
The Joyful Noise

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As most of you know, I love to sing. In fact, if I get to heaven and there's not a heavenly choir I get to sing in, I may not stay. Well, OK, maybe I'd stay, but I would be eternally disappointed! I guess I love singing because I love both words that express profound thoughts, and melody that stirs the soul; and when words and melody come together in a song, it has the power to touch and move me deeply.

I got to experience a little heaven on earth this past weekend when Earl, Ben and I participated in a weekend choir retreat at Luther College in Decorah. (Earl and Ben are both Luther alums.) Luther College has a long tradition of excellence in their music program, both for their students and for the thousands of kids that have attended their Dorian music festivals and camps through the years. Ben and Sam both attended Luther's week-long "Dorian Summer Camp" several times during their middle school and high school years. Each year when we went to the concluding concert, I always felt a mixture of things: awe at how good the music being performed by the kids was, gratitude that Ben and Sam had had the opportunity to have such a wonderful musical experience, and a feeling of regret (and yes, I admit it—jealousy) that I had never had a chance to experience anything as glorious as singing in a choir with two or three hundred other voices.

So, given my love of singing and my regret that I never knew about Luther's Dorian events until I was far too old to participate, you can imagine how excited I was when I got an email several months ago saying that for the first time ever, Luther College was going to offer a Dorian Choir Retreat for grown-ups! It was a dream come true for this Dorian wannabe! I knew it would be a wonderful experience because first of all, the choir was to be directed by Andrew Last. He is now the director of Luther's Nordic Choir, but formerly directed Luther's Norsemen and Collegiate Choirs. Ben sang in both those choirs, so he had Dr. Last as a conductor for three years and had nothing but great things to say about him. Besides that, I knew the event would attract a lot of former Luther College music majors like Ben and Earl, so I knew the quality of the choir would be really good.

I was not disappointed! And yet all my imaginings didn't quite prepare me for when the singing started Friday evening at the first rehearsal. We turned to page 8 of "Homeward Bound" a favorite choral piece I'd heard several times but never had the chance to sing, and 212 voices began singing "Bind me not to the pasture; chain me not to the plow. Set me free to find my calling and I'll return to you somehow." Well, 212 voices may have started out, but it dropped to 211 pretty quickly. I don't think I got out more than "Bind me not" before I got so choked up that I couldn't sing; I was so overwhelmed at being a part of such a glorious sound!

Music has such power to move us, and such power to convey messages that are important for us to hear. And I think that the amazing thing about a song is that we not only hear the message it conveys, but we *feel* it. Somehow it touches us more deeply than the words alone ever could.

Besides the glorious feeling of singing with a choir of 212, we had moments of really “feeling the song.” One of the songs we sang was “A Place at the Table,” a song that makes you feel with conviction its message that ALL persons are sacred, all should have a “place at the table.” It states that “God will delight when we are creators of justice and joy, compassion and peace.” By itself the song is moving; when you sing it you can almost believe that the world could be as God meant it to be if only we would commit ourselves to living with compassion, peace, justice and joy. Here are the words to the song:

A Place at the Table"

words by Shirley Erena Murray, music by Brian Mann, arranged by Tom Trenney

For everyone born, a place at the table,
for everyone born, clean water and bread,
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
for everyone born, a star overhead,

Refrain

For young and for old, a place at the table,
a voice to be heard, a part in the song,
the hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled,
for young and for old, the right to belong.

Refrain

For woman and man, a place at the table,
revising the roles, deciding the share,
with wisdom and grace, dividing the power,
for woman and man, a system that's far.

Refrain

For everyone born, a place at the table,
to live without fear, and simply to be,
to work, to speak out, to witness and worship,
for everyone born, the right to be free.

Refrain

**Refrain: And God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!**

The song was made even more moving by the presence and words of Tom Trenney, the man who had arranged the particular version of the song we were singing. Tom is a small, soft-spoken man, one who impresses you as humble and genuine. As we were learning the song, he got up and spoke to us. He said that the idea of everyone having a place at the table took on new meaning for him when he was waiting for three foster children, twin 4-year-old girls and their 3 year-old brother, to arrive at his home. It struck him how these children had never really had a home, a “safe place for growing,” or a “place at the table,” and how much he hoped he could give them those things while they were in his care. When he finished speaking and we went back to singing, (or tried to) most of the sopranos around me were passing Kleenex and sniffing, unable to sing at that moment. But in the end, we sang that song with conviction and hope, and I would like to think that God delighted in the singing!

I think God would delight even more if we truly committed ourselves not just to sing those words with conviction and hope, but to live them. In a world where we have to debate whether or not it is wrong to take small children away from their parents and hold them in cages, we desperately need people who would dare to be “creators of justice and joy, compassion and peace.” May we be those people.

*He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*

Micah 6:8

PLEASE KEEP US INFORMED

If you have recently moved, changed your mailing address, your **email address**, phone number, **or are only using cell phones**, please contact the church office with the current information. **Thank you!**



If you would like to be included in the **Weekly Prayer Partner EMAIL** which includes scripture readings, prayer requests, birthdays, and weekly reminders, please email or call the church; especially if you have not received these lately. If you have email, but do not receive information from the church this way, please give your email address to the office. We may not have it, and it's important that we do going forward so you can stay updated. Thank you.

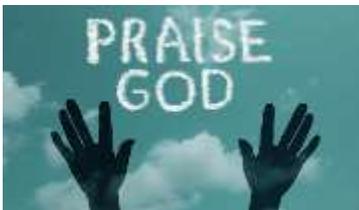
HOSPITALIZED

Please contact the church office or Pastor Kathy if you know a member has been admitted to the hospital. With the new privacy laws being strictly enforced there are many times we are unaware of hospitalizations. We would rather get ten calls than none at all. Thank you. **Prayer concerns** can be called into the office (472-2324) or emailed to the office at rockrapidsumc@premieronline.net or Pastor Kathy at kathysides@hotmail.com and they will be sent out.



Prayers~

- ✂ Barb Fegan
- ✂ Pray for the families of Ron Boekhout and LeRoy Griesse
- ✂ Dorothy Rockhill has moved to Assisted Living at Cherokee



Praise God~

- ☺ An amazing Central Lyon Band/Choir trip to Florida. Could not have been prouder of our students as they conducted themselves in a respectful way. Thanks to safe bus drivers and our Band/Choir directors.
- ☺ New Grandson Evan John Vander Zee born to Meredith & Joe Vander Zee- Grandson of John & Chris Vander Zee and Mike & Jackie Austin
- ☺ A productive, Christ led Annual Conference as the attendees chart a new Way Forward
- ☺ A Wonderful, joyous week of Bible School and all those who helped in any way.
- ☺ One Way Up leading our Worship with their musical talents, Christian witness and energy!
- ☺ Volunteers who loaded and unloaded the equipment for One Way Up
- ☺ Thanks to everyone who rode or walked alongside the RRUMC float in the Heritage Days Parade.



July Birthdays & Anniversaries

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|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 01~ Jane Aeilts | 09~ Rita Rice | 21~ Holly Spitler |
| 02~ Billi Sieperda | 09~ Eddie Sindt | 22~ Jason Engleman |
| 04~ Helen Boeve | 09~ Jay and Jamie Kelly | 23~ Deb Molitor |
| 05~ Heather Stubbe | 11~ Quinnlie Engleman | 23~ Shirley Harms |
| 05~ Daniel Berg | 11~ Jamie Kelly | 23~ Dave & Char Krahling |
| 05~ Laurie Herman | 12~ Kurt Huisman | 24~ Carmen Stratton |
| 06~ Rebecca Halse | 12~ Eric Selken | 25~ Steve Sieperda |
| 06~ Dan Vander Zee | 13~ Dorothy Rockhill | 27~ Becky Rydell |
| 07~ Larry Kracht | 16~ Marceia Brown | 28~ Randy & Kim Waagmeester |
| 07~ Marie McCormack | 16~ Alexis Selken | 30~ Elaine Birkey |
| 08~ Lance & Jill Schlumbohm | 17~ Jodi DeGooyer | 31~ Tom & Colleen Wall |

*We apologize for any omissions or incorrect information. Please contact the office with the correct/missing information. Thank you!

Reminders and Announcements



Community Bingo will be held the 1st Friday of each month at 2 p.m. at the Rock Rapids Health Centre. All are welcome.



Huge thanks to everyone for the prayers, calls and visits following the loss of LeRoy. It was very much appreciated. Thank you to the Bread of Life Frozen Meal Ministry for the food provided to our family.
~Griesse family



To the Meal Ministry at RRUMC~
Thank you so kindly putting together a meal for our family in the recent loss of our granddaughter Carsin. It made us feel God's love in a tangible way. Blessings to you all for being the hands and feet of Jesus.
~Much Love, The Birkey's
~Jerry & Elaine

RRUMC MEAL MINISTRY

Meal Ministry report: We have served 400 people from our community. We have had over 40 volunteers since March participating in this ministry from our church. We have had individuals donate meat and grills the month of June. We have 2 other churches participating in August and have donated to the ministry. We are also putting the non-perishable item list back out on the table. Some items are getting low. The volunteer sign-up sheets are out for fall/winter. Our information table is located by the front entrance hallway. We keep learning and growing. We ask for your continued prayers and positive attitudes. In closing this newsletter, I wanted to find some inspiration and I couldn't think of a better way to inspire or leave you with words of our closing song on Sundays.

GO NOW IN PEACE
NEVER BE AFRAID
GOD WILL GO WITH YOU EACH HOUR OF EVERYDAY
GO NOW IN FAITH
STEADFAST STRONG AND TRUE
KNOW HE WILL GUIDE YOU IN ALL YOU DO
GO NOW IN LOVE AND SHOW YOU BELIEVE
REACH OUT TO OTHERS SO ALL THE WORLD CAN SEE
GOD WILL BE THERE
WATCHING FROM ABOVE
GO NOW IN PEACE AND IN LOVE
AMEN AMEN AMEN

God Bless each of you!

Rhonda and Kathy

Luke 6 vs. 38

"Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with measure you use, it will be measured to you."

ROCK RAPIDS UMC Asking Members and Friends to Take a Cat



Yes, it's true! But it may not be what you think. We don't have a basketful of adorable kittens that need homes. But we are asking people to help us to assess where we are as a church and what we might dream of becoming, by spending a little time taking a **CAT**. In this case a CAT isn't a fluffy feline, but the **Congregational Assessment Tool**. The CAT is an online survey (paper copies will also be available) that is designed to help us get a picture not only of our current congregational attitudes, opinions and strengths, but also our willingness, ability, and energy for ministry as we move into the future.

Our new Visioning Team, which was created as a result of our Visioning Sunday in April, will be using the data collected to help us discern our current reality and suggest a vision for future ministry. Bob Dylan's phrase "The **Times They** Are A-Changin'" may be even more relevant now than when he first wrote it. We hope the information we get from the CAT will help us to know what changes we need to make as a church to ensure that Rock Rapids UMC continues to be as faithful and effective as possible as we seek to be and to make disciples for Jesus Christ now and into the future.

Watch for a letter and emails with more information about the CAT, which should be available to begin completing online on or about July 15th. And yes, I know, I hate surveys too. (I mean I REALLY hate them!) But please take the time to give us your input on the very important subject of who we are and where we should go as the Church of Jesus Christ in this time and place! It will be a lot less time and effort than taking a cat of the feline sort would have been! Should anyone be disappointed that a real cat isn't involved, let me know and I will do my best to find you one!

Pastor Kathy