

From the Director

Steadfast Love

This summer I began again to read from the Psalms each day. Many of you do this, and it is a long healthy devotional practice of the Christian church since it's beginning. Even among those people and churches that find little time or place for the Old Testament, the Psalms still are generally read and beloved. Have you ever seen the Bibles that are printed with just the New Testament *plus Psalms and Proverbs*? That's what I'm talking about.

The New Testament uses the Psalms, a lot of the Psalms, in a lot of places. So, if nothing else, there's our warrant for Christians to linger in and love the prayer and songbook of the Hebrew Bible, of *our* Bible.

I can't really explain why I took a break from reading at least one psalm per day. But this summer I began again to read through the psalms, daily and systematically. On my August read-through, I was reminded again of an observation I made during my 2004 sabbatical. During that time away, I read through the Bible looking for and reflecting on "the glory of God." And in the Psalms I noted particularly how David understood God's glory.

And what is unique about his understanding — at least this is what I thought then, and am now exploring again — is that a) David never "saw" God's glory, as others did before and after him; b) his confidence in God's glory comes from the Torah (the books of Moses), and c) specifically, it appears to come from an encounter in which God refuses to actually display his glory!

In the next few columns I am going to muse on these things, by reflecting on Psalms that David wrote, and looking explicitly at his use of the phrase "steadfast love." Today, let me start with explaining my starting point.

When I say that David never "saw God's glory" I

mean that there are a few spectacular displays in the Old Testament, but David was not privileged to this vision or experience.

- Moses saw the burning bush and the pillar of cloud and fire, as well as the glory entering the tabernacle
- Solomon was present when the temple was filled with the smoke of the presence of God's glory
- Isaiah saw the cherubim and the train of God's robe filling the temple and the declaration of God's glory

David had an amazing experience with God, but he did not see displays like these. And yet, his songs are filled with God's glory.

And when we consider David's use of the phrase "steadfast love," we see how David understood God's glory. It was rooted in David's reading of Torah, and it was evidenced in God's goodness. David "knew his Bible," and it shaped his life with God. He did not need the "experience" to know the reality. That is an encouragement to us as well, who long for God's glory but must wait to actually see it!

In Exodus 33, Moses intercedes with God on behalf of a disobedient nation. And he implores God (v. 18) "*Please show me your glory.*" But God says: "*I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.'*" Then, in chapter 34, again on Mount Sinai, *The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty ..."* And Moses bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped. (Exod. 34:5-8)

In the weeks ahead, I want to walk through the Psalms and see how Moses' encounter shaped David's faith and praise. And how it can encourage us to

Sing on!

Chack

Calendar Corner:

September 20—Sunday morning services: Chancel Choir

September 27—Sunday morning services: Aradhna, Indian devotional music ensemble; chancel Choir

Chancel Choir Fall Retreat: Friday evening, Saturday morning and afternoon—September 25 and 26, at College Church

THE PRAYER COLUMN
Praying our Anchor memory verses

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as stewards of God's varied grace. (1 Peter 4:10)

The New Testament teaches that all who are in Christ have received something from him, a gift to be used to serve and build up the local body of Christ. Every church, it can be reasoned, has all the gifts needed to do all that God calls it to do. What gift have you received, and how are you using it to serve others? Let us pray about these things. And let us then display God's varied grace by living together with these shared gifts. The music ministry thrives when the gifts, the varied grace, are exercised *in the music ministry*. Let's pray that we are brought to completion by our mutually shared varied gifts. *E pluribus unum, indeed!*

To include your new prayer requests, contact Chuck King (668-0878 x122; cdking@college-church.org)

Chancel Choir Rehearsal Music:

Voice building

Fall repertoire:

Sing for Joy
Come, let us sing a song of joy
A Prayer for Living
Peace I Leave with You
The Majesty and Glory of Your Name
Joyful Songs
My Lord, What a Morning
Lauda anima

Jubilation Bells Rehearsal

Wednesday 6:45 PM in the Choir Room

Brass Ensemble Rehearsal

In services on October 4

**Concert Series
College Church Sanctuary**

**Sunday September 27
3:00 pm**

Dr. Ed Zimmerman, organ

Dr. Zimmerman is an annual recitalist in our Series. He is the Wheaton College organist and organ professor. His program this year includes the complete Widor *Symphony No. 6*, among other varied works for solo organ.

**Brochure online:
[http://www.college-church.org/music/
concertseries.htm](http://www.college-church.org/music/concertseries.htm)**