

From the Director

Words That Help and Heal

*Gracious Spirit, dwell with me:
I myself would gracious be;
And with words that help and heal
Would Thy life in mine reveal;
And with actions bold and meek
Would for Christ my Savior speak.*

Thomas T. Lynch, 1855

Our faith begins with words, and is rooted in words. Our life in Christ—salvation, maturity, sanctification—is a life of words. Christianity is a faith that cares about words, that values words, that protects words. One practical demonstration of the word-ness of the our faith is that literacy always follows the advance of the Gospel.

And really, how could it be otherwise? We understand that God spoke the universe into being. Even that act was preceded by a council of the Godhead. God revealed his name, his character, his purposes in conversation and speeches. Even when accompanied by fire and lightning and thunder, it was not the accompaniment but the content of his speech that made himself clear. Jesus is called “The Word.” Words matter to God’s people.

When God brought Israel out of Egypt and established a covenant with his people, they were not given symbols or signs—they were given laws and promises. How unlike the nations around them! *“Did any people ever hear the voice of a god speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and still live? ... Out of heaven he let you hear his voice ... and you heard his words out of the midst of the fire... [K]now therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that the LORD is God in heaven above and on earth beneath; there is no other.”*
Deuteronomy 4:33,36-39

What were the gods of other nations, but the visible works of human hands? *Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see. They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell. They have hands but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat.* (Psalm 115:4-7) In contrast, God the uncreated Creator has no mouth, but he speaks; he has no eyes, but he sees all; he has no ears, but he hears all; he has no nose, but smells

the fragrance of sacrifices; he has no arm, but is mighty to save; no feet, but he is present everywhere. He has no throat, but he has spoken, and we have his words.

So it is. This speaking God draws us to himself with words, and our response to him is made in kind: *“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.* (Romans 10:8-9) *Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.* (Romans 10:17) The words of the gospel are the first words for us that “help and heal” - they rescue and restore us to God.

And so the word and words of the Gospel become our vocabulary. Even our “actions bold and meek” only have clear meaning in the context of speaking for Christ our Savior. Anything we can say to “help and heal” must reveal the life of Christ in us. Jesus said (Matthew 5:16) “let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” ... word and deed working together in unity and clarity.

Words matter in the music of our gathered worship. Any “light” we may have musically, any “good works” that we may produce, have some limited capacity to draw people to ... “something” outside themselves. Musical excellence in itself has a certain real power. But not the power of communicating meaning, until words are added. (And I hasten to add: actual words, sung; or implied words, by association*; or words of a program, provided to the listeners.***) In our public worship, words that help and heal derive from God’s revelation of himself. Music itself can heal. Music in worship, based on God’s words, helps and heals in the ways God’s word helps and heals: rescuing, reconciling, restoring, establishing, equipping, preparing his people for today and for eternity.

Sing on!

* e.g. the instrumental number based on a known hymn tune

** e.g. the program provided by Messiaen for “Quartet for the End of Time,” or Beethoven for the Sixth Symphony

Chuck

Calendar Corner:

Sunday, September 30—morning services: Tim Smile, piano; Chancel Choir with Brass Quartet

Sunday, October 14—Missions Sunday; evening service, “Missionary Christmas” with the children’s choirs

Sunday, October 21—Concert Series (3pm) featuring H. E. Singley, organist; reception follows

Sunday, October 28—Alleluia Choir (girls grade 4-6) sings in the morning services

THE PRAYER COLUMN
LEE HOFFNER, CHOIR CHAPLAIN

Packets of Seeds and Boxes of Fireworks

On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. Revelation 22: 2b-5

We are the leaves of the tree. God gave us into this world, equipped with the gift of Faith and his uniquely appointed spiritual gifts, for the healing of the nations. This healing comes from the declaration of the gospel of Christ to the nations: unless they hear and believe, they will not be healed.

This is our *real* business on earth. Believers lives are to be like germinated seeds and lit fireworks, showing forth the fruit of the tree of life, which is Christ.

Are you keeping your eyes open for the opportunities God provides for the exercising of your gifts? It is through these opportunities for service that God will provide healing for the lost and vigor in your soul. Pray, then, for discernment and willingness to follow God's lead for the utilizing of your gifts for service. Hallelujah!

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

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Chancel Choir Rehearsal Music:

Voice-Building

O Let Your Soul Now Be Filled
Praise the Lord, All You Nations
Jesus the Christ Says

Music for this Sunday, September 23
Rejoice in God

Magnificat/Nunc dimittis
Additional "retreat music"

Choir Calendar

Sunday, Oct. 28—choir does not sing
Long/late rehearsal on Thursday, Nov. 15
Wednesday, Nov. 21—Thanksgiving service
Long/late rehearsal on Thursday, Dec. 6
Sun., Dec. 9—*Service of Lessons & Carols*

Jubilation Bells Rehearsal

Wednesday 6:45 PM in the Choir Room
Bells play in services on
Sunday, October 28

Brass Ensemble Rehearsal
Ad hoc for the Fall season

String Ensemble Rehearsal
Organizing rehearsal Saturday, October 13, 10AM in the sanctuary

Concert Series
College Church Sanctuary

October 21, 3:00 pm
Reception following the concert

H. E. Singley, III
College Church Organist

Works by:
Bach, Vierne, Reger, Bruhns, Distler