programs.

*MUSIC AND VITAL CONGREGATIONS* is a very helpful text on the practical matters of music ministry that is geared towards the nonmusician. For clergy it answers many questions that may have gone unanswered and also helps them ask the right questions when discussing the music program in the church. A thoughtful church musician will read the text and have a better understanding of what it is that clergy need to know; this will enable the church musician to communicate more effectively with the clergy, other staff, and the congregation itself. The book would also be very helpful to members of a search committee as they begin the process of securing a musician for the congregation.

Roberts does an excellent job of providing a brief, readable synopsis of the practical matters of music ministry for clergy and congregations. While the practical points of ministry often are not nearly as engaging as the theological for the reader, these points are still essential to ministry. Robert’s wisdom will strengthen the ministry of each reader and will be an essential read for seminarians, pastors, and church musicians.

*Stephen Rosebrock*
*Kantor, Mount Olive Lutheran Church*
*Milwaukee, WI*
HOW DID A CHURCH WITH MISSION FERVOR get a hymnal in a language that it did not yet speak, have it field-tested by others, and preserve important biblical teachings into its second language? Jon Vieker has found one such a case, searched the archives, and told how it happened.

His monograph presents the story of August Crull (1845–1923), who translated German hymns and identified a corpus of English-language hymns for Lutherans in North America. Crull’s work appeared in the first edition of Evangelical Lutheran Hymn Book (Baltimore: Lang, 1889; ELHB 1889) for the English Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri and Other States (EELSM), a small synod that worked exclusively in English. It was a partner of and received support from The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), even though the latter was focused on German-speaking people. In 1911, when the LCMS needed worship materials in English, the EELSM became a nongeographic district of the LCMS and brought its English-language hymnal with it.

Though he was born in Rostock, Germany, August Crull had the right interests and expertise to undertake a project outside of his native tongue. After the untimely death of his lawyer father, his mother married a Lutheran pastor. When August was ten the family emigrated to St. Louis where he entered a pre-seminary preparatory school. He was especially interested in languages and had a fascination for English. After ordination, a chronic throat ailment caused him to resign his first pastoral assignment in Milwaukee and he returned to Germany to recover. By letter he was urged to return in order to assist the Missouri Synod’s mission to English-speaking America; he had already made an impression with his beautiful translation of hymns into English that mirrored the original texts. Upon his return he worked at a newspaper in St. Louis, directed a new high school in Milwaukee, served as a pastor in Michigan, and was then called in 1873 to be a professor of German and French at Concordia College in Fort Wayne, IN. There he produced collections of devotional poetry in German, a high school German grammar, daily devotions excerpted from sermons, and English translations of German LCMS documents in defense of parochial schools for a case before the United States Supreme Court.

Fortunately Crull’s role in preparing hymns for ELHB 1889 is documented in letters to William Dallmann, a pastor serving an EELSM congregation in Baltimore. In May 1888 Crull forwarded to Dallmann a selection of 200 German hymn translations, unabridged and in the meter of the original. (Vieker’s Appendix One shows which German hymns had appeared in four hymnals of Lutherans in the USA between 1847 and 1886.) Crull’s translations were examined and approved by the faculty at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. Then, in time for a gathering that would establish a constitution for the EELSM, he also proposed a list of 171 English-language hymns.
(Appendix Two lists which of these hymns had appeared in four American hymnals printed between 1868 and 1880 by Lutherans from the General Council, General Synod, Norwegian Synod, and Ohio Synod.) The gathering established a committee—which included Crull—to edit its hymnal. He encouraged his fellow committee members to hold to the highest standards of English and of Lutheran theology. When some translation issues in the second edition (1892) disappointed him, he withdrew his involvement. The expanded version retained the original 400 hymns, supplied a few alternate translations for the German hymns, added 50 more hymns, and included Common Service orders as replacements for the hastily prepared service orders in the first edition.

By 1891 the EELSM was hoping to publish a version with the tunes of the hymns; up to this point it had had only texts. In 1893 it dropped the idea of a separate tune book, since other available books had the necessary tunes. The printing plates for ELHB 1889 were so worn by 1899 it was time to consider revising the book before new plates were prepared. In 1905 a list of 634 hymn titles with assigned tunes was distributed in the EELSM. The hymn titles were arranged under thematic headings with the central role given to the church year, a continuation of the pattern in the LCMS’ 1847 German hymnal, and with a slight rearranging of other themes. (Appendix Three compares thematic headings, evidence that the content of the hymns in ELHB 1889 was valued for teaching Biblical doctrines.) Because publishing the book was to put no financial burden on the small synod, the project was on hold. Thus when EELSM merged with the LCMS in 1911, the project costs could be shared with others and the tune edition could move forward. By mid-1912 Concordia Publishing House printed the tune edition of ELHB and publicized it as an orthodox, comprehensive, and complete hymnal with practical music settings (ELHB 1912).

Vieker’s study shows how Crull preserved a German Lutheran hymn tradition for an English-speaking American context, how he assembled a doctrinally acceptable ecumenical selection from previous English-language collections printed by Lutherans in America for a 50/50 mix of German-to-English hymns and hymns already in English, and how Crull’s thematic organization of the hymns in ELHB 1912 came primarily from the LCMS’ 1847 German hymnal. Crull’s hymn corpus—translations of core German hymns and English-language hymns with pure doctrine and an evangelical spirit—was a gift to a small synod and eventually to the first official Missouri Synod hymnbook in English.

The monograph is based on a chapter from a forthcoming PhD dissertation in historical theology. Despite its scholarly origin it is readable. Vieker’s information comes from primary sources in German and English: minutes, reports, proceedings, periodical reviews, announcements, archival records, and letters. The body of the text puts everything in English with the original German in footnotes, which carefully document the sources. There is no separate bibliography, so for some hymnals referenced on the charts in the appendices the reader must search footnotes to find information. The four appendices, however, provide details about the hymn titles and implied relationships between the individual hymn collections. The final appendix is a chart showing the hymnals that influenced the four official Missouri Synod hymnals in English (1912, 1941, 1982, 2006) along with titles of two hymnal supplements and four Sunday school hymnals.

Vieker is well prepared to tell this story. For 12 years he was assistant director for the Missouri Synod’s Commission on Worship and participated in the preparation of Lutheran Service Book (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006). He knows well how to decode the data in archives and official publications about decision processes for worship books.

This is a significant study of but one Lutheran hymnal in America; similar stories might be told if there were documents and someone to report on them. It shows how one pioneer helped his immigrant group retain a heritage of theology in a new cultural context. It is highly recommended to musicians, pastors, and anyone who studies hymnody.

James L. Brauer
Professor Emeritus, Concordia Seminary
Saint Louis, MO
Two popular orchestral works are transcribed in this brief, nine-page publication: Bach’s “Air on the G String” from the Suite No. 3 in D Major (BWV 1068) and Handel’s Prelude from the Suite in D Major (HWV 349). Both pieces are well adapted to the organ. The Bach “Air” has the primary melody soloed out, and the Handel piece employs terrace dynamics by alternating Great and Swell, often in echo-like fashion. In the Bach work, Christiansen follows the accepted Baroque practice of introducing ornaments (or some melodic variants) at repetitions of phrases. By providing written-out examples of embellishments that would normally have been improvised, Christiansen ensures the freshness of material. The care with which Christiansen transcribes his material is evident in certain details. For instance, in measure six of the Handel Prelude he divides a descending octave run into treble and bass clefs, thereby indicating the distribution of notes into right and left hands and deftly solving the fingering problem. However, one wishes that he would have notated cadence trills in the right hand on the penultimate beat at measures 18, 22, 32, 36, 40, and 44, just as he had done in measures 26 and 28. These fine transcriptions provide the opportunity for the listener to experience this wonderful music on the organ, music which otherwise would have required the resources of an orchestra. The pieces are suitable for use in weddings and general service music and are highly recommended.

Benjamin M. Culli.

_Five Preludes on Jesus, the Savior._
Concordia (97-7511), $18.00.

Three quieter preludes contrast with two more triumphant pieces. “Savior, When in Dust to Thee” (Aberystwyth) quietly alternates two different melodic ideas, both based on the hymn tune without directly quoting it. “Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me” (Pilot) takes a more traditional approach, stating phrases of the hymn tune in the tenor between quiet interludes inspired by the tune. Constant triplet motion in the right hand undulates throughout the setting of “What Is This Bread” (Preparation), accompanied by the tune in the tenor and punctuated by pedal notes. A processional on Earth and All Stars and a brief, festive setting of Ascended Triumph round out the collection.

LW

F. Liszt.

_Liebestraume No. 3 (Dream of Love)._ Transcription by Nigel Potts.
MorningStar (MSM-10-674), $9.00.

This work was originally written for piano by Franz Liszt in 1850; it is listed as op. 168, no. 3. The transcription for organ is idiomatic to that instrument. In fact, the use of the pedal to sustain bass notes frees the organist to play arpeggios in one hand and the theme in the other hand. The organist needs to pay close attention to the registration instructions throughout the piece. The opening registration is a bit confusing. The left hand is instructed to play the theme on the Great with Swell and Choir coupled to it, but also with super coupler and unison off as well. And this theme is notated in the bass clef in the bass range, while the piano version places the theme at the beginning in the inner voice in the tenor range. The effect of the super coupler and unison off is to have the theme sound an octave higher than written, thus placing it in the correct tenor range. On page four of the organ version, the purpose of this arrangement for the left hand perhaps becomes clearer. The left hand is instructed to play the theme on the Great with Swell and Choir coupled to it, but also with super coupler and unison off as well. And this theme is notated in the bass clef in the bass range, while the piano version places the theme at the beginning in the inner voice in the tenor range. The effect of the super coupler and unison off is to have the theme sound an octave higher than written, thus placing it in the correct tenor range. On page four of the organ version, the purpose of this arrangement for the left hand perhaps becomes clearer. The left hand, playing the theme in the bass range on the Great, also picks up occasional low notes from the right-hand arpeggios played on the Choir. Perhaps there could be a more comfortable arrangement for the beginning of the piece. However, it is noteworthy that this transcription is eminently playable on the organ, the arpeggiated figuration notwithstanding. (Incidentally, it appears that
the initial G-natural note in the left hand in measure 25 should be played down an octave to create a smoother descending line.) While this piece is obviously not liturgical music, it could prove useful for wedding music. Liszt’s *Liebestraume* No. 3 is quite beautiful, especially in its rich chromatic accompaniment and deserves to be heard also on the organ. *JB*

Lynn Trapp.  
**Te Deum.**  
MorningStar (MSM-10-678), $8.00.

This work was premiered at the 2014 National Association of Pastoral Musicians National Convention held in St. Louis, MO. It is based on the traditional Gregorian chant *Te Deum*. This six-page piece begins “majestically” with overlapping statements of the Gregorian chant motive. A brief section marked “flowing” introduces the Gregorian chant. An “animated” section leads into the following “declamatory” section featuring the motive in lower voices against dramatic scalar passagework. A short “reflective” passage harmonizes the chant melody with some lovely, evocative chords. The next large section features “flowing” triplets and a fantasy-like exploration of the chant material. After another brief “reflective” chant statement soloed out against quiet sustained chords, the final “animated” section moves to an exciting, “majestic” conclusion. This attractive work thus provides a variety of material based on the Te Deum chant, is well constructed, and leads inexorably to the conclusion. The technical demands are moderate, but this piece will require careful practice. This work is highly recommended for those desiring an introduction to modern organ interpretations of traditional Gregorian chant repertoire. *JB*

**PIANO**

Carol Wahl.  
**Cry of the Dove.**  
Augsburg Fortress (978-1-4514-7961-4), $16.00.

Most of Wahl’s settings in this volume tend toward the “ethereal” and the “atmospheric,” with extended sections where the damper pedal is held down. She creates interesting effects with repeated notes in the opening section of “As the Deer Runs to the River” (Julion), leading into a more straightforward statement of the tune accompanied by “rippling” arpeggios. “God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending” (Rustington) is inspired by a Scripture quotation, leading to descending sixteenth-note figures cascading down from the melody. “Holy, Holy, Holy” quietly and reverently combines the traditional hymn tune *Nicæa* with *Argentine Santo*. The collection also includes *Bring Forth the Kingdom; Herr Jesu Christ, meins; Thomas; and You Are Mine*. *LW*

**KEYBOARD AND INSTRUMENT**

Daniel Pinkham.  
**Divertimento.**  
Double bass, organ (or harpsichord).  
ECS (5981), $19.90.

This three-movement work is difficult for both the bassist and the organist, due to accidentals, meter changes, dissonant harmonies, and challenging rhythms. This is particularly true in the first and last movements. However, these movements also include some interesting, catchy musical moments. The first movement, “Prelude,” begins with a quick, cheerful pizzicato figure that comes back later to close the movement. In the middle section, legato melodic lines appear in dialogue between the two instruments. The slow middle movement, “Interlude,” is in the high register of the double bass, intended to be played entirely as harmonics. The spare organ part is reminiscent of the music of Arvo Pärt. The final movement, “March,” is
fast, with syncopation in both instruments as well as the lively motion expected in a march. The keyboard writing is primarily linear rather than chordal, and the bass part is often written in tenor or treble clef. _LW_

**HANDBELLS**

**Comfort, Comfort.**
Arr. Cathy Moklebust.
3–5 octaves handbells (plus optional B♭), with optional flute, finger cymbals, tambourine, tenor drum, 3–5 octaves handchimes.
Choristers Guild (CGB856 for handbell score), $4.95.

This joyful setting of _Freu dich sehr_ uses a variety of bell techniques. Both the rhythmic and isometric versions of the tune are used. This flexible setting is greatly enhanced by adding the flute and percussion. Level 4. _LS_

**Fantasy on Sleepers, Wake!**
Arr. Charles E. Peery.
3–5 octaves handbells, harp (or piano), organ (or second harp).
From the Top (MFM20412HB for handbell score), $4.50; (MFM20412M for Master score), $5.75.

Something unusual! This is a beautiful setting of _Wachet auf_. For those who have access to a harp, this would be a stunning, yet gentle, addition to the Advent repertoire. Level 2+. _LS_

**How Far Is It to Bethlehem?**
Arr. Derek K. Hakes.
3–6 octaves handbells.
From the Top (MFM20461), $4.25.

Hakes has written a beautiful setting based on a traditional English carol “The Children’s Song of the Nativity.” The gentle rocking accompaniment adds to the charm of this piece. Appropriate for worship or concert. Level 2+. _LS_

**Lo, How a Rose.**
Arr. Cathy Moklebust.
3–5 octaves handbells, with optional organ and/or strings.
Choristers Guild (CGB844), $4.95.

This is an incredibly flexible arrangement. The piece can be played by bells alone, bells and violin, bells and strings, bells and organ, and bells and string quartet plus organ. Moklebust has created a rich and moving arrangement of this 16th-century carol. The gentle sound of the bells is nicely complemented when accompanied by optional strings, organ, or electronic keyboard. There are minimal bell changes. Level 2+. _LS_

**Clarion Call.**
3–5 octaves handbells.
Choristers Guild (CGB864), $4.50.

_Clarion Call_ is a big, bold piece suitable for worship, concert, or festival. Techniques include echo, shake, mallets, mart, and mart lifts. Joy explains the meanings of the word clarion (used as a noun, an adjective, or a verb). This fanfare-like, original piece would be ideal for a youth bell choir. Level 2+. _LS_

**Three French Carols.**
3–5 octaves handbells.
Lorenz (MLC201729L), $4.50.

The minimal bell changes plus limited eighth-note patterns make this a great choice for groups moving into Level 2 music. Techniques used are mallet, mart, and thumb damp. The carols are _Un flambeau_, _Jeanette, Isabelle_; _Il est ne_; and _Noël nouveau_. Level 2. _LS_
**While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks.**
Arr. Sandra Eithun.
3–5 octaves handbells, with optional B♭ or C treble instrument.
Choristers Guild (CGB850 for 3–5 octaves; CGB849 for 2–3 octaves), $4.95.

This title is the newest in the Flexible Favorites series. There are 2 settings: 2–3 octaves or 3–5 octaves; the settings are compatible. Both have optional instrument. The instrumental line weaves in hints of other carols. This piece has mallets on the table in the opening, a slower and thoughtful middle section, and then a grand and stately ending. Level 2. *LS*

**VOCAL | CHILDREN’S CHOIR**

**ChildrenSing in Worship,** vol. 3.
Unison/two-part, keyboard.
Augsburg Fortress (978-1-4514-6254-8), $29.95.

This collection includes 11 anthems designed for use with upper elementary singers (8–12 years old). The anthems cover all seasons of the church year, and most are for unison voices with an optional second part or descant. In addition to the complete score of each piece for the director or accompanist, the volume includes reproducible melody-line scores for the singers, making it a good value. Eight of the eleven pieces were previously published, and three are newly composed. “The Lord’s My Shepherd” (1993) by Marie Pooler would be a nice introduction to two-part singing. Nancy Raabe’s “Lullaby Carol” (2013) elegantly sets a Christmas text by Shirley Erena Murray, utilizing a simple finger cymbal part. Optional C-instrument parts are included for “The World’s True Light” (Anna Laura Page, 2007) and “What Shall We Give to God?” (Robert A. Benson, 2007). Hymn tunes included in the anthems are **Cantad al Señor** (“Prepare Ye the Way,” arr. Hal H. Hopson, 2002), **Dona nobis pacem** (“The World’s True Light”), **Go Tell It** (“The Lord Is King,” Dorothy Christopherson, 1992), and **Sojourner** (“I Want Jesus to Walk with Me,” arr. Aaron David Miller, 2007). Other anthems in the collection are “All Things Bright and Beautiful” (Miller, 2013), “Blessing” (Miller, 2013), “Build New Bridges” (Wayne L. Wold, 1998), and “Jesus, My Lord and God” (John Ferguson, 1984). *LW*

**Gloria in Excelsis.**
Unison/two-part, piano, with optional claves, maracas, bongos.
Choristers Guild (CGA1365), $1.95.

A good introduction to singing in Latin, this anthem repeats the first two lines of text from the Gloria in excelsis several times, combining them with a bouncy 7/4 meter and lively percussion parts. The refrain (“Gloria in excelsis Deo”) actually splits into three parts, added layer by layer at the beginning. The stanza (“Et in terra pax hominibus”) is in unison without percussion, providing a brief contrast. Especially appropriate for the Christmas or Epiphany seasons, this anthem could also be sung at other times of the church year, whenever the Gloria is part of the liturgy. *LW*

**Go Down, Moses.**
Arr. Thomas Keesecker.
Unison/two-part, piano.
Choristers Guild (CGA1368), $1.95.

Keesecker brings the story in this traditional spiritual to life through his creative treatment that never strays too far from the original spiritual. Following a unison first stanza, the second vocal part joins on stanza two. A swinging piano accompaniment provides harmonic support for the tune. Stanza three’s slower tempo and contrasting accompaniment effectively communicate the text’s description of the long journey to Canaan’s land. Finally, stanza four returns to the original tempo and adds optional higher harmony, with a brief but effective coda on “Let my people go.” The relatively narrow range (mostly C#4 to C#5 with a brief ascent to E5) and jazzy style will help choirs to enjoy this anthem. *LW*
S. C. Molefe.  
**Amen Siakudumisa.**
Arr. Cameron F. LaBarr.  
Three-part treble, with optional African percussion, solos, small group parts.  
Choristers Guild (CGA1355), $1.95.

Repetition, consonant harmonies, and mostly stepwise motion will help your singers learn this South African praise song quickly. It begins slowly, with a solo followed by the full choir. The tempo speeds up when the percussion enters. Suggestions for percussion instruments and rhythms are included inside the front cover. Vocal layers enter gradually, building up to six parts in the final section. This layering creates an African feel and adds excitement to the piece. Although the piece may be performed exactly as written, the arranger also encourages performers to vary the number of repetitions, embellishments, movements, and percussion. Also available for SATB (CGA1285).  

Mark Patterson.  
**Living God’s Love.**  
Unison/two-part, piano, with optional 3 handbells.  
Choristers Guild (CGA1367), $1.95.

Patterson wrote both text and music for this anthem, which was commissioned to honor children’s choir leaders. Based on Colossians 3:12-17, the text is a prayer for the word of Christ to “dwell richly in you as you teach one another.” The music has a good balance of repetition and variety, organized in an ABA form. The range (C4 to F5) is well-suited to children’s voices, and this piece could be a good introduction to singing in two parts. The optional second part briefly alternates with and echoes the first part, adding a few harmony notes toward the end. A simple handbell or handchime part adds another layer of interest in the A sections.  

**ADULT CHOIR**

Ron Barnett.  
**Love Is Little.**  
SATB, medium-voice solo, cello, piano.  
Morningstar (MSM-50-7505), $1.70.

This anthem for mixed choir is a lovely arrangement of a 19th-century Kentucky Shaker spiritual. The text, “Love is little, love is low, love will make our spirit grow, grow in peace, grow in light; love will do the thing that’s right,”
is sung three times, first by a solo voice, then by unaccompanied SATB, and finally by unison choir with cello obligato, the music building with each repetition. The piece concludes quietly as the soloist returns, repeating the final phrase. The piano and cello accompaniment frame the piece and add musical interest. This anthem could work for mixed choirs of all sizes. The SATB section can be doubled by the piano if needed. General use. **AE**

Mary Kay Beall.

**Holy Spirit, Hope and Healer.**
Three-part mixed, piano.
Hope (C 5872), $1.95.

In this SAB anthem, Carter sets a new text by Beall to the music of the Welsh folk tune **suo-gân**. The three stanzas move from the key of D-flat to F to D. Carter makes careful use of tempo and dynamic markings to bring out the text, and a flowing eighth-note motion in the piano helps maintain forward motion. The SAB setting and limited vocal range make this a good option for choirs with fewer resources. Appropriate for general use, Pentecost. Easy. **AE**

David Blackwell.

**A Scottish Blessing.**
SATB, keyboard, with optional treble instrument.
Morningstar (MSM-50-6320), $1.85.

The text of this anthem is a traditional Scottish blessing adapted by the composer. The melody is reminiscent of a folk tune, and the use of dotted rhythms, especially sixteenth-dotted-eighth-note rhythm (the so-called Scotch snap) in both the melody and accompaniment, add to the feel of Scottish folk music. The lilting melody and rich harmonies fit the text well. The instrumental part (available separately in either B-flat or C) is within the ability of a good high school player. Appropriate for general worship, especially services focusing on creation. **AE**

Bob Burroughs.

**Bretren, We Have Met to Worship.**
TTBB, piano.
MorningStar (MSM-50-6091), $1.70.

This setting of **Holy Manna** begins with a rhythmic stanza that repeats the word “Brethren!” several times, appropriate for a men’s choir anthem. This stanza has some unison phrases and some that divide into four parts. The second stanza is softer and more legato, with slightly more *divisi*; basses briefly split into three-part harmony. The anthem ends softly with a reiteration of the opening text, “Brethren, we have met to worship.” Moderately easy and enjoyable, this would make a good call to worship. An alternate text, “God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens,” is printed in italics in the choral score. **LW**

John Butler.

**Prayer of the Incarnation.**
SATB a cappella (some *divisi*).
Paraclete (PPM01333), $1.70.

Using a text attributed to George Potter, this anthem begins simply and softly in unison, building to *forte* and six-part harmony (SSATBB) before quickly returning to *piano*. The second section has a similar dynamic profile, but it stays in 4–6 parts throughout. Rhythms are simple, mostly quarter notes and half notes, and the voices usually have the same rhythm. Both of these allow the prayerful text to take priority. The harmonies include dissonances, which may be challenging for some choirs. The first soprano part also has a relatively high range, with a sustained high A near the end. **LW**

Craig Carnahan.

**Hark! I Hear the Harps Eternal.**
SATB a cappella.
MorningStar (MSM-50-3074), $1.85.

This is an exuberant setting of the text “Hark! I hear the harps eternal” paired with William Walker’s *Southern Harmony* tune **Invitation**. The piece opens with a fairly simple soprano-alto duet. The tenor takes over the melody when
the full choir comes in at the refrain, while the other voices provide what is almost a rhythmic ostinato, which helps energize the melody. The use of rhythmic ostinato is particularly striking in the second stanza, with the basses singing in octaves while the upper voices harmonize on the melody. The stanza that follows provides a contrasting lyrical section that is more homophonic in nature. The use of open fifths and octaves in this piece is suggestive of 19th-century American music, and optional foot stomping to accompany the final “Alleluias” adds to the rhythmic energy. Carnahan provides an alternative text for Advent, “Hark, I Hear the Harps Resounding,” adding to the value of this anthem. This would be a lively addition for church choirs who can sing unaccompanied, with independent voice parts and some divisi in all parts. Medium-difficult. General, All Saints’ Day, Advent (alternate text). 

David M. Cherwein. 

How Far Is It to Bethlehem? 
SATB, organ. 
MorningStar (MSM-50-1136), $1.70. 

Cherwein’s new setting of “How far is it to Bethlehem” uses its traditional tune Stowey. Passages of unison writing alternate with four-part sections, and sensitive use of dynamics serves the text well, as does the organ’s supporting role. The sections of a cappella writing could be doubled by the organ if needed. Fitting for both larger and smaller choirs, this would make a lovely anthem for the Christmas season. AE

Charles Forsberg. 

In the Shepherd’s Keeping. 
SATB divisi a cappella, with optional violin. 
Augsburg Fortress (978-1-4514-8290-4), $1.95. 

In the Shepherd’s Keeping, from the St. Olaf Choral series, is based on a Norwegian folk hymn, Når mitt øye. The text is in Norwegian with alternate English words. The violin obbligato is listed as optional, although it certainly adds interest to the piece. Forsberg keeps harmonies and textures clean and simple in the spirit of the folksong. The piece starts with just sopranos singing pianissimo against a single sustained note on an “ooh” by the altos. If sung carefully, the effect would magical! There is no room here for intonation issues. Tenors and basses sneak in, building to a fortissimo at the wonderful words, “Crowned with glory, Lamb now raised in bridal paradise of praise.” Texture and dynamics taper off to a pianississimo, concluding as the piece began, with just the sopranos. This piece is a lovely celebration of Christmas in the Norwegian tradition. KO

Alexander Gondo. 

Uyai Mose (Come, All You People). 
Arr. Kevin Holland. 
SATB, Orff xylophones, djembe, shekere. 
Choristers Guild (CGA1373), $2.10. 

Inside the front cover of this joyful invitation to praise Holland gives helpful and well-informed directions about pronunciation and instruments. The text is mostly in Shona, an African language, with one English stanza, but it repeats many times, making it easier to learn. Holland chooses to use three Orff xylophones in imitation of the Zimbabwean belafon, but he notes that the parts may be altered according to the players’ ability or eliminated if needed. Unpitched percussion parts included are the djembe (or conga) and the shekere (or maracas). Voices begin in unison and gradually split into four parts, finally adding a descant in the last section. Xylophones and percussionists will play from the vocal score, so order extra copies for them. LW
great piano part, which requires a keyboardist who can forget northern European precision for about four minutes and have fun with this fine music. A number of composers and arrangers have come out with these written-out improvisations in recent years. Successful ones like His Eye are of value to congregations who are trying to diversify their music ministry and are fun for all. It is also available in an SATB voicing (C5152). KO

Karen Marrolli.

**O Dayspring.**

SATB, violin, piano.

MorningStar (MSM-50-0150), $1.85.

This piece for Advent sets a new text by the composer based on “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.” The work opens with the violin playing the first phrases of Veni, Emmanuel, and the choir enters with a newly composed melody in unison octaves, with a simple piano accompaniment. The stanzas that follow use a variety of textures to add interest: the second stanza is a soprano-alto duet over a slower-moving bass-tenor part, and the third stanza is a more homophonic four-part setting. In the fourth stanza, the choir sings the unison melody as the violin plays Veni, Emmanuel as a countermelody. This combination of the traditional melody with the newly composed melody is a nice touch. This anthem will be a valuable addition for Advent, especially for smaller SATB choirs or larger choirs with limited rehearsal time in the weeks before Christmas. The violin part (included) can be played by another C instrument. Easy. AE

Mark A. Miller.

**Love Has Broken Down the Wall.**

SATB, piano.

Choristers Guild (CGA1384), $1.95.

This is a slightly altered version of Miller’s “Christ Has Broken Down the Wall” (CGA1224), now made more appropriate for schools and interfaith events. Written in a laid-back gospel style, this anthem conveys deep truths through a relatively simple structure and text. Four stanzas gradually increase in intensity through dynamic changes, key changes, and a shift from unison to harmony. Most stanzas are in AABA form, repeating the beginning line three times. This piece would be appropriate for worship
or events emphasizing love, unity, acceptance, peace, and our role in making these a reality. *LW*

Gerald Near.  
**Cradle Song.**  
SATB, organ.  
MorningStar (MSM-50-1123), $1.70.

Isaac Watts’ lovely lullaby text is from his collection with the intimidating title *Divine and Moral Songs for Children.* However, there is nothing intimidating about Gerald Near’s charming setting of these words. He uses the Welsh melody *suo-gân*, which is a great match for the poetry. Near introduces some mildly dissonant harmonies in the accompaniment. These are just enough to give the piece some gentle extra interest, but not enough to wake the baby! The choir parts are very easy and could be learned quickly during Advent when rehearsal time is at a premium. *KO*

Walter Pelz.  
**Sing to God.**  
SATB, organ.  
Augsburg Fortress (978-1-4514-8595-0), $1.80.

Thomas Troeger’s fine text is a modern psalm, with the spiritual journey of the psalmist dictating the shape of the music. It begins with praise for creation set to a triumphal, hymn-like melody. The second section sets “Sing the heart’s deep sighing sorrow” in the relative minor with a slower tempo, concluding with the soft, dramatic prayer “and sustain us through the night.” The conclusion, to be performed “Broadly majestic,” brings back the opening music with a descant and words that celebrate the resurrection. This is music that will speak to the thoughtful listener about the ups and downs of every Christian’s walk. *KO*

K. Lee Scott.  
**As Water to the Thirsty.**  
SATB, piano.  
MorningStar (MSM-50-6072), $1.85.

Although this Timothy Dudley-Smith hymn text is over 30 years old, it has not been included in any Lutheran hymnals. The evocative text, a series of images for the role of God in the writer’s life, finds a welcome pairing with Scott’s new tune. Each stanza begins with several pairs of contrasts (e.g., “Like calm in place of clamour,” “As sleep that follows fever”) matched with gradually ascending melodic phrases. When the text reaches its climax, the melody also reaches its high point. The refrain that follows catches the listener’s attention with shorter phrases—a change from the rhythmic unity of the first section—as it descends to the tonic. Scott sets the first stanza for women, the second for men, joined later by the women, and the third for SATB voices and descant. The piano accompaniment artfully supports the voices. *LW*

St. Martin’s Psalter: With Texts from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (CD-ROM).  
Arr. Thomas Pavlechko.  
Assembly, SATB.  
Augsburg Fortress (978-1-4514-2427-0), $99.00.

This collection includes antiphons and psalm tones based on well-known traditional public-domain hymn tunes. It covers the entire three-year Revised Common Lectionary cycle, and includes all the Easter Vigil responses and the psalms for other seasonal services. Both semi-continuous and complementary tracks are included, and Pavlechko provides multiple musical options for Christmas and other selected days during the liturgical year. The purchase of the CD-ROM includes permission to reproduce, both for cantor/choir and for the assembly. For the choir, the antiphons and tones are given in four-part harmony, sometimes with a descant, while separate melody-line graphics are provided for the assembly. A revision of an earlier publication by St. James Press, the *St. Martin’s Psalter* now includes psalm texts from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship.* Some of the psalm settings in this
collection may also be found in Augsburg’s Psalm Settings for the Church Year.

Generally, the hymn tunes chosen for a season will reflect the mood of that season (e.g., Veni Emmanuel during Advent). Often, one psalm tone will be used for a month or more in sequence. At the same time, the antiphons will usually be based on the same hymn tune, but the particular phrase of the tune found in the antiphon may change from week to week. In cases where a psalm is associated with a particular hymn tune (e.g., Psalm 46, Ein feste Burg), that tune is usually used in the psalm setting.

Pavlechko describes his chanting system as “a happy medium between Anglican Chant and Simplified Anglican Chant.” The advantage to his system is that assemblies who are familiar with tunes such as Antioch, Aus tiefer Not, Duke Street, Ein feste Burg, Eventide, Nun danket alle Gott, and Sine nomine should recognize the melodies (whether consciously or unconsciously) and be able to sing the psalms with enthusiasm. He has tested various methods of pointing the psalm text, resulting in a system that intends to help the assembly breathe and sing together. One especially welcome part of this system is his use of . . . [ellipses] to indicate a pause, along with the elimination of punctuation that does not correspond to a pause. He also is sensitive to the choir’s needs, reprinting the psalm tone when the verses require a second page.

Various performance practices are possible. The assembly could sing both the antiphons and the verses, or verses could alternate between assembly and choir/cantor, or the assembly could sing only the antiphons, leaving the verses for the choir. If an assembly is accustomed to chanting the psalms to tones such as those found in Evangelical Lutheran Worship, Lutheran Service Book, Lutheran Book of Worship, or Christian Worship, Pavlechko’s style may take some time to learn. However, the use of familiar tunes should help. Occasionally Pavlechko suggests an alternate harmonization or tone for a few of the choir verses. He also includes some double tones (Cranham, Morning Star). These techniques, while providing possible enhancements to the psalm interpretation, could prove to be confusing for an assembly and might be best left to the choir. Assembly participation in the chanting of the psalm verses is further complicated by the lack of separate psalm text files pointed for congregational use.

Overall, this collection is a useful resource, whether a congregation intends to employ it as the only method of psalm singing or as a way to add variety during a particular season. LW

Philip W. J. Stopford.

The King of Love My Shepherd Is.
SATB divisi a cappella.

Stopford gives us a beautiful new setting of Henry W. Baker’s paraphrase of Psalm 23. The melody is introduced by the sopranos (optional soprano solo), with the full choir joining in at the end of the first stanza, at “he is mine forever.” The piece is mostly in G major, moving at times to G minor and B major to reflect a change in mood, such as G minor at “Perverse and foolish oft I strayed.” The piece is primarily in 5/4 meter, which serves to gently move the rhythm forward, while the rich harmonies bring out the text. There is a brief echo effect near the end, alternating between two sides of the choir (or between larger ensemble and smaller ensemble), that emphasizes the text “within thy house.” This anthem would be a wonderful and accessible addition for choirs who can sing unaccompanied and who have the forces to sing SATB divisi in all parts. Medium difficulty. Suitable for general use, funerals. AE

While Shepherds Watched.
Arr. Alice Parker.

SSATB a cappella.

Parker takes an 18th-century text by Nahum Tate and a tune by Supply Belcher from The Harmony of Maine (1794) to create an anthem that pays homage to the American fuguing tune. The first four stanzas each use a pair of voices for the stanza, and the refrain adds a voice with each appearance until it reaches the full SSATB choir for the entire last stanza. Parker uses techniques familiar from 18th-century fuguing tunes, with the refrain “And glory shone around” set imitatively, each voice coming in about
a measure apart, although Parker does not adhere strictly to using the same melody in all voices. This energetic piece would make a good addition for a Christmas Eve service or Christmas concert. Medium-difficult. AE

Glenn Wonacott.

**God Is Here.**
SATB a cappella.
Augsburg Fortress (978-1-4514-8580-6), $1.50.

The composer sets his own words, punctuating the acts of God—listening, giving, lifting, calling, teaching, reaching, lifting, showing—with the repeated, incessant phrase “God is here.” The effect is a little like the emphatic, gentle repetition in the Taizé tradition. The a capella harmonies are simple and transparent. While the “Call to Worship” is not historically part of the Lutheran liturgy, *God Is Here* would be a beautiful way to set a hushed mood for worship at the beginning of a service. KO

### SOUNDfest Reviewers

**John Bernthal** (*JB*)
Associate Professor Emeritus of Music
Valparaiso University
Valparaiso, IN

**Jean R. Boehler** (*JRB*)
*CrossAccent* Music Review Editor
Cantor
Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church
The Bronx, NY

**Ann Edahl** (*AE*)
Our Savior’s Lutheran Church
Fresno, CA

**Karl A. Osterland** (*KO*)
Music Director
Historic Trinity Church
Detroit, MI

**Deborah Reiss** (*DR*)
Minister of Music
Village Lutheran Church
Bronxville, NY

**Linda Schmidt** (*LS*)
Minister of Music
St. Mary’s Lutheran Church
Kenosha, WI

**Lara West** (*LW*)
Music Director
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Lawrence, KS
Lecturer, Benedictine College, Atchison, KS
CONFERENCES ARE ONE OF THE MANY WAYS ALCM provides professional development and outstanding worship opportunities for our members. As you’ve read in this issue of CrossAccent, last year’s biennial conference as well as this year’s four regional conferences were full of a variety of thoughtful dialogues on all sorts of issues related to your vocation as church musicians and worship leaders.

As I reflect on the four regional conferences earlier this summer, as different as they were thematically, a number of common themes became evident, starting with Paul Hoffman’s use of the three nouns from the last line of Charles Wesley’s hymn text for “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”—“lost in wonder, love, and praise”—as the themes for his three lectures at the Region 4 conference in Portland, OR. Wonder; love; praise. Each of the conferences had all of these.

Wonder, for sure. In one of Peter Marty’s lectures at the Region 3 conference, he called church musicians “practitioners of wonder.” That phrase struck me as particularly profound. Musicians are in the practice of wonder. One definition of wonder in Webster’s dictionary is this: “rapt attention or astonishment at something awesomely mysterious or new to one’s experience.” As musicians—church musicians in particular—this is what you do every week. Through music you help your community to be astonished at something awesomely mysterious. That’s a pretty high and holy calling!

And certainly love is present at all of ALCM’s conferences. At the Region 1 conference in Baltimore, Scott Weidler led us through the Three Days and reminded us that “Ultimately, all that goes on in the liturgies of the Three Days is about expressing various aspects of God’s love poured out on the world and how the Christian life is lived in response to that gift for the life of the world.” I saw love in each of the conferences over and over again, as friends new and old connected with each other, as words of encouragement and sometimes support were exchanged, and certainly as we gathered to worship the One who loves us and gave himself for us.

And then, of course, praise. Praise through worship and song is what ALCM does best at our conferences: enthusiastic hymn singing, wonderful service playing, experimentation with instruments known and unknown. Through all of these we offer our praise to him again.

A huge thank you to the different planning committees that made each conference a huge success. The time and commitment our member volunteers give is truly extraordinary.

Looking ahead, I hope that you will be inspired to join your colleagues next July at the ALCM biennial conference in Atlanta: “Called to be a Living Voice: Vocation, Reformation, Mission.” There will be plenty of opportunities there to network with colleagues, engage in thought-provoking dialogues, learn from other professionals, gather new resources and ideas, and listen to and perform great music. Mark your calendar—July 19–22/23, 2015, is right around the corner!

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