

**“An Abundance of Generous Gratitude:
Celebrating Music!”**

**Exodus 15:20; Psalm 100; I Thessalonians 5:16-18
November 3, 2019; 10:00 am
Congregational UCC, Buena Vista, CO
Rev. Rebecca K. Poos**

Exodus 15:20

²⁰ Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron’s sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing.

PSALM 100

¹ Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

² Worship the Lord with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.

³ Know that the Lord is God.

It is he that made us, and we are his;^[a]
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise.

Give thanks to him, bless his name.

⁵ For the Lord is good;

his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.

I Thessalonians 5:16-18

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

“An Abundance of Generous Gratitude”

This month our theme is “An Abundance of Generous Gratitude.” We will make our way to Thanksgiving by highlighting many things we are thankful for. In our worship, conversations and fellowship together in community.

Today we celebrate the Bazaar and all that it represents! Many, many hands and souls working together for many months to create this incredible gift to the community. A gift that keeps on giving all year long and beyond—as the proceeds from the Bazaar support vital missions and ministries literally all over the world! Can I get an Amen?!

An Abundance of Generous Music!

Today, we also kick off the month of gratitude and generosity by celebrating music.

Music—that incredible gift from God to us, from the soothing rhythm of our mother’s heartbeat that surrounded us in the womb, to lullabies, and through our childhood memories of songs, to every note and song we experience around us now—at whatever age we find ourselves.

What does music mean to you? When you think back on your life's "meaningful moments," do some of those rich memories involve music? Think back today, as we give thanks for music in our lives, of those "holy moments." Give thanks to our Creator and the one who created music for this incredible gift!

My earliest memories of music happened in church. I don't think I would ever have *liked* church if music weren't involved! I have memories of standing on the pew, leaning on my mom, as she held the hymnal and drew her finger along the verses, showing me where to sing. I could barely read! This was when I was five and we still lived in Seattle.

I loved all the singing that Sunday School and church involved—the sermon and all the rest were something to be endured, so we could sing some more! Youth group started with singing, and I learned to play guitar so I could join the leaders at our meetings and on retreats. Youth choir, adult choir, everything we could be part of, we were. My friends would say, "Why do you go to church so much?!"

Music is a central part of what we do in worship and in community. And you don't have to be a singer to participate. We sing hymns and songs and listen to beautiful music in our worship for many reasons. It allows us to experience God's spirit in a way unlike the spoken word. It also teaches us about God and our faith, and expresses our faith and praise and thanksgiving.

WHY SING HYMNS? (Article by Jonathan Aigner)

Hymns teach theology.

This must be the first reason. Biblical scholar Gordon Fee says, "Show me a church's songs, and I'll show you their theology." And if that's true, we should be horrified at the sorts of things we've let ourselves get away with singing. Hymn-singing continues the didactic function of corporate worship by adding a new dimension to the beautiful truth of the Christian story. If the songs we sing don't inform, enrich, or edify our faith and mission, they simply aren't worth singing. Bad worship begets bad theology. Bad theology begets a weak church. If **we are what we sing**, we should begin with the wealth of hymnody that has endured.

During the darkest (and happiest) times of my life, I feel my faith is all the better for having the great hymns of faith in my head, heart, and mouth, because they gave me a heightened language for articulating the good news of Christ's gospel in response to the crap going here in tension of the already-not yet.

Hymns display a social consciousness.

They give us an *awareness of others*. The idea that our faith should radically impact the way we relate to the world around us has long been a part of the hymn tradition through the likes of Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley, Fanny Crosby. And through the pens of recent hymn-writers, such as Fred Pratt Green, Brian

Wren, and Ruth Duck, we've seen a renewed focus on singing this important part of our faith.

Hymns unite generations of Christian people.

When we sing hymns in our churches, we are uniting with those around us in a fantastically corporate, sensory experience. When we sing hymns of the past, we are sharing in faith with those who have gone before us.

We come together as God's people, singing, speaking, preaching, and praying the old, old story, so that we might be remade further into Christ's likeness. Hymn-singing auto-corrects the blind spots in our modern faith understandings.

By allowing the witness of previous generations into our worship, we are presented with a more complete picture of what it means to be a person of faith in our own time.

And along with new hymns of our own creation, we pass on the faith of the saints who've gone before to our children and children's children.

The hymn tradition readily accepts new contributions.

New hymns are being written everyday! And they are *good!* So as we bring along the beloved hymns from the past; the traditions of the saints, we also explore and enjoy the new hymns.

Please turn in your hymnal to page:

“When In Our Music God is Glorified”

As we sing this hymn and any hymn, I challenge you to pay attention! What are the words we sing? What do they say about God? About us, as followers of Jesus? What are we to be about as Christians?

What are we praising? Confessing? Lifting up? Focusing on? Hymns can be praising idols, too! We must be discerning in our hymn-singing. What is being exalted when we sing? What do we learn?

[MUSIC LESSONS -the Best thing your parents ever did for you!](https://www.mic.com/articles/110628/13-scientific-studies-prove-music-lessons-were-the-best-thing-your-parents-did-for-you)

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Science proves that music is good for us! Good for our brains, our fine motor skills, whether we play an instrument or not, we can benefit from listening, discerning, learning.

(Share article)

STORIES OF SHARING MUSIC GENEROUSLY

Gary Allegretto (Harmonicowboy)



This week I taught 600 5th graders to play harmonica in three title one (low income) schools. The children were overjoyed as they were taken on a fun educational musical journey surrounding the harmonica while learning to accurately play four songs.

Then I provided full school assemblies to 2000 kids in which the 5th graders performed a song I taught them for their school mates as part of the presentation. They were so proud of themselves! Thanks to the Freeman Foundation and Hohner harmonicas for making it possible to make a joyful positive difference in so many children's lives.

HOLY MOLY!!! I am speechless. [Liz Backus](#) is crushing her boot, glasses, and fiddle game today dressed up as the fiddler from [Trout Steak Revival](#). My brain is exploding. The little orchestra dork inside of me doesn't even know what to do with this information. What an amazing honor. ☐

SUPPORT OTHERS!! If not a musician yourself!

That's just as important a way to show gratitude to God and our neighbors for the holy gift of music.

Exodus 15:20

²⁰ Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing.

As we explore the theme of gratitude over the next four Sundays, we will be challenged to bring our whole selves, body and mind, to thanksgiving. Dancing and playing tambourines, Miriam and the other Israelite women lead us in a kind of spiritual aerobics, a full body experience of gratitude. As we move into the week ahead, let's emulate Miriam and the Israelite women by mentally beating the tambourine and dancing each time we remember to thank God for God's faithfulness.

I Thessalonians 5:16-18

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Note! Paul does not say, "Like all circumstances!" You don't have to like them at all—especially when harm and injustice are being waged against you or your fellow humans.

You don't even have to "like" something on Facebook! Or Twitter or Instagram, when it's not right.

"Rejoice in all circumstances...." Hmmmm.....

Like Mercy last week—far more there than reaches the eyes or trite sayings on coffee cups?

Let us go into this week rejoicing! Giving thanks for
music—in all its varieties.

“I Worried” (Mary Oliver)

I worried a lot. Will the garden grow, will the rivers
flow in the right direction, will the earth turn
as it was taught, and if not how shall
I correct it?

Was I right, was I wrong, will I be forgiven,
can I do better?

Will I ever be able to sing, even the sparrows
can do it and I am, well,
hopeless.

Is my eyesight fading or am I just imagining it,
am I going to get rheumatism,
lockjaw, dementia?

Finally I saw that worrying had come to nothing.
And gave it up. And took my old body
and went out into the morning,
and sang.”

— Mary Oliver, Swan: Poems and Prose Poems