

THE PEACE POST

September, 2006

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, unto life everlasting. Amen.



FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR MESSER

“Christmas in August”

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

“Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care” (Psalm 95:1-7a).

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Well, they have arrived! We were not expecting to receive them until mid to late September, but CPH finished them earlier than planned and we received our first shipment of 100 new, pew edition *Lutheran Service Book* hymnals a couple of weeks ago.

For me, receiving the new hymnals was like having Christmas in August. I have been looking forward to the release of *LSB* for a few years and I am overjoyed to finally have a copy in my hand. I believe this hymnal is the best ever published and I know that it will be a blessing to our congregation, and to our synod, for many years to come.

I encourage all of you to take some time in the coming weeks to read the Introduction found on pages viii-ix in *LSB*. From its opening sentence, “Our Lord is the Lord who serves,” through its concluding remarks, it is an excellent presentation of a true theology of worship.

The Commission on Worship of the LCMS has done a stellar job of producing a faithful, trustworthy hymnal for our beloved church body. Some of the blessed features of the *LSB* include:

- A user-friendly format. Awkward page turns have been eliminated, the best and clearest type-faces have been used, and the numeration of pages is continuous to avoid confusion.
- The restoration of faithful hymns and the introduction of new, faithful hymns to our hymnody.
- The inclusion of five different Divine Services, providing congregations

with the ability to employ a variety of faithful liturgies in their Services.

- The addition of several other services and resources that were not included in our previous hymnals.

Much more could be said, but I am confident that you will find out for yourselves what a tremendous blessing this new hymnal will be for our church.

We will be receiving all of the accompanying resources for *LSB* in the coming weeks, including the much anticipated *Lutheran Service Builder* (the electronic version of the hymnal). We look forward to receiving these resources and implementing them into our worship life here at Peace.

As we make the transition to the new hymnal, I thought it would be beneficial to include in this newsletter an excellent article written by Kantor Richard C. Resch, who serves as Kantor and Professor at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne. The article is titled, “Music: Gift of God or Tool of the Devil” and begins on page 7. The article is lengthy, but I hope that you will take the time to read it, for it highlights the importance of how we use music in the church, emphasizing the dangers when music is used inappropriately. It is an extremely important article for our day and age!

Finally, let us give thanks to God for providing us with a hymnal that will ensure that we continue to worship Him “in Spirit and in truth.”

Your servant in Christ,
Pastor Messer



PEACE LUTHERAN LIBRARY



New books in our library:

NOTE: A COMPLETE LIST OF NEW BOOKS IS AVAILABLE IN THE CHURCH OFFICE. It is quite a substantial list and we again thank Peace Ladies' Guild, Marlene Wiltshire and Bill Hendrick for their donations.

Donations are always welcomed:

If you are thinking about donating (a) book(s) to our library and are not sure what to be looking for, we have a "wish" list of suggestions in the church office. Prices and books can also be found in the CPH catalog, also in the church office.

A Book Review

No book review was submitted this month. Look for a review from a member of our church next month! We would like to encourage people to use our Church Library more often. We will be encouraging people to read books and share a book review with the congregation via the monthly newsletter. If you have read a book from our library that you enjoyed, or that inspired you, and you would like to share it, please contact Beth Brostrom or Coaline Luplow.



LADIES & ALTAR GUILD INFO

- **LADIES GUILD MEETING:** Guild will resume meeting on Tuesday, September 5 at 7:00 pm. Hostess: Sharyn Greening. All ladies of the congregation are invited to attend our guild meetings; if you are a confirmed female member of Peace, you can be a member of the guild. We would sincerely encourage you to participate and be an active member of the guild.
- **LADIES GUILD PRAYER CHAIN:** The Ladies Guild has a prayer chain in place. If you wish to be included in the prayer chain as a caller, see Marlene Wiltshire. If you wish to add yourself or someone else to the prayers, the chain starts with either Georgia Spindler (466-4352) or Marlene Wiltshire (463-4101).
- **ALTAR GUILD DUTY:** September - Carol Zeile; October - Beth Brostrom; November - Marilyn Oswald; December - Carol Zeile.
- **ALTAR FLOWERS:** There is a flower calendar for 2006 posted on the fellowship bulletin board. If you wish to place flowers on the altar some time during the year, fill in your name and/or contact Marilyn Oswald. A bouquet usually lasts about one (1) month and the cost is about \$25.



UPCOMING COFFEE HOSTESSES:

September	October
3 - Lois Miller/ Jeannette Bigelow	1 - Sharyn Greening
10 - Janice Sager	8 - Darlene Palmer
17 - Youth Group	15 - Marlene Wiltshire
24 - Marilyn Oswald	22 - Cheryl Henry
	29 - Coaline Luplow



PEACE NURSERY TO BEGIN!

We have been blessed to have more infants and little children in our Services of late. There have been numerous requests to begin a nursery ministry in which various members of our congregation would volunteer to watch our children in the nursery during Divine Services. There will be a sign-up sheet posted on the bulletin board for all of the Sundays for the next few months. If you are interested in being involved in this important ministry, please place your name on the line for the Sunday(s) you would be willing to be in the nursery during Divine Service if need be. Thank you in advance for your participation!

Summary of Church Council Minutes

Summary Minutes, Church Council Meeting, August 14, 2006

Vern Jakolat called the meeting to order at 6:55 p.m. Dave Zeile opened the meeting with prayer.

Secretary's Report: Minutes from the July 10, 2006 meeting accepted as read.

Board of Elders Report:

The elders are planning a meeting for the second Saturday in September and then will resume monthly elder's meetings on Sundays at 8:00 a.m. The Saturday meeting will be to review the membership list.

Treasurer's Report:

Checking account: \$4201

Memorial savings: \$6059.85

Extention savings: \$3353.92

Extention CD: \$27,041.01

Building Fund: \$55,785.41

Trustees Report:

Bill reported that he's been looking at energy savings projects. One of the main projects he's looking at is the windows so that we don't have as much heat loss.

Board of Christian Ed. Report:

Board met and talked about Sunday School curriculum. Pastor has a program that he would like to follow to prepare the children for catechism classes. They would learn books of the Bible, hymns, Bible stories, etc. There will be an emphasis on memory work and Bible stories. There will be three groups - lower grades, middle grades, and upper grades up to grade eight. All others will be in adult Bible class. Also, the Board is ordering a Christmas program from CPH, *From Heaven Above*.

Old Business

1. Stained glass windows: Beth reported that Mr. Handley can make the logo just as it is, instead of the way that he redesigned it. Bill Brostrom moved that we have Beth call and tell him to go ahead and make them with the logo as it is designed. Burt Henry seconded. Motion carried. Beth and Pastor will decide on the wording for the red blocks.
2. The Constitution and Bylaws Committee is meeting on Wednesdays. They are trying to complete the revisions before the September Council Meeting.
3. Next year's budget needs to be completed before the October Voter's Assembly. The Nominating Committee also needs to meet to prepare a slate of officers for the October Voter's Assembly. The President, Pastor, Chairman of the Board of Elders and Chairman of the Board of Trustees are the nominating committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Carol Zeile, Council Secretary

Want something included in "The Peace Post" next month? Email Beth or Pastor Messer (addresses on back page) by August 22 with your item. Also, call or email them anytime with your feedback and/or ideas!

LIFE WITH GOD
A Survey of Biblical Doctrine
As Confessed In
The Evangelical Lutheran Church

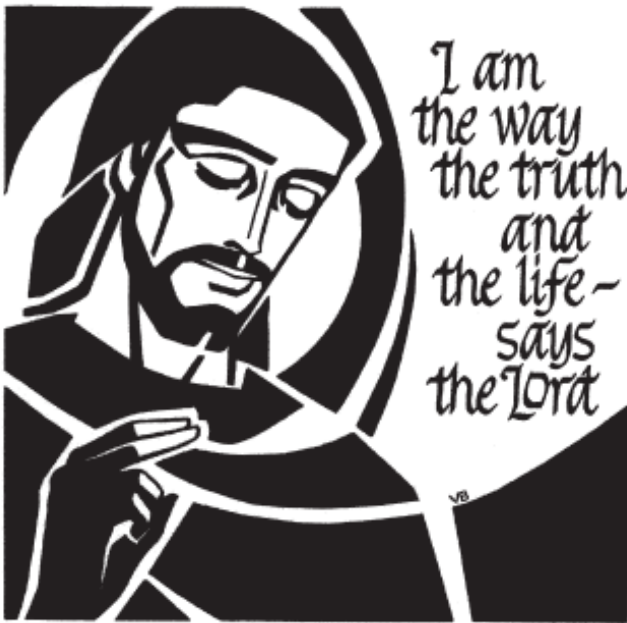
COMING THIS FALL!

Two available times:
Wednesday evenings at 8:00 p.m.
Saturday mornings at 11:00 a.m.

Begins Wednesday, September 20 and
Saturday, September 23

We need your help in getting this information out into our community! You can help by participating with us in our upcoming Evangelism Walks or by acquiring some flyers from Pastor Messer to hand out to family, friends, and neighbors who may be interested in joining the class. If you have any questions, please see Pastor Messer.

Thanks!



A NEW SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM TO BEGIN AT PEACE!

The Board of Education and Pastor Messer have developed an entirely new Sunday School program to begin this year in our congregation. The program is focused on returning to the basics of Christian education by teaching our children, in a repetitive fashion, the most important stories from the Bible, the six chief parts of Luther's Small Catechism, some of the most important Scripture verses/passages, and an appreciation for our awesome and inspiring Lutheran hymnody. Our Sunday School program will be broken up into three different groups: 1) Kindergarten-2nd Grade; 2) 3rd Grade-5th Grade; 3) 6th Grade-8th Grade. Confirmed members of our congregation will participate in our Adult Bible Study each Sunday. A three-year curriculum has been developed for each class which will cover the entire Bible. All three classes will be studying the same Bible stories each week on different levels. The middle and upper grades will have memory work each week, and all three classes will be introduced to the same "Hymn of the Week" each week. Participation from the parents of our Sunday School children is vital if this program is to succeed. Parents will be asked to go over the memory work with their children for the upcoming week and to make sure that they have their workbooks completed (for the upper grades). We are looking forward to beginning this new program and to the cooperation of the parents and our members. If you have any questions regarding the new program, please see Sharyn Greening (chairperson of our Board of Education) or Pastor Messer.

RALLY DAY

Rally Day for Sunday School and Adult Bible Study will be **Sunday, Sept. 10** to get our Christian education programs started for year. Please remember how important it is to study God's word as often as possible. The children of our congregation are encouraged to attend Sunday School each week and students who have been confirmed along with all adults can join Pastor as he begins a study of the book of **Revelation**.

What would Rally Day without a potluck? Bring a dish to pass and your table service for fellowship time after Sunday School and Bible Study.

S.A.L.T. NEWS

S.A.L.T. is hard at work planning to implement the following ministries at Peace:

Evangelism Walks (see p. 6)
Support Our Troops
Community Food Bank
Seminary Donations (see p. 4)
Advent Tea
Movie/Game Nights

Look for info on all of these exciting ministries on the S.A.L.T. bulletin board soon!

Our evangelism committee will only be effective with your help. Please consider volunteering your time to help us in our ministries, so that, together, we can Share with All the Love and Truth of Christ.

PYG NEWS

PYG met on Sunday, August 20 and brainstormed on how we can make our youth group more mission-oriented, fun, and active. We need the help of parents and youth alike to make this happen!

All youth of Peace from grades 5-12 are invited, and strongly encouraged, to join us on **Sunday, September 17 from 1:00-5:00 at Pastor Messer's house** as we kick off our year and begin to develop a plan for making our PYG all that it can be. In addition to the business of the day, we will eat and have fun together playing horseshoes and volleyball.

Please be there if at all possible. We need all the youth of Peace to start getting involved! See you there!

SECRET PALS

It's almost time to find out who has been your secret pal this year! We will be having a luncheon on **Saturday, September 23 from 1:00 to 3:00 pm. Please see Lisa Messer if you can bring a dish to pass.** At this luncheon, our secret pals will be revealed **and** we'll collect the secret pal forms for those who would like to participate in the program in the coming year. If you were not in the program this year, you are more than welcome to join us! Everyone, including this year's participants, must fill out a new form to be turned in at the luncheon. The forms are available on the table by the mailboxes (where secret pal gifts are left). If you can't make the luncheon, please return your completed form to Pastor Messer sometime before that date, or you can put your form in the Secret Pals box located on the table. Pastor Messer will be matching us up and sending out the forms the following week so that we can begin a new year right away. If you have any questions, please see Pastor or Lisa Messer.

SEMINARY COLLECTION

We are in the process of putting together a collection of clothing to donate to the clothing co-op at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, IN. Look for information on how you can participate in this on the S.A.L.T. bulletin board at church. Pastor Messer will be taking the collection down to the seminary sometime towards the end of September or beginning of October. Thanks in advance for your participation and donations!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT PEACE

Sunday School and Adult Bible Class

- Sunday School will resume on **Sunday, September 10** (please see article on page 4).
- Adult Bible Class is offered **every Sunday at 11:00 a.m.** for all confirmed members of Peace and adult guests. On **Sunday, September 10**, we will begin a detailed study of **Revelation**. You will not want to miss it!

Youth Confirmation Class

- Youth Confirmation Class will re-convene in September. There will be a **meeting for all 1st and 2nd year confirmands and their parents on Sunday, September 10 at noon.**

Adult Confirmation/Information Class

- Three prospective members are currently meeting with pastor for catechesis. Also, see the article on the upcoming "Life With God" class on page 4.



Together in the Word

- Our *Together in the Word* Bible Study takes place **Tuesday mornings at 9:30 a.m.** All men and women of Peace who are available at that time are encouraged to join us. Guests are always welcome, too. We are currently engaged in a detailed study of the **Gospel of John**. Please plan on joining us soon.

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Happy Birthday to:

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 3 - Marion Greening | 14 - Kim Penzien |
| 3 - John Isaksson | 17 - Susan Reithel |
| 5 - Lisa Messer | 18 - Edward Rosalez |
| 6 - Marissa Byers | 19 - Dorothy Trgina |
| 11 - Maxine Isaksson | 20 - Brenda Stroven |
| 12 - Joshua Schafer | 23 - Dave Zeile |
| 13 - Vern Jakolat | 23 - Tim Gustavison |

Happy Anniversary to:

- 4 - Bob & Jo Wendt
- 8 - Vern & Mary Jakolat
- 12 - Brian & Brenda Stroven
- 19 - James & Janice Sager
- 30 - Ovidio & Christine Figueroa

If we ever miss your birthday or anniversary, please let us know so that we can update our records.

EVANGELISM WALK

What: Walking a local subdivision handing out (or placing in doors) information about our church.

Who: All members of Peace are invited and encouraged to participate.

When: **Saturday, September 9** (meet at church at 10:00 am; we'll begin walking at 11:00 and be done sometime between 2:00 and 3:00).

We need your help! We would like to distribute information about our church to as many homes as possible. There were only eight of us who participated in the first walk. We need lots more!

PAROCHIAL REPORT

(As of July 30)

Membership at Peace

Baptized - 184

Confirmed - 142

Official Acts: 1

August 27 - Baptism of Kaylynn Breanne Fisher

Membership gains: 1

Kaylynn Breanne Fisher –infant baptism

Membership losses: 0

Financial Report

YTD Receipts (1/1/06 - 8/31/06): \$61,111.84

Budgeted YTD (1/1/06 - 8/31/06): \$71,750.00

Music: Gift of God or Tool of the Devil

by Richard C. Resch

GIFTS ARE USUALLY MEANT FOR THE GOOD OF THE RECEIVER. The child of God is baptized into a beautifully manifold plan of gifts, and there is no reason to doubt the intention or result of those gifts. But these are not the only gifts that are offered in life. The subject of gifts would be simple if it were not for another plan devised and skillfully implemented by an enemy of God's children - the great deceiver. He purposely twists everything in the world and in the church to his evil end. His twisted gifts promise delight, but bring anguish; they appear to be innocent, but are masterpieces of deception; they claim to be true, but are lies. The children of God are surrounded by two opposing plans. Nothing is as easy or simple as it may at first appear. Good gifts can become harmful tools.

But let us look first at God's plan, within which he gives the sublime gift of music to his children and church. His plan is found throughout his Word. Robin Leaver writes:

Although there is no specific chapter and verse in which is to be found a clear theological statement concerning the nature and function of music, there is nevertheless hardly a page of the Bible from which some musical inference cannot be drawn. Music is the accompanying counterpoint to the divine message and in all the mighty acts of God music is never very far away. From eternity to eternity, from creation to judgment, from Genesis to Revelation, the sound of music is to be heard.1

A THEOLOGY OF MUSIC

The scriptural theology of music may be summarized under the following ten points:

(1) Music is a divine gift. It accompanies creation ("and the morning stars sang together," Job 38:7) and is given to man in the calling of Jubal to be father of all who play the flute and harp (Gn 4:21). This gift of music accompanies the highest divine gift, faith. The Psalmist sings: "While I live I will praise the LORD; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being" (Ps 146:2). These are words that can only be sung by faith.

(2) Music is a gift in which all angels and heavenly hosts join mortals without ceasing. "Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights! Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his hosts!" (Ps 148:1, 2). The book of Revelation describes the activity of those in the presence of the Lamb. "They do not rest day or night, saying: 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!'" (4:8). This heavenly anthem is the joyful future of all saints.

(3) Music is ordained for use by the church. "Sing to the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints" (Ps 149:1). "When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals to praise the Lord, according to the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord" (Ezra 3:10-11a).

(4) Music teaches doctrine to the church. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your heart to the Lord" (Col 3:16). And the Lord said to Moses: "Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel" (Dt 31:19). The practice of the church teaches the church.

(5) Music carries the confession of the faithful "They shall utter the memory of your great goodness, and shall sing of your righteousness" (Ps 145:7). "One generation shall praise your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts" (Ps 145:4). Music helps the memory of the church in rehearsing what God has done. It is an integral, powerful part of the church's proclamation to young and old.

(6) Music is to be a full-throated response of praise and thanks-giving to God. "Let the saints be joyful in glory... Let the high praises of God be in their throats" (Ps 149: 5, 6). "Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth: break forth in song, rejoice and sing praises!" (Ps 98:4). "Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving: sing praises on the harp to our God" (Ps 147:7). The object of this praise and thanksgiving is always God.

(7) Music heals, soothes, and drives away the devil. "And so it was, whenever the spirit from God was upon Saul, that David would take a harp and play it with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him" (1 Sm 16: 23). Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs comfort and strengthen the saints in times of trial. Paul and Silas sang praises to God as they sat in a dark dungeon (Acts 16: 25).

(8) Music is powerful. The power of music can be used to point to God: "When the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying: 'For he is good, for his mercy endures forever,' the house, the house of the LORD was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God" (2 Chr 5: 13:14). But the power of music can also point to other gods: "So at the time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, and lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations and languages fell down and worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up" (Dn 3:7).

(9) Music in the church requires understanding and a proper spirit: "I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding" (1 Cor 14:15). Music serves the word. It is to be disciplined in the church by an appropriate reverence for and interpretation of the divine message it carries.

(10) Music in the church is led by those who are skilled. Chenaniah was chosen by David as chief musician of the Levites because "he was instructed about the song, and was skillful" (1 Chr 15:22).

Martin Luther and his Cantor, Johann Walter, addressed this very subject in a poem, *In Praise of the Noble Art of Music*. The poem of 332 lines was written in Wittenberg in 1538 by Cantor Walter as a compilation of Luther's thought on the subject of music. The introduction concludes:

I have just named two reasons why
God gave us music from on high.
Those reasons teach us we must use
The gift from heaven as God would choose:
By it let God be glorified;
Then let it be our help and guide.
Since this high art most certainly
Was given by God, as all can see,
It outshines other arts in name,
Nobility, and lasting fame.
For music and theology
Were given by God concurrently.
No other arts with it compare
For it breathes purest Gospel air,
Exalting Holy Writ on high
And earning highest praise thereby.2

The scriptural theology of music does not present music as a capricious art. Though the world might be free to use music without discipline, the church is not. God's plan for music in the service of his church requires skill, understanding, a proper spirit, attention to what is being taught, a careful vigilance over a power that could harm souls, and the high purpose of serving the gospel of Christ. The world's tendency to do as it wishes with music must never be envied by the church. For when the church follows the guidelines from her Lord she has all the freedom she needs for a satisfying and glorious church music practice.

We should also now consider the Lutheran theology of worship, which is the context for church music. For the Lutheran theology of worship is surprisingly unique in the whole picture of Christendom. And in these complex end times, when the devil is working with great energy also within the church, it is crucial for Lutherans to understand who they are, what they believe, and why they worship as they do, especially since they are surrounded by very different notions of worship and the church.

The Lutheran theology of worship is uniquely based on grace. Thus the name given to worship: the divine service. These simple words say it all. God here serves his gifts to his children. He is the gracious giver in the divine service who gives gifts through his means of grace. As the saints are gathered around word and sacrament they receive exactly what they need most:

forgiveness of sins and the strengthening of faith. God has set the agenda, namely, his feeding his children. Our agenda, whatever it may be, must be subsumed in his.

What is the role of the saints in this theology? Reception. The saints must first receive before they can give. Every word of their response comes from the divine gift of faith. In the divine service they confess to each other and to God what they have received by faith as God puts the words in their mouths. "If anyone speak, let him speak as the oracle of God" (1 Pt 4:11). As the Book of Concord states: "Faith is that worship which receives God's offered blessings.... It is by faith that God wants to be worshiped, namely, that we receive from him what he promises and offers" (Ap IV, 49). The Lutheran Church is a liturgical church because in the liturgy the saints hear, say, and sing Scripture. The readings, Psalms, responses, canticles, and prayers from the Word say back to God exactly what needs to be said. Such scriptural, liturgical worship, centered around receiving the means of grace, will naturally have the proper balance of law and gospel.

Music fits into the divine service as servant of the means of grace. Music in the world serves the pleasure of man, but in the church music serves the purpose of God. Since the plan of God is very different from that of man, the One whose will is being served must be made clear. The desires of the individual regarding the gift of music must conform to God's plan. If music takes on a free or undisciplined, perhaps even a rebellious spirit, it is no longer a proper servant of the means of grace and therefore has no place in the divine service of the church.

The theology of music as articulated in Scripture, Luther, and the Confessions is surprisingly simple. But in reality, church music practice today is anything but simple. Those responsible for music in the church often find themselves in a veritable hornet's nest concerning the appropriateness, choice, influence, and role of music in their parish. Such tension and controversy are not God's plan for his gift, and are thus the result of another plan. Too often, music is used as a tool in the service of the great deceiver.

In the Old Testament God speaks through the prophet Amos against offerings of music that lack a proper spirit and understanding: "Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen" (Amos 5:23). "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion . . . that chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David" (Amos 6: 1, 5). Isaiah speaks negatively of music as a worldly excess of the rich in Israel: "The harp and the strings, the tambourine and the flute, and wine are in their feasts; but they do not regard the work of the Lord, nor consider the operation of his hands" (Is 5:12). Clearly, music can be used to serve a master other than God, and if so, God does not wish to hear it.

While Old Testament references to musical instruments abound, New Testament references are limited to a few that describe the trumpets and harps of heaven. In other words, the New Testament says nothing about the instruments of worship here on earth. Something has changed to quiet the trumpets, lutes, harps, strings, pipes, and loud clashing cymbals of Old Testament worship.

By the time of the New Testament, instrumental music had become closely associated with the life, games, rites, and worship practices of pagan religions. These influences surrounded Christians in their daily life. "There is hardly a church father from the fourth century who does not speak against pagan musical practice using the strongest language."³ Novatian says: "By a trick of the devil sacred things have been transferred into illicit ones."⁴ Chrysostom refers to musical instruments along with obscene songs as "rubbish of the devil."⁵

The fathers recognized that instruments had been used for the service of pagan gods, the lust of the flesh, and the ways of the world. These dangerous associations had consequences that the fathers did not ignore. They stated emphatically that instruments were no longer suitable for expressing the sacred in the church. A good thing had been twisted to the point that it had to be expelled from the divine service.

As a result of the fathers' counsel, the human voice became the instrument of the young church.⁶ The "new song" was now the unaccompanied vocal (solo, choral, and congregational) offered in a proper spirit. Clement of Alexandria said: "The Lord made man a beautiful breathing instrument after his own image; certainly he is himself an all harmonious instrument of God."⁷ The silence of the New Testament and the protest of the fathers concurred. Something had happened to a practice of the church that needed to be addressed by the church for the sake of the church. A good gift had become a harmful tool.

Paul Henry Lang writes:

The task of the young church was made difficult by the hostile atmosphere in which it lived, an atmosphere opposed to Christian conceptions of the purpose of life and the vocation of man, and one in which music had sunk to the lowest regions of lascivious amusement. Indeed, it is surprising that music found entrance into the young church at all. The admission was assured in principle because of Scripture, but the extent of its use and its character and nature gave rise to grave problems.[8](#)

The early church approached the use of music with caution, aware of both its dangers and its potential. Their attitude may be summarized as follows:

Music was respected as a power (even without a text).

Music was regarded as one of the best teachers available for both good and bad.

Music was expected to serve the glorification of God and edification of man.

Music was feared as a carrier of pagan influences to young and old.

Music required and received vigilance by church authorities, and concerns were addressed decisively by modifying the practice of the church. (Unaccompanied vocal music became the practice while instruments had to wait for a time when they no longer carried the message and the baggage of the world.)[9](#)

These concerns have much to say also about church music practice today.

MUSIC AS A POWER

Music was respected as a power. The power was not questioned until the 1960s, when it was first argued that music is neutral. The argument was raised, not on the basis of any new findings, but in order to remove the fear of music so that it could be used with complete freedom. The argument could be defined as a battle of the ancients and traditionalists on one side and the materialists on the other. The ancients and traditionalists believe that music affects character and society, and therefore artists are to be responsibly moral and constructive, not immoral and destructive. The materialists disclaim responsibility and the need for value judgments, and therefore pay no heed to the outcome of their sounds. The materialists want to sell a product at any cost, and so they play with fire. But they must first convince their audience that playing with fire is harmless.

One example of the materialists' campaign is to make MTV (Music Television) appear as a harmless, normal, accepted part of our modern culture. They would have us believe that MTV is simply the normal progression of popular music history, acceptable enough to be a standard offering in the family cable TV package. Before the 1960s such a notion would have been derided from every quarter. But a multi-billion dollar industry has developed, and it must sell itself by breaking down the paradigms of responsibility and values. So music is said to be neutral, meaning that it has no power, message, or baggage of its own. Yet MTV itself masterfully depicts the images behind its music for all to see and feel.

The campaign of the materialists is brought into the church in the form of marketing. Churches are compared to businesses, where success is measured by numbers and response. Old paradigms must make way for whatever works now. One of the old paradigms said that music is potentially a harmful power. In the name of successful marketing it is argued that any music may carry a sacred text because the power is contained only in the text. Thus whatever music is able to attract people's interest may be employed for the sake of marketing the church.[10](#)

Apart from denying the directives of God and the salutary advice of the church fathers concerning the power of music, church marketers have also developed their own "incarnational" theology. They are led by their agenda to say that all things are made new by service in the church. But neither sinners nor music are made new by their service! Service in the church requires coming under the cross and being changed by it! The "all things have become new" passage is followed by an extensive (and often ignored) admonition about what it means to be holy, separate, and forgiven (2 Cor 5:17, 2 Cor 6 and 7). Adding sacred words to music from the secular realm does not automatically make that music "new." To believe otherwise requires that music be neutral. But music is a power, and any agenda to convince the church otherwise should be exposed for what it is - part of the great deceiver's plan to harm the church.

MUSIC AS A TEACHER

Music was regarded as one of the best teachers available for both good and bad. As a servant of the church, music helps teach the timeless and universal truths of the faith. The problem in the church today is that music is seldom seen as a teacher of anything, good or bad. But whether the teacher is recognized or not, the teaching does go on; something is being taught. When church music serves the will of man, emphasis is placed on how the music is received instead of what is being taught. However, if the music of the church is seen as a divine method of catechizing the faithful, then saving truths are easily given to even the youngest saints. Then the difference between music as a slave of the flesh and music as a servant of the Spirit becomes evident to young and old by witness of the church's practice.

Sunday schools, Vacation Bible Schools, and Lutheran elementary schools each have excellent opportunities to use music to teach the faith. Unfortunately, these are the very agencies that often trivialize the faith through music. Music is indeed "used," but often in ways contrary to a proper theology of music. The title "fun songs" has for many years described the music given to children in the church setting. That practice has been bad enough, but now the marketing campaign from within the church has extended the use of "fun songs" to include adults and the divine service. Something is very wrong when the word most commonly associated with children's singing and so-called "effective worship" is fun. Fun is a man-centered goal and must not be confused with true Christian joy, which is a Christ-centered result of faith. Every trend that seeks to satisfy the individual rather than to feed the faithful should be exposed for what it is—the work of the great deceiver.[11](#)

MUSIC FOR THE GLORY OF GOD AND EDIFICATION OF MAN

Music was expected to serve the glorification of God and edification of man. Even though the whole spectrum of music fills our lives, the spectrum must narrow when music serves the church. Here it must glorify God and edify man. But much of the music that surrounds us cannot serve this high purpose, for it already serves and glorifies man and his world. By contrast, the worship of the saints points heavenward and seeks to separate itself from worldly associations. Athanasius says:

That is the true life, which a man lives in Christ; for although they are dead to the world, yet they dwell as it were in heaven, minding those things which are above . . . While we walk on earth, our dwelling is in heaven. Now those who thus live, and are partakers in such virtue, are alone able to give glory to God.[12](#)

Martin Luther is one of the most misunderstood church fathers with respect to the use of music in the church. Claims that he used tavern tunes for his hymns are used in defense of a music practice that freely accepts worldly associations. Such conclusions bear no resemblance to Luther's writings on the subjects of worship and music. In fact, Luther's actions teach us quite a different lesson. In his search for the right tune for his text *Vom Himmel hoch, da komm' ich her*, Luther learned about the power of worldly associations. According to the Luther scholar Markus Jenny, Luther's first wedding of this text with a tune was "a classic example of the failure of a contrafacta." He set it to a secular dance song that begins, "I step eagerly to this dance." The dance and tune were closely associated with a Christmas wreath ceremony that was often held in taverns. Luther found the secular associations to be so strong that he eventually wrote a fresh tune that was free of worldly associations. He then indicated on the manuscript that this new melody was to be used in the Sunday service and with children. Luther's modification of this beloved hymn is indication of his sensitivity to the harmful power of worldly associations in the worship practice of the church.[13](#)

The music of the world serves the likes and dislikes of man. That is why a separate music expression for the church is so important. For music that carries the agenda of the world throughout the week cannot then serve the church on Sunday. Yet given the choice, man will choose the music of the world. From the earliest days of the church God has given his church a wealth of music that is separate and able to serve worthily his glorification and our edification. He has in every century contributed to this body of musical expression. Athanasius describes the context for such music: "Let us not celebrate the feast after an earthly manner, but as keeping festival in heaven with the angels. And let us rejoice, not in ourselves, but in the Lord, that we may be inheritors with the saints."[14](#)

MUSIC AS THE CARRIER OF PAGAN INFLUENCES

Music was feared as a carrier of pagan influences to young and old. The campaign of the materialists in the secular realm has been extraordinarily successful.[15](#) Due to masterful desensitizing by the materialists' campaign, there is no limit to what the worldly music of today can say. The texts that outraged the church fathers were tame compared to the musical influence surrounding youth today.

The undisciplined music of today is problematic for more than textual reasons. Steve Lawhead observes in his book *Rock Reconsidered*:

As rhythmic creatures, we cannot help but be affected by the powerful, overbearing rhythms of rock music. These rhythms short-circuit centuries of refinement and sophistication, exciting our baser primitive instincts. Subjection to rock's beat can cause harm mentally, physically and emotionally. It is a rough music, dealing with the lower side of human nature. It creates an unhealthy mental environment for its listeners through suggestive lyrics and obscene connotations. Rock excites a person's sexual drives, and projects an atmosphere where immorality is acceptable.¹⁶

Pagan influences are alive, well, and readily available to young saints in concerts, cassettes and compact discs, videos, radio, and cable television. Anyone with any agenda can reach the young by writing a song. The early church feared and preached against such influences. But the church today does not fear the powerful influence of music as is evidenced by her amazing silence.

MUSIC AND VIGILANCE BY THE CHURCH

Music required and received vigilance by church authorities, and concerns were addressed decisively by modifying the practice of the church. Because the fathers fervently believed in music as a power to be feared, respected, and carefully directed for use by the church, they addressed music as a major issue in the life of the church. I believe there are four underlying reasons why today's bishops and pastors are for the most part silent on church music issues: (1) The marketers of the church have successfully confused the subject, (2) the reign of individualism has forced music from the realm of substance to the man-centered role of appeasement, (3) most pastors do not feel equipped to speak about musical matters, and (4) too often pastors separate theology and practice and therefore see no problem.

The Confusion Wrought by Church Marketers

The confusion wrought by church marketers is the result of music being used as an effective manipulator. When pastors are surrounded in their circuit, district, and synod by suggestions for how music can and should be used for bigger numbers and "effective ministry," they either follow this misguided advice or stand firm with an orthodox understanding of the church, ministry, worship, and music. Music as manipulator may fit Protestant Evangelicalism - it may fit every other church in town - but it does not fit orthodox Lutheran theology. For Lutherans, music has the high purpose of building up the faithful as a part of preaching and teaching. Lutherans are bold to do this because of God's directives concerning his gift. God does not teach that music is a tool of the church to manipulate emotions to increase numbers.

The Man-Centered Role of Appeasement

Pastors are also faced with pressure from members not to take music so seriously. A sample request: "Pastor, I don't know much about music, but I do know what I like. What harm can it do if we sing our favorites and occasionally have some contemporary Christian music in the service?" Perhaps such a person cares deeply about music, but he has not been taught music's serious, high, and beautiful work of proclamation in the Lutheran Church. Pastors must remember, perhaps daily, that no one is born with an orthodox view of music. It requires patience and a willingness to impart, through a gentle and consistent pastoral practice, that these are not matters of personal preference for him or anyone else in the church; that music is not a tool for appeasement; and that these matters are not theologically insignificant.

Requests for contemporary Christian music (CCM) in the divine service are on the increase, especially for weddings. According to the rock band Petra, CCM is "a blend of ministry and entertainment."¹⁷ No doubt their assessment is correct, which is precisely why CCM is not suitable for the divine service. CCM has its source, its vocabulary, and at least one-half of its message in the popular music of today's culture. While the music may at times be beautiful and appealing, it carries an underlying message - the world's message. Because much of CCM's purpose is to entertain the masses, it is by definition an informal, popular, man-centered expression with immediate appeal. It should be obvious that such music cannot faithfully serve the church, for it already has two other masters: man and this world. By its very nature, CCM is in rebellion against the sanctified and heavenly. Its proclamation is a confused attempt to blend the sacred and the secular. The church should beware when the great deceiver tells her that the music of Saturday night and that of Sunday morning should be the same.

The Silence of Pastors

Pastors are often silent on these issues simply because they have not been trained in music. The church fathers spoke even when they were not musicians because of their respect for and fear of music's power. Today's silence is not healthy for the church. Music issues need to be addressed in seminary education. Because the message and function of music is integral to both the gathering of saints around the means of grace in worship and the life of those saints in this world, it warrants the time

and study necessary to equip pastors to speak in an informed and pastoral way about this gift.

The Separation of Theology and Practice

Other pastors are silent because they separate theology and practice. They preach and teach orthodoxy from the pulpit and in the classroom, but they do not see the connection between doctrine and worship life. There is therefore an inconsistency that cannot help but confuse the flock. Worship practice teaches the faith. Pastors who are consistent in theology and practice have the significant aid of liturgy, hymnody, and church music as a reinforcement of their proclamation. When attention to the union of word and music is not regarded as important, it is the word that suffers. Peter Brunner says:

Music which lays hold of the word, and the word, which is clad in the music, become a sign of that peculiarly uncommon, unworldly, exuberant, overflowing element of Christian worship, which is something stupendous and something extremely lovely at the same time.¹⁸

SOME CONCLUSIONS

The fathers modified the church music practice of their day. Instruments were put away until they could again worthily carry the holy. What now needs to be removed from church music practice in our time?

- o All music that serves other gods.
- o All music that has the goal of pleasing men rather than God.
- o All manipulative uses of music.
- o All that regards the church as a business and thus exalts the methods and ingenuity of man.
- o All that brings the world's influence into the gathering of saints around the means of grace. All inconsistency in doctrine and practice.
- o All that refuses to point heavenward.

How often we hear today that the church must change to meet the changing times. The true church will beware of such advice. For the needs of man have not changed since the Garden of Eden; nor has the cunning of Satan. And thus the church must ever guard against his deceptive advice. As our Lord once said even to Peter: "Get behind me, Satan! You have not in mind the things of God, but the things of men" (Mt 16:23). In truth, the faith once delivered has not changed. The need for God's gifts in his means of grace has not changed. And the need for a stable worship life that points heavenward has not changed.

The music of the church serves the needs of men, in the context of changing times, when it directs the hearts and minds of men to the unchanging things of God. In so doing, the music of the church - as with all the gifts of God to his church - preserves the church upon the rock of Christ, "even when steeples are falling." In the words of Johann Gerhard:

Beautiful as a lily is the church, but it is as a lily among thorns. She is the daughter of God, but she is greatly despised by the world and looks expectantly to her heavenly inheritance. She is as a chaste virgin and those who are true to her abstain from the embraces of the world. They belong to her and do not wish to dishonor themselves or her by an unholy alliance with the devil. Let her children beware that they not cling to Satan in an unholy union.¹⁹

Thanks be to God for his good gift of music! The true church delights and rejoices in the use of this gift as God intended, even as she surely will in heaven.

NOTES

1. Robin Leaver, *Duty and Delight* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 1985), p. 48.
2. Carl Schalk, *Johann Walter The First Cantor of the Lutheran Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), p. 15.
3. James McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 2.

4. McKinnon, p. 48.
 5. McKinnon, P. 86.
 6. Egon Wellesz, *Ancient and Oriental Musk* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 303.
 7. McKinnon, p. 30.
 8. Paul Henry Lang, *Musk in Western Civilization* (New York: W.W. Norton Co., 1941), p. 40.
 9. As an aside: such a time came after Gregorian chant gained ascendancy and reigned for centuries as the supreme musical influence overshadowing all music-making in both the church and the world (Lang, p. 78).
 10. I have written on this subject in my essay "Church Music at the Close of the Twentieth Century: The Entanglement of Sacred and Secular," *Logia* 2, no. 2 (1993), pp. 21-27.
 11. I have written on the subject "Hymnody as Teacher of the Faith" in *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 57 ~ pp. 161-176.
 12. Athanasius Easter Letter 7.3. English translation is from *Select Writings and Letters of Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria*, S. Archibald Robertson, *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd series, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1981), p. 524.
 13. Markus Jenny, *Luthers geistliche Lieder und Kirchen-gesange* (Koln: Bohlau Verlag, 1985) pp. 109-ill.
 14. Athanasius Easter Letter 6.12. English translation is from *Select Writings of Athanasius*, p. 523.
 15. By way of example: The Sex Pistols sing:
 Right now! Ahhhhhhhhh!
 I am an anti-Christ
 I know what I want
 And I know how to get it
 I wanna destroy passers by
 For I wanna be anarchy (Tame, p. 31.)

 And Ozzy Osbourne sings in his song "Suicide Solution":
 You're living a lie
 Such a shame, you're wondering why.
 Why don't you just kill yourself,
 Because you can't escape the master reaper.
- (Gary L. Krug, *Rock-the Beat Goes On* [Milwaukee: North-western Publishing House, 1987], p. m) Some recent rap texts on MTV are so shockingly perverted and base that they cannot be printed in this essay.
16. Steve Lawhead, *Rock Reconsidered* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1981), pp. 6i, 72.
 17. Dan Peters, Steve Peters, Cher Merrill, *What About Christian Rock?* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1986), p. 129
 18. Peter Brunner, *Worship in the Name of Jesus* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), p. 273.
 19. Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations* (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1991), pp. 127, 128.

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September 2006

Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

August 27.	August 28	August 29	August 30	August 31	1	2
12th Sunday after Pentecost 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC		9:30—Together in the Word	6:30 pm—Constitutional Committee mtg.	5:00 pm— <i>WW</i>		
3 13th Sunday after Pentecost 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC	4 Happy Labor Day! 7:00 pm—Ladies Guild Mtg.	5 <i>No Together in the Word (Pastor @ Winked)</i>	6 6:30 pm—Constitutional Committee mtg.	7 5:00 pm— <i>WW</i>	8	9 10:00 am—Evangelism Walk
10 14th Sunday after Pentecost RALLY DAY! 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC 12:00—Confirmation mtg.	11 6:45 pm—Council Mtg.	12 9:30—Together in the Word	13 6:30 pm—Constitutional Committee mtg.	14 5:00 pm— <i>WW</i>	15	16
17 15th Sunday after Pentecost 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC 1:00—PYG mtg. at Pastor Messer's house	18	19 9:30—Together in the Word	20 6:30 pm—Constitutional Committee mtg. 8:00 pm—Life With God	21 5:00 pm— <i>WW</i>	22	23 11:00 am—Life With God 1:00 pm—Secret Pals Luncheon
24 16th Sunday after Pentecost 9:30—Divine Service 10:45—Fellowship 11:00—BC	25	26 9:30—Together in the Word	27 6:30 pm—Constitutional Committee mtg. 8:00 pm—Life With God	28 5:00 pm— <i>WW</i>	29	30 11:00 am—Life With God

SERVING IN SEPTEMBER

	<u>ACOLYTES</u>	<u>ORGANIST</u>	<u>ELDER</u>	<u>USHERS</u>	<u>GREETERS</u>
SEPTEMBER					
3 - 9:30 am	CJ Oswald Melanie Penzien	Mary Jakolat	Bill Hendrick	Jon Greening Bill Brostrom	Chris & Megan Brown
10 - 9:30 am	Alex Henry Jared Kuehnlein	Beth Brostrom	Larry Elliott	Leland Oswald Burt Henry	Ryan & Sarah Cummins
17 - 9:30 am	Lauren Penzien Sarah Messer	Mary Jakolat	Terry Luplow	Vern Jakolat James Sager	Jenny Baughman & Family
24 - 9:30 am	Jordan Henry Samantha Messer	Beth Brostrom	Dave Zeile	Curt Oswald Miguel Ortiz	Dick & Joyce Kohler
OCTOBER					
1 - 9:30 am	Kelsey Gensler Jessica Oswald	Mary Jakolat	Bill Hendrick	Jon Penzien Chris Brown	Dave & Carol Zeile

“Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men” (Eph. 6:7)

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The mission of Peace Lutheran Church is to welcome all people into the fellowship of God's love by proclaiming the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ and to nurture our members with God's Holy Word and Sacraments.