

FINDING YOUR ROLE AS A MUSICAL PASTOR:
A STUDY OF VOCATION AND STEWARDSHIP OF MUSICAL ACTS

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A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF DIVINITY

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MEQUON, WI

FEBRUARY 16, 2024

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ABSTRACT

A pastor who is musically gifted should not feel that he must abandon music altogether for the sake of his ministry. Both can work together for the benefit of the church. If God has blessed a pastor with musical gifts, then that pastor can find ways to use them in his ministry, even if he is the sole pastor of a congregation. A musically gifted pastor may consider his parish's circumstances to decide how he might use his musical abilities for the benefit of the church without thinking that his gifts are wasted.

INTRODUCTION

I once overheard a senior student from an area Lutheran high school talking to a professor when he visited the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. The conversation entailed that this student loved music and wanted to be a pastor. However, he thought that being a pastor meant that he would not be able to use his musical talents while being a pastor in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS).

As one who is also musically gifted, I struggled with how I would be able to use my musical gifts while serving as a pastor, especially as the majority of the churches in WELS are served by only one pastor. Would I have to give up playing organ or piano to prepare a sermon each week? Would I have to be content with only planning the worship service while someone else gets to play week by week? At this point, I started to look for answers to this matter. Through my research, interviews, and surveys, I have found further evidence that a pastor does not need to give up being a musician after ordination. In this paper, I will give examples of ways in which parish pastors can actively use their musical abilities while serving primarily as parish pastors.

PART 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

In my research, I did not find any direct information pertaining to a musical pastor. However, I was able to find different sources on worship, its principles, the role of music in worship, and the idea of a pastor as a worship leader. In the following part of this paper, I will summarize these findings on worship and music.

Definition and Principles of Worship

In 2021, WELS introduced a new hymnal to its congregations: *Christian Worship* (CW). Other books accompanied it in the years following its publication. One of those books is called *Christians Worship: Foundations*. The multiple authors of this book lay the foundations of worship practices and describe what worship is. The book's first chapter talks about the etymology of the word *worship*. To worship means to ascribe worth. It is not passive but active. One author describes the act of worship as,

To worship God means to stand in awe of him and respect him more than we respect any other person or thing; it means to love and cherish him more than any other person or thing; it means to trust him and have confidence in him more than we trust any other person or thing. Isaac Watts concluded, "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all" (407:4). To worship God, therefore, is to have faith in him.¹

1. Jonathan Bauer et al., *Christian Worship: Foundations*, ed. Jon Zabell (Waukesha, WI: Northwestern, 2023), 13.

This quote helps us understand that worship is not just an hour on Sunday but a lifelong action we have when God has called us out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Purpose of Worship

The authors of *Foundations* describe the purpose, or objective, of worship, which flows from the understanding of faith, as this: “Universal priests and public ministers gather together to praise God by proclaiming the gospel in Word and Sacrament to summarize truth and solidify it deep in the heart by means of ritual and the fine arts.”² The universal priesthood of all believers and those who have been called to serve in the public ministry gather together to praise God by proclaiming the gospel in Word and sacrament. This is the key truth and definition of worship. It can be simplified even more: the proclamation of the gospel.

This truth of proclaiming the gospel in worship is found in the Scriptures, which Strey notes is difficult because the Scriptures do not give prescriptions about worship. Instead, they give descriptions of worship.³ People have worshiped God since the beginning of the earth. Genesis 4:26 shows when people began to call on the name of the Lord. This act does not mean prayer, even though prayer is a part of worship. Calling on the name of the Lord, as Lawrenz and Jeske say, “refers to the act of proclaiming who God is and what has he done—his characteristics

2. Bauer et al., *Christian Worship*, 32.

3. Johnold J. Strey, *Christian Worship: God Gives His Gospel Gifts* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 2021), 11.

and his actions.”⁴ People worshiped God even after the fall. Proclaiming the gospel is an integral part of worship.

The New Testament also gives us principles that help our understanding of worship. These principles are not commands but rather descriptions of what happened in the early Christian church. Acts 2:42 reads, “[The disciples] devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” The early Christian church read and focused on the apostles’ teachings. The apostles received their teaching from the Son of God. The church was focused on the Word of God—another fundamental principle that helps our understanding of worship. The church also devoted itself to fellowship because worship involves fellowship with other Christians.

Colossians 3:16 records one aspect of the early church that should happen within the Christian community at large: “Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.” The gospel should dwell among the church, even as the church teaches with other “psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit.” These hymns and psalms taught the early church truths of the Bible.

4. Carl J. Lawrenz and John C. Jeske, *A Commentary on Genesis 1-11* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 2004), 204-206.

Four Different Dimensions

Timothy Maschke describes four different dimensions of Lutheran worship based on these biblical principles. His text visualizes these dimensions as a square with four different sides: *encounter, expression, education, and evangelism*.⁵ The Lutheran worship planner should have all four of these aspects in mind when planning worship, and focusing too much on one aspect can lead to an overemphasis like that of other Christian denominations and their theological imbalances.⁶

Encounter in the Lutheran worship service is “worship as a profound encounter with God and his manifold gifts to His people. God comes to His gathered guests with numerous blessings from on high.”⁷ The gifts Lutherans encounter suggest what God gives us in the service: the means of grace both in Word and sacrament, which are the blessings that flow from faith; the forgiveness of sins; and salvation. In the Lutheran service, we have a revelation and a response. God reveals the blessings he has so graciously poured out into our lives, and worship is the opportunity to respond with praise and thanks, using the very words that God gives us.⁸ Overemphasizing this encounter dimension can “purchase the plane ticket to Constantinople and Eastern Orthodoxy.”⁹

5. Timothy Maschke, *Gathered Guests: A Guide to Worship in the Lutheran Church* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2003), 24.

6. Aaron Christie, “The Quest for New Treasure Can Be Treacherous” (paper presented at "A Conference on Creative Excellence in Worship," South Atlantic District, 23-25, January 2008), 4.

7. Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 25.

8. Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 25–28.

9. Christie, “The Quest for New Treasure,” 4.

Expression as part of Lutheran worship is best described by the *Lutheran Service Book*:

“The Lord’s service calls forth our service — in sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to Him and in loving service to one another.”¹⁰ Although the expression dimension can be like encounter, the main emphasis is praising and giving thanks to God for all the things he has done for us.

Celebration is an apt description for expression. We praise God for the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the faith that God plants in our hearts is as we praise him. Faith is also a keyword when it comes to expression. Going too far with expression can lead us to act like the enthusiasts or churches that are all about praise and thanks but lack any law or gospel proclamation.¹¹

The next dimension of worship is *Education* or *Edification*. “As education, worship teaches the faith and nurtures the faithful because it is Word-oriented.”¹² Everything in worship can teach something, even if it is symbolic. The hymns and psalms convey the gospel differently. The Scripture readings teach the Bible and the life of Jesus. The sermon preaches God’s Word to the people so that they may apply the gospel to their lives – even children! Maschke reflects, “I never intentionally taught my three sons the Lord’s Prayer or the Apostles’ Creed; instead, they learned these expressions of the Christian faith through regular attendance and participation in Sunday worship services. They were taught to participate in the service and knew the words of the liturgy long before they could actually read the texts in the hymnal of the service book.”¹³

10. Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 28.

11. Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 28–30.

12. Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 31.

13. Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 32.

Children understand worship if they are immersed in the service and participate. Many pastors can tell an anecdote of a child realizing with wonder why the paraments changed colors from the previous Sunday. Going too far with education reforms the church into that of Calvinists who appear to over-emphasize head-knowledge.

The last of these four dimensions is *Evangelism*. In worship circles today, especially those outside of WELS, this dimension may have more weight. However, in Lutheran circles, evangelism is a by-product of worship and not a primary purpose. The two can work together. As Maschke says, “Our worship affects our witness, and our witness affects our worship.”¹⁴ When worship is done well, it will attract the unchurched and give the opportunity for the visitor to hear the Word of God. The opposite is also accurate, so if worship is poor, the visitor may not want to hear the gospel. Too much focus on evangelism in worship turns it to those of the megachurches.¹⁵

Six Principles of Worship

In Johnold Strey’s book, *Christian Worship*, in addition to gospel proclamation, he brings up another six principles concerning worship: participation of the people, respect for the church’s past tradition, unity in the body of faith, Christian freedom, the best of God’s gifts in music and the arts, and guided by form.

14. Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 33.

15. Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 35.

Participation of the people has been touched on already in this paper. Strey mentions that the apostles taught their audiences that through the death of Christ, we now have direct access to God. Peter describes us as part of a royal priesthood (1 Pet 2:9). This term implies that the priesthood will participate in worship, not as the pastor but as a congregation. Martin Luther made it a point that worship should be available to the people and allow them to be active, which was a reform from the passivity of the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁶

Strey's next principle is that there should be respect for the church's past experiences. The Christian church is not a new thing; it is thousands of years old. Luther did not throw out the whole Catholic Mass when he wanted the people to participate. He kept the aspects that were from the historic church, and in line with biblical truth. In our liturgies today, we see remnants of the early Christian church when we sing the liturgical songs. The titles remain the same, such as *Gloria in Excelsis* and *Kyrie*.¹⁷

Worship is a place that expresses our unity in the Christian faith. When we worship together with fellow Christians, we confess our common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. As the Christian church, we are part of one body. Each of us has different gifts, and we are tasked to use them for the benefit of the church. Much more will be mentioned about unity in terms of congregational singing later in the paper.¹⁸

The word most often associated with Christian freedom is *adiaphora*—the middle things that God has not commanded or forbidden. Common everyday examples of *adiaphora* are

16. Strey, *Christian Worship*, 46–49.

17. Strey, *Christian Worship*, 49–52.

18. Strey, *Christian Worship*, 53–59.

drinking alcohol or getting your ears pierced. The form of worship is also an adiaphoron; we are commanded to worship, but we are not commanded how to worship. We as Christians have the freedom to develop our worship in the best way without biblical mandate. However, that does not mean we should worship by singing secular songs that have nothing to do with Christ. Worshiping with Christian freedom means that we must use wise judgment and sanctified common sense.¹⁹

In terms of music and the arts, the church should use the best of God's gifts in regard to worship. God made the entire world; he did not neglect his best gifts in that endeavor. He continues to provide for his creation. We should recognize that God has given everyone a wonderful gift: a life on earth. Those whom God has revived through his Son also recognize what a great gift they have been given: eternal life in heaven. Why wouldn't they want to give back to God the best of their gifts?²⁰ Strey says, "Our use of the arts in worship is just another aspect of our Christian stewardship. Stewardship is the way we manage the blessings God gives us. When it comes to stewardship, we want to respond to God's grace with our best."²¹ The next part of the thesis will delve further into this discussion.

The last principle of worship is that worship is guided by form. Lutheran worship should be orderly and not chaotic. Our worship and the way we worship communicate meaning to the people who are watching. Strey says it best: "Because worship forms can also teach truths about

19. Strey, *Christian Worship*, 62–68.

20. This fact can refer back to stewardship of money, but this paragraph will explain further about musical gifts and the stewardship of them.

21. Strey, *Christian Worship*, 68–74.

our faith, especially when people repeatedly experience them over several years, we want to ensure that our actions and forms in worship communicate the right message.”²²

Use of Music in Worship

As mentioned earlier, the church should use all its gifts to give the highest praise to God for all that he has done for us. One of those ways is by using music. How does music fit into worship? How should we use music inside of worship?

One of the authors of *Foundations* described music as “a deliberate ordering of sounds and silence resulting in melody and harmony, pitch and timbre, rhythm and tempo.”²³ The physics of music, although simply vibration throughout the air, produce emotions and recall memories in the listener. Music is not neutral. Strey gives an example of two familiar hymns, “Amazing Grace” and “Joy to the World.” Both hymns have the same meter. “In theory, we can sing the words of ‘Amazing Grace’ to the melody of ‘Joy to the World’ and vice versa. It fits—yet it doesn’t.”²⁴ Lutherans have the capacity to recognize that the same Creator who created the beautiful landscapes of the earth is able to create something out of thin air, such as music. Luther recognized the beauty of music and thus reflected it in his theology and worship.

22. Strey, *Christian Worship*, 74–79.

23. Bauer et al., *Christian Worship*, 271.

24. Strey, *Christian Worship*, 229.

Music as Proclamation

The authors of *Foundations* point out that a person should understand worship and its purpose before beginning to look at the music of worship. If the worship purpose is skewed, so much more will the music be skewed. Music is not the essence of the church. “Music does not build the Church. The gospel builds the Church.”²⁵ Music can aid in the proclamation of the gospel.

Daniel Zager describes worship in an analogous way to our definition and purpose of worship. He continues to explain this concerning the purpose of music in worship. “For Lutherans, the purpose of music is to proclaim the Word of God, which is the way we praise God, and when proclamation and praise takes place through music that is well made and skillfully rendered, people will be attracted to the church’s worship,”²⁶ Zager explains further that music inside of worship, mainly done by Lutheran composers, has teachings and doctrine woven into it. His prime example is Heinrich Schütz and the different motifs in his music that can teach his listeners. About Schütz’s *Kleine geitlich Konzerte*, which is based on Luke 18:10-14, Zager says,

The contrast between the two men in the parable could not be greater, and Schütz uses musical means to emphasize and heighten that contrast. The self-righteous Pharisee, asking nothing of God, thanks God that he is “not like other men” and enumerates his virtues in fasting and tithing. Schütz scores this part for a bass singer and provides him with much text repetition, befitting the proud Pharisee intent on calling attention to his own merit. Above this self-righteous monologue, the penitent tax collector (a tenor) can only whimper his persistent prayer, “God be merciful to me, a sinner.”²⁷

25. Bauer et al., *Christian Worship*, 277.

26. Daniel Zager, *The Gospel Preached Through Music: The Purpose and Practice of Lutheran Church Music* (Fort Wayne, IN: Good Shepherd Institute, Concordia Theological Seminary Press), 9.

27. Zager, *The Gospel Preached Through Music*, 47.

Schütz's commentary on this familiar parable is quite beautiful. The music teaches the concepts of that story to people. It proclaims the gospel because it uses Scripture to portray critical truths.

Cherry explains the several roles and functions music has in worship. Music supports the celebration of the story of God. Lutherans would call the story of God the gospel, but she adds the entire story of the Bible to this function. Music in a worship service is not added for music's sake. Instead, music is added to proclaim for several reasons. First, as Cherry continues, music and worship go together. Second, music also enhances the service, though we might avoid the phrase "beautifying the worship service." Third, music helps the congregation members be the primary participants in the service. Fourth, the musical tone of each sung action helps give a flavor to that action.²⁸ Fifth, music helps convey the worship conversation to a particular group. Different styles of music are more effective for different people.²⁹

Music as a Servant

William Sheppard Smith describes music best as a servant in the worship service. He even goes as far as to say, "No kind of music is barred from the church's worship as long as it is useful to

28. I believe she is referring upbeat praise songs or the music reflecting a deeply meditative song or text.

29. Constance M. Cherry, *The Music Architect: Blueprints for Engaging Worshipers in Song*, (Baker Academic, 2016), 39–41.

the congregation.”³⁰ We agree that Scripture does not command nor forbid a specific style of music. The key point to remember is that the music should serve the congregation.

In Smith’s mind, music serves the liturgy in two ways. When music is combined with a text, it illuminates and provides commentary to the text, as well as lends power to the liturgy. Smith emphasizes that music can stir emotions. Thus, when attached to the liturgy, well-themed music resounds the power of the message. “Music directs emotions and charges them with power. Music lends power to the truth of a text.”³¹ While we understand that music can effectively produce or enhance emotions, the text, especially a direct quote from Scripture, is powerful enough. Music is aiding the message, not adding power to it.

30. William Sheppard Smith, *Joyful Noise: A Guide to Music in the Church for Pastors and Musicians* (Franklin: Providence House, 2007), 13.

31. Smith, *Joyful Noise*, 17.

PART 2: PROOF OF THESIS

In this part of the paper, I will explore three topics. First, I will look at the historical precedence of music in public worship and why it belongs. Second, I will look at how a musical pastor is able to benefit the worship of his congregation through a variety of ways. Third, I will look at how a musical pastor can enhance the fellowship of his congregation through singing.

The Historical Precedence

For this section, I researched Luther's opinions of music through his writings and hymns. I also investigated how the history of church music was always closely associated with worship.

Luther

When we look at the life of Martin Luther, we can see that he held the Bible, theology, and music in high esteem. He even went as far as to say that next to theology, music was the highest art and deserved all the praise. He writes, "Here it must suffice to discuss the benefit of art. But even that transcends the great eloquence of the most eloquent because of the infinite variety of its form and benefits. We can mention only one point (which experience confirms), namely, that next to the Word of God, Music deserves the highest praise."³² We see this in his life when he wrote hymns in the common vocabulary for the congregations. He wrote many hymns that teach and preach what the Bible does, which Lutherans still sing to this day, such as "From Heaven

32. Ulrich S. Leupold and Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, Volume 53: Liturgy and Hymns, American edition (St. Louis: Fortress Press, 1965), 323.

Above to Earth I Come” and “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.” Luther, while describing his love for music, says, “But when [musical] learning is added to all this and artistic music which corrects, develops and refines the natural music, then, at last, it is possible to taste with wonder (yet not comprehend) God’s absolute and perfect wisdom in his wondrous work of music.”³³ In the same letter, Luther praised music and wished it to everyone: “I would certainly like to praise music with all my heart as the excellent gift of God which it is and to commend it to everyone.”³⁴

Luther’s love for music recognizes what music is: a gift of God. Luther once said, “Music is a gift and grace of God, not an invention of men. Thus, it drives out the devil and makes people cheerful. . . . The devil, the originator of sorrowful anxieties and restless troubles, flees before the sound of music almost as much as before the Word of God.”³⁵ Although we would stipulate that music *when combined* with the Word of God makes the devil flee, Luther’s sentiment is that music is essential. It is a gift of God. Those who are blessed to have this gift should use their gift properly to praise God and aid the proclamation of the Word. Similarly, Smith says, “Music has not within itself the ability to communicate truth.”³⁶

Luther recognized that by using music attached to the Word of God, we not only honor and praise the Word, but we also use music to serve our God. Luther writes in the preface to the burial hymns,

33. *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 53, 324.

34. *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 53, 321.

35. Keith Getty and Kristyn Getty, *Sing!: How Worship Transforms Your Life, Family, and Church* (Nashville: B&H Books, 2017), 82.

36. Smith, *Joyful Noise*, 10.

We have put this music on the living and holy Word of God in order to sing, praise, and honor it. We want the beautiful art of music to be properly used to serve her dear Creator and Christians. He is thereby praised and honored, and we are made better and stronger in faith when his holy Word is impressed on our hearts by sweet music. God the Father with Son and Holy Spirit grant us this. Amen.³⁷

Throughout the Christian Church

Even before Luther, music belonged to the church. In the early Christian church, we see the prevalence of music and how the apostles encouraged it. While we do not have original sheet music from the early church or that time, we recognize that music belonged to worship, either pagan or Christian. Because music has the power to add meaning to the text, music can promote the teaching of both truths and morals. As a negative example, Philostorgius writes in his *Epitome* that Arius' false teachings were spread among the people through the songs he composed, "for the sea, for the mill, and for the road."³⁸

During the Reformation, church music became highly developed and was on the cusp of blooming into its own. At that time, choirs were employed to sing music, not to lead but rather to sing music that the congregation listened to. The clergy was also expected to sing portions of the liturgy. The people even assumed that the clergy were supposed to be the musicians. Erik Routley says, "The question whether church musician shall or shall not continue to be primarily a cleric and only secondarily a musician is on the point of breaking out into the open. The

37. *Luther's Works*, Vol. 53, 328.

38. Frances M. Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and Its Background*, 2nd edition. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 36.

assumption is that he will be a cleric.”³⁹ While music was more straightforward, and the clergy could spend time on both pastoral and musical duties prior to the Reformation, the explosion of music following the movement would enforce a change. Routley continues,

But since (a) music has become so highly sophisticated an art already as to demand a full-time autonomous artist for its practice, and (b) there is by now so much interplay between sacred and secular music, whatever the official administrative mind of the church may think, the tension between the demands of theology and those of music in its own right is mounting to the breaking point.⁴⁰

Music was becoming so elaborate, ornate, and plentiful that the priests could not handle it all by themselves, so the profession of the church musician began.

Keith and Kristyn Getty reference a bishop’s wife named Cecil Frances Alexander, who lived in Northern Ireland. She struggled with the fact that many of the children around the congregation lacked biblical knowledge and spiritual understanding. So, she sought to write hymns to teach the kids these truths. The collaborators of *Christian Worship 21* (CW 21) included one of her hymns, “Once in Royal David’s City,” which tells the story of Christ’s birth in Bethlehem. The Gettys explain her philosophy toward hymns and music, “Alexander understood that songs were not simply expressions of praise to punctuate a service or to entertain when attention was dwindling, but powerful tools in which beautiful truth set to memorable music could inspire deeper faith.”⁴¹ Music can teach, and even in the 1800s, the people inside the church knew the importance of that.

39. Erik Routley, *Music Leadership in the Church: A Conversation Chiefly with My American Friends/ Erik Routley* (Carol Stream: Agape, 1984), 21.

40. Routley, *Music Leadership in the Church*, 21.

41. Getty and Getty, *Sing!*, 41.

Biblically

Throughout the Bible, we see several commands from God that he wanted his people to worship him. Although there is no specific commandment to sing to praise God, the people of the Old Testament still sang songs. We see this recorded in the Psalms. In this Old Testament hymnbook, we repeatedly see an exhortation to the people to sing praise to their Lord for what he has done. The people recognized that their Lord had done great things for them, specifically the exodus, through which God rescued his people from the oppression of the Egyptians. The Psalms were an expression of their faith and trust in God. “In the Old Testament, the faith of the Israelites could be clearly heard in their songs. And many of the lyrics of their hymnal, the psalms, showed their awareness of other nations listening to their singing, and called them to praise God too.”⁴²

Routley continues this discussion by saying that the sacred music of the Israelites had two different traditions coming together in the Psalms. This sacred music was “something ecstatic, inspired, topical; it [was] associated with dancing and with a kind of high intoxication with religion.”⁴³

Since the Psalms are filled with praise and proclamation, it would be good to immerse ourselves in them to learn how to praise God. Routley encourages musicians to grow in this area, “I think that if the church musician wants to develop his appreciation of the psalms, and thereby infect others with a love of the psalter, his best line of approach is to read them himself, to read and read until they have become a part of his life.”⁴⁴ The Psalms have a plethora of truths that we

42. Getty and Getty, *Sing!*, 88.

43. Routley, *Music Leadership in the Church*, 58.

44. Routley, *Music Leadership in the Church*, 68.

can learn from. Learning from God's people about their praise can lead us to reflect our praise to others.

In the New Testament, the apostles encouraged God's people to continue meeting for worship and also to keep "speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit [singing and making] music from [the] heart" (Eph 5:19.)

Benefits the Church

This section of the paper will focus on the benefits that a musical pastor can offer to a church. The musical pastor can set the tone for the service and help his congregation grow in their musicality, whether he can play the piano or organ on a Sunday or not. Parts of this research were done by looking at various literary sources. The rest was done by interviewing other pastors in the WELS who are musically gifted.

Sets the Tone for the Service

A musical pastor who can plan and pick hymns well sets the tone or theme for the service. For example, the season of Lent is known for a reflective and somber mood. It would be unwise for a pastor to pick a hymn that is happy and full of joyful praise leading up to the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus.⁴⁵

45. Excluding Palm Sunday, which has a triumphal processional sound.

Why is this important? Not every hymn is created to profess every point of teaching or theology. Pastor Kyle Bitter said in his interview,⁴⁶ “Texts of hymns are important and have meaning behind them. There are no good hymns or bad hymns but ones that are more or less closely fitted to an occasion. Having an understanding of the service and the readings can make the choosing of hymns a little bit easier, or at least a little bit different.”⁴⁷ While picking hymns for a service, it is important and necessary to look at the texts to see if this hymn enhances the theme of the service. The Gettys elaborate on this detail further: “Every part of a lyric should link together to bring a wonderfully thoughtful, deep expression to every singer. If you are choosing the songs as a worship leader, this is your responsibility.”⁴⁸ You do not want to forget your responsibility and pick hymns that do not support the theme but rather are theologically vague. You should not pick hymns merely to be appealing. Instead, pick hymns that communicate sound doctrine to your members’ minds and engage their emotions.⁴⁹

You are the worship leader. Your choices of hymns highlight the theme of the service. A musical pastor also makes the gospel or the theme of the seasons more memorable through his hymn choices while also letting critical points of doctrine predominate. A pastor can look at a particular Sunday and its readings and deduce its theme. He can then look at hymns that support the theme. For example, suppose the service is a mission festival. In that case, the pastor may be wise to use the hymn “Hark! The Voice of Jesus Crying,” specifically the second stanza, which

46. All interview quotes have been edited by the author for grammatical correctness and cohesion.

47. Kyle Bitter, interview by author. Google Meet, December 5, 2023.

48. Getty and Getty, *Sing!*, 17.

49. Getty and Getty, *Sing!*, 91.

reads, “If you cannot speak like angels, if you cannot preach like Paul, you can tell the love of Jesus; you can say he died for all. If you cannot rouse the wicked with the judgment’s dread alarms, you can lead the little children to the Savior’s waiting arms.”⁵⁰ This stanza helps teach the people that they, too, can be workers in the Lord’s harvest field. They, too, can share the Word of Jesus. The pastor can say similar words in his sermon. The addition of music and poetry allows the takeaway point to be memorable and teaches the congregation the truth. The Gettys explain, “The truth is that the songs we sing on Sunday stick with us—and so they shape us. It has been said, rightly, that you have the people when you have their songs, perhaps even more than their sermons.”⁵¹ Of course, pastors should focus on their sermons because people will remember this aspect of worship. However, people will remember the hymns and the tunes that reinforce the teachings of those hymns. So, it would be good to remember that in corporate worship, “sloppy music will turn people off.”⁵²

In worship planning, a pastor must recognize that “music, which may occupy from one-third to one-half of the time of worship, is an integral part of worship.”⁵³ He should not believe that worship planning can be just good enough. Instead, the worship schedule should be planned carefully and well in advance. Bitter found that planning a year, from June to June, helped the musicians plan and prepare to lead the people excellently. He also says, “If I wanted them (teachers and staff in the school) to prepare things that matched up with what the church was

50. *Christian Worship: Hymnal*, 1st edition. (Waukesha: Northwestern, 2021), 745.

51. Getty and Getty, *Sing!*, 38.

52. Jonathan Kehren, interview by author. Google Meet. December 1, 2023.

53. Smith, *Joyful Noise*, 235.

doing, that meant the church's things had to be done before they started planning."⁵⁴ Some others found that six months ahead or done quarterly is the best time frame. A pastor will have to determine the best use of his time and the ability of his musicians to figure out what planning schedule would be most beneficial.

Leading and Assisting the Accompanist(s)

Nevertheless, worship planning should never occur the week before but weeks, months, or a year in advance. "Realizing how much better music can be when the musicians are given time to plan. . . . Suppose you are a person who is a musician, and you understand how much rehearsal it takes to get something ready. In that case, you are probably going to see the value of planning more so than the person who is just pragmatic and says, 'This is working fine. Why should we discipline ourselves to have things done a year in advance?'"⁵⁵

A pastor with musical talents and understanding is also able to work with musicians for planning the services. As previously mentioned, a pastor recognizes what hymns the congregation members know and how to improve their abilities. Still, he must understand the expertise of the congregation's musicians. Suppose he is blessed with a congregation with extraordinary accompanists. In that case, he can pick hymns with no fear, knowing that they can handle it. Kehren recommends that a pastor should "meet with church musicians on a regular

54. Bitter, interview.

55. Bitter, interview.

basis . . . so [they] are on the same page.”⁵⁶ If he is blessed with accompanists who can lead but struggle with more challenging pieces of music, he can pick hymns and liturgies that they either know or can play.

Suppose the pastor has a decent grasp of music theory and musical notation. He would be able to help the musicians who lack the training or “talk shop” with them. Routley reflects on working with other musicians, “Personally, I get a great deal of pleasure out of the company of fellow church musicians.”⁵⁷ A musical pastor who communicates with a musician can correct and give technical suggestions for specific organ registrations and preludes or postludes. Kehren said, “With my musical background, I could communicate intelligently with them so they could understand where I was coming from and respected my opinion.”⁵⁸ However, the pastor should do so carefully. Suppose the pastor were to lay out everything that he wants to have performed in the service, excluding the liturgy and hymns. In that case, he becomes a micromanager and does not let his musicians be free, which would produce conflict between the pastor and the musician. Routley says, “The whole purpose of these pages is to amplify the musician’s freedom through the disciplines of his faith, not to restrict it; it seems to me that where the musicians can really feel that he works as a member of a creative team in public worship, he will find that he gains the greatest fulfillment and happiness from his work.”⁵⁹ A musical pastor should let the musicians pick their music, and he should be helpful when they need to hear a piece played or see the

56. Kehren, interview.

57. Routley, *Music Leadership in the Church*, 60.

58. Kehren, interview.

59. Routley, *Music Leadership in the Church*, 108.

fingerings. Kehren says, “It is important for a musically gifted pastor to be open to allowing other musicians with their tastes and everything like that to use their gifts in a different way than maybe you would.”⁶⁰ A pastor’s goal with a subpar musician is to help fund or teach him or her the music so that the worship life of the congregation can better reach excellence.

If the pastor has a good relationship with his musicians, he is also able to offer constructive criticism. He should not head into that conversation lightly, because what he says could harm their relationship. He should not go into it saying what he prefers or how he would have played it. Instead, he should be willing to offer critique and feedback that correctly shows the musician that the pastor listened and thought of how to help improve the worship life of a congregation. The Gettys speak this word of warning: “A church music department left unchecked can become like a monster in a church, wielding too much influence and causing a lot of grief. It is not healthy for the whole congregation or the musicians themselves if the relationship between the pastor and them is not operating well.”⁶¹ At times, however, the pastor will have to be firmer. If a musician plays a piece of music or suggests a hymn that is not scripturally accurate, the pastor will have to say no. Here is an opportunity for the pastor to teach what Lutheran worship is and how music aids the proclamation of the gospel. Each Sunday has a different theme and emphasis. It is Christ-centered. While a musician might play a piece based on the famous Getty hymn “In Christ Alone” throughout the church year, its text suggest that it

60. Kehren, interview.

61. Getty and Getty, *Sing!*, 109.

might be best to save that for Lent or Easter instead of Christmas. A musical pastor can teach the musician why the music and lyrics of that hymn thematically fit better elsewhere.

Increasing the Musicality of His Congregation

A musical pastor also recognizes the musicality of his congregation. Once he gets to know his people, he will understand what hymns or liturgical settings are within their capabilities. He can assess if his congregation can sing a certain hymn or musical setting. With that knowledge, he learns the hymns and styles the congregation is comfortable with and the ways to encourage growth in music. He then can start planning worship around that point and slowly work to improve their ability to sing. The pastor would be wise not to introduce a multitude of hymns and new services at once. Trials by fire do not work with introducing new hymns. He should instead introduce one new aspect at a time and do so slowly. Routley encourages to start where the congregation is at musically, “Begin from the common ground and recognize what music outside that ground will win the worshiper and cause him difficulty. Then decide how much difficulty he can, as a Christian, be asked to encounter, and don’t go beyond that limit unless there is some compelling pastoral reason to do so.”⁶²

How, then, does a pastor introduce new music to a congregation? He must recognize that a congregation is a diverse group of people with different tastes and talents. Some people will be tone-deaf, and others will be stubborn and have their preferred style of music. The pastor can

62. Routley, *Music Leadership in the Church*, 91.

teach new hymns or liturgies either indirectly or directly. He can indirectly teach by using hymn preludes and hymn anthems for the choir.⁶³ We can draw many applications from this. Pastor Bitter noted that he taught the choir at this church and strategically placed them in the sanctuary so that others could grasp onto the confident singers.⁶⁴ The direct approach is by literally teaching the people the tune and lyrics, whether that be outside or inside of the worship service.⁶⁵ A musically gifted pastor with a good singing voice can lead the congregation in the song. Pastor Jonathan Kehren reflected, “I have a pretty strong singing voice too, so that already just helps as they’re singing along, and they hear me carrying the tune, and they had to follow along with that.”⁶⁶

A caution must be made here. Suppose a pastor emphasizes music too much and focuses on the playing and performing of music. In that case, it lessens the effect he wants on the worship. The Gettys mention:

We live in a time when the importance of music in Church has been elevated greatly (not least because it has become commercially lucrative). But at the same time, we are in danger of lowering the importance we place on singing *together*. Listening to each other quietly as a band performs brilliantly on stage in a church building is not the same as singing together as a congregation.⁶⁷

We should be cautious in the excessive use of the freedom of music. Bitter reflects on the use of elaborate hymn introductions, “ We should honor both and not do the fancy things that

63. Routley, *Music Leadership in the Church*, 100–101.

64. Bitter, interview.

65. Routley, *Music Leadership in the Church*, 102.

66. Kehren, interview.

67. Getty and Getty, *Sing!*, 72-73.

people like, but make sure they are not so elaborate that there are other people who are frustrated that they are just sitting there listening to something that they don't personally enjoy that much."⁶⁸ While doing alternate settings of hymns or descants add different meanings to the hymns, it is unwise to do this frequently and complicatedly that they frustrate the worshipers instead of benefitting them.

A musical pastor can help explain to his musicians and choir directors a principle for picking music for church services. Kurt Eggert wrote about music, "Not all good music is good for worship, and not all music written for worship is good. We should cling to the treasures of our heritage, and the only way to do this is by actually singing and playing them."⁶⁹ Some pieces of music may come to mind upon reading Eggert's first sentence. This is where it would be necessary to stress to the musicians about the theme of the week. Also, to encourage musicians to "play music based on or inspired by the Hymn of the Week as a prelude to that hymn. Generally speaking, more good music based on Hymn of the Week melodies is available than for the tunes often chosen for the opening service."⁷⁰

68. Bitter, interview.

69. Kurt Eggert, *Not unto Us: A Celebration of the Ministry of Kurt J. Eggert*, ed. William H. Braun and Victor H. Prange (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 2001), 47.

70. Eggert, *Not unto Us*, 15.

If One Can Play on a Sunday

Not every congregation is the same. Some churches have more than one pastor, which allows more opportunities for the musical pastor to use his gifts. If those are the circumstances of his call, then he is in a unique position in which he can serve and praise the Lord by using his musical abilities. Unless the situation calls for it, he should not always be on the organ or piano bench. Part of being a pastor is recognizing that the ministry is about the people. A pastor should meet with his people before and after the service so that he can get to know them at a personal level. If he is always on the organ bench, then he misses many people who leave the building as soon as the postlude starts. A pastor should consider many details before deciding to get on the bench. While using part of his gifts and abilities, would his practice for playing that Sunday detract from his pastoral duties?

Maschke talks about what a musician is and what that role can be. The following quote mentions other musicians who can play in a service besides the organist and choir director. This can also refer to the pastor who is able to sing or play different instruments inside the worship service.

Other musicians besides the organist and choir director may contribute to the musical life of a congregation as they offer their services to the Lord at a specific congregation or for particular services under the direction of the church musician. The service of these musicians is an opportunity to praise God with the particular gifts with which He has endowed them rather than an opportunity to perform. The spirit of humble service will be evident in all that musicians do to enhance the worship life of the congregation through the gift of music.⁷¹

71. Maschke, *Gathered Guests*, 267.

If a pastor can play instruments well, he understands how to make the service come alive with his playing. Depending on your instrument of choice, you can adjust your playing to reflect the words of the text, which allows the people to appreciate that hymn differently. From my playing, I was able to tell a story through my organ registrations for “Lord, Help Us Walk Your Servant Way.” I started loud and proud to show the zeal some people have for being servants. I lowered the volume for each stanza, reflecting on what it means to be a servant like Christ, who went to the cross to die. One pastor reflected on how he pulled out all the stops for “Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending.”⁷² One worshiper reflected that his playing helped picture what heaven would be like. Countless more examples could follow, but the point here is that the very way a musician plays helps the proclamation of the gospel. As a pastor, you also have the theological training to make those themes pop. Bitter explains,

One I usually use as I’m playing organ if it’s a section that’s about Jesus’ suffering or about sin, I will often use a more reed-heavy registration because it has that more of that somber abrasive tone to it. That contrast between a lot of hymn verses will talk about that for half and then suddenly will come in with this text about Jesus and his work. If you play that somber half on the reads and then switch to a bright principal and mixtures when Jesus comes, I think that’s kind of an effective way to draw attention to the words without hugely changing the harmony or the pacing of the hymn that would make it hard to sing.⁷³

If given the opportunity, even as the sole pastor of a congregation, a musical pastor can use his musical gifts to offer a pre-service hymn sing. Smith notes the benefits of this but also the detriments. “The practice does show respect for the members. It may also reinforce satisfaction with the old and familiar, making people less open to learning new songs. It can also give the

72. Kehren, interview.

73. Bitter, interview.

impression that what we sing in Church is a matter of personal taste.”⁷⁴ It may not be wise to have a hymn-sing every Sunday. However, a pastor is free to select certain Sundays of the month or specific festivals of the church year to have a hymn-sing. If a pastor is musical, he can ease the minds of the musicians by playing for those hymn-sings so that the other musicians do not have to prepare extra music.

Enhancing Congregational Singing

A musical pastor can also help with congregational singing, not only by the hymns and liturgies he picks but also by his example. Depending on the worship space and its acoustics, the congregation might be able to hear the pastor sing. This fact allows the congregation a few benefits. First, it helps the congregation understand the tune. A pastor with an excellent knowledge of music will be able to read the music and lead the people in singing that tune. Many hymns in our hymnal are challenging, especially for those people who are not musically inclined. Being able to listen to someone who understands and leads boldly can help the congregation learn the tunes. A pastor can even announce that he would sing the first stanza, and the congregation can join in when they felt comfortable.⁷⁵

Second, it helps show the congregation that worship is essential. Suppose a pastor is not singing the hymns and does not seem interested in them. In that case, he is conveying the message that worship is not necessary. Singing is a way of showing that you are praising God.

74. Smith, *Joyful Noise*, 225.

75. Kehren, interview.

Showing that you are excited and want to praise God for all the things he has done will be reflected in the congregation.

Third, it enhances fellowship because it shows the worshipper that the people who are singing around them believe the same thing. Congregational singing encourages the lay member when everyone around him or her believes in the same Lord and the same teachings. Nothing can quite compare to that fact, and what a blessing that we are able to confess and praise together.

In the introduction of their book *Sing!* the Gettys give different examples of why someone would ask, “How did the congregation sing?” One of the examples they give pertains to the thesis: “Perhaps you long to talk confidently about it because you are a leader or pastor yearning for people to sing to their core the things you are teaching, but you are not sure how to navigate the maze of church music, or where you want your church’s music to get to anyway.”⁷⁶ If you are a musical pastor, you have the benefit of being able to navigate the maze of music and pick those hymns that your congregation can sing and learn from. Specifically, “songs help train children in the ‘language’ of the Christian faith.”⁷⁷ So, too, songs can help even adults learn the language of faith, especially when they are new to the faith.

This act of worshiping together also improves fellowship because God’s people were meant to be a community, not sole individuals. The Gettys say, “As we sing to God and about God together with the people of God, we reflect the truth that we were designed for community, both with God and each other. It was never good for man to be alone, and singing together

76. Getty and Getty, *Sing!*, XX-XXI.

77. Getty and Getty, *Sing!*, 57.

engenders and expresses that we are family.”⁷⁸ Suppose a pastor can enhance the worship life of a congregation through his musical talents. In that case, he can improve the fellowship of that congregation. The Gettys continue,

When we sing together as the Church, we are showing how we are a congregation of living stones. Our singing is an audible expression of the bonds we share, testifying to the life that lies within these stones. We are cut from the same elements of faith, united in one Lord, filled by one Spirit, and brought into one Church to offer our praise to him. We are being chiseled and refined through our singing, just as we are through every aspect of our lives. We are forged together through our singing together.⁷⁹

Singing together removes the individuality that is prevalent in American culture. Being a Christian means that you are also part of the body of Christ, a family. “We are reminded that we are not the center of the universe, but just one voice and heart among the great worldwide throng of people praising the One who is. And we remind each other of all this as we sing *together*.”⁸⁰

When the congregation sings together, it aids in witnessing the truth. When a visitor or a guest visits a church and notices that all the people are singing the same thing with all their hearts and voices, the guest takes notice. “Singing together bears compelling witness to the truth it says to those watching on and listening in that, just as we sing the same melody together, we share the same faith, *the Faith*: not a self-made creed for a solo journey toward nowhere, but commitment to our one Lord of all, who transforms the life we live together and will bring us

78. Getty and Getty, *Sing!*, 8.

79. Getty and Getty, *Sing!*, 72.

80. Getty and Getty, *Sing!*, 73.

home to eternity.”⁸¹ While worship and evangelism go hand in hand, the people’s witnessing by showing their thanks and praise to God impresses upon fellow believers and visitors.

Increasing the musicality of the congregation can also help people encounter other members outside of worship. For example, people can meet others through a variety of different choirs: adult choir, handbell choir, brass choir, and more. It can be encouraging for people who are joining separate choirs to meet others who also want to use their time and talents to praise God. This is what the Gettys say about being in a choir: “The true beauty of such a congregational choir is that our voices and our hearts are knit *together* in praise. It is exhilarating to be part of a body of believers singing truth *together*.”⁸² It is truly a beautiful thing when God’s people join their voices, praise God, and also lead other Christians to proclaim the same truths that you believe.

Routley references one principle that was emphasized in the epistles: “There is one principle, however, which the Epistles seem to establish concerning worship, and that is that worship in the Christian community is intimately bound up with friendship.”⁸³ Community means everything to the Christian church, especially when the apostles wrote. The body of Christ was persecuted, but it was unified by worship. The people’s faith brought a new level of unity and friendship that was not shared before.

81. Getty and Getty, *Sing!*, 87.

82. Getty and Getty, *Sing!*, 4.

83. Routley, *Music Leadership in the Church*, 88.

PART 3: PASTORAL APPLICATIONS

A musical pastor has a great deal of talents that many congregations would want. These congregations will want to allow the pastor to praise God by using his God-given talents. These opportunities will look different in each congregation. It is up to you as the pastor to decide how you use your gifts. A pastor should not abandon his gifts since they are God-given, and it would be poor stewardship if he did not use them. A pastor may not be able to use his gifts on the organ or piano bench. However, he can still use his musical knowledge to promote excellent worship, teaching core doctrines through song and encouraging the flock of believers that God has entrusted to him.

No matter where a pastor is called to and the situation he is in, he will be able to use his gifts. Pastor Jon Bauer has advice for an aspiring musical pastor: “I can’t envision a scenario—certainly in normal parish life—when you wouldn’t be able to use your gifts as fully as you desire. Time is the only constraint.”⁸⁴ Being a musical pastor will look different for each individual. These pastors will have to ask questions about their ability and their schedule to see if they can juggle both playing regularly and being a pastor. Pastor Brett Naumann commented, “I would often play and preach, so my associate would preside, and then I’d be able to just get off the bench after the hymn of the day and go and do the sermon and then head back to the bench. And that worked out quite well. So, I was actually quite instrumental in participating from the bench in that setting here.”⁸⁵ Pastor Paul Meier said something similar but recommended not playing and preaching in his circumstances,

84. Jonathan Bauer, survey by author, December 9, 2023.

85. Brett Naumann, interview by author. Zoom, December 11, 2023.

I'm blessed with having an associate. He could do the whole liturgy. I have played and preached. It's not advisable because, in my opinion, I just don't have the time to give to both the organ and the sermon. Something's going to suffer, and it's usually the sermon. .. It only takes thirty seconds to walk from the balcony to the front. It seems like it is sort of an eternity, but you just give them a little bit of time. It can be done, but yeah, you are worn out after those services.⁸⁶

From these two quotes, we can understand that the musical pastor is able to play for a worship service and preach the sermon, but it might not be ideal. An associate pastor or two at a congregation would make this easier. A solo pastor might be able to play and preside if there is an instrument in the front of the church, but then he would have to adjust the service to accommodate that circumstance, which may mean having spoken responses instead of sung. The pastor must wrestle with those decisions to make the service work.

Pastor Phillip Moldenhauer also adds a different aspect to consider in this topic. Although he is in a large congregation with multiple pastors, he does not play that often. He says,

I think you have to ask yourself the fundamental question, "With the gifts that God has given me, where do I belong?" And for me, the answer to that question became clear, and the answer was I belong in the pulpit, not on the organ bench. So, I don't actively seek to play for services. I will occasionally. But suppose you are on the organ bench. In that case, it robs you of one of the prime pastoral moments, which is the before and after service, catching people, being their pastor, and making those contacts. That's very hard if you are locked to the organ bench, and people are coming and going, and you're not shaking hands with them, and so on and so forth. So, for me, it became pretty clear that even though I enjoy playing organ, it's not going to be something that I spend a lot of time doing. Or if I do it, I'm probably going to look for like midweek services, like Lent.⁸⁷

86. Paul Meier, interview by author. In-person, December 4, 2023.

87. Phillip Moldenhauer, interview by author. Google Meet, November 27, 2023.

Asking yourself the question “With the gifts God has given me, where do I belong?” is essential. The answer will be completely different depending on the person. For those who may not be as gifted in music, it may be best to enjoy music as a hobby. Still, with limited time as a pastor, you must prioritize pastoral duties. For those who are incredibly gifted in music and playing instruments, you will have to find a way to synthesize being a pastor and a musician and ask those hard questions.

As mentioned earlier, the pastor should know the people in the congregation personally and musically. Know the people and figure out what they like, dislike, and what they can or cannot sing. Pastor Mark Schewe says, “I’ve been blessed by my music background in my school years to be able to generally gauge what a specific congregation (whether large, small, a singing congregation) will be able to learn and do and which songs or liturgies will not go well.”⁸⁸ Bauer notes this as well when he describes what works for his congregation: “Our people have benefited tremendously from simplicity and repetition. We have a lot of young families, so it helps when you do things often enough that even young kids can participate. Our style is a little more piano-guitar-winds-strings in nature (those are the musicians and instruments we have), so we tend to do music that lends itself well to that.”⁸⁹ All of these illustrate and encourage the need to know your people and context. Because of the musicality of the pastor, it allows him to understand the musical culture of his congregation.

88. Mark Schewe, survey by author. December 12, 2023.

89. Bauer, survey.

Huebner stresses the importance of worship and what we do in worship. Worship teaches, and if you can model and reflect it for the congregation, that “we are blessed with an ambiance because we’re in the presence of God and that at the same time, it touches my life with Jesus.”⁹⁰ Thus, it is essential to be deliberate and thoughtful so that people can learn about Christ.

Having excellent worship does not mean that music must be at the level of Bach, or the preaching has to be like the sermons of Luther. Every part of the body has different gifts that make it unique. In some congregations, there will be a great number of well-accomplished organists and musicians. For others, there may only be one. Kehren highlighted this fundamental principle: “Let all of God’s gift be used in worship.”⁹¹ For the congregation that has someone with a Doctor of Music Arts Degree playing, that means you should let this person play and use the breadth of his or her talents to give thanks to the Lord. For those who do not have that level of caliber, let those musicians use their gifts to the best of their abilities to praise God. However, if some members think that the musician is showing off, the pastor might have to intervene. Here is where you should know your musician and wonder if this is a temptation. You can go in two directions. Schewe says, “Judging where the appropriate line between the message being appropriately prominent and a musician being too ‘showy’ is almost something that you need to see to judge.”⁹² You won’t know if it is showy or inappropriate unless you witness the performance and understand it.

90. James Huebner, interview by author. December 4, 2023..

91. Jonathan Kehren, survey by author. December 1, 2023.

92. Schewe, survey.

On the other hand, as Pastor Jacob Haag says, “The temptation, of course, is there. But it’s a temptation that happens rarely. And with only certain musicians, if the purpose of worship is to proclaim the gospel, and that’s how we praise God, why wouldn’t you do it in the best way you possibly can?”⁹³ This is where you can teach your members the principle mentioned here. If God has given the musician incredible gifts in this area, why wouldn’t you want him or her to use these gifts to the fullest? A musical pastor will need to use proper judgment when a situation like this arises.

93. Jacob Haag, interview by author. Zoom. December 11, 2023.

CONCLUSION

Those who are gifted in music and love it and have a great passion for it and the pastoral ministry may feel that they have to focus on one and get rid of the other. However, music is a large part of being a pastor because music will happen in almost every worship service. Having a musical background, either vocally or instrumentally, will help with many aspects of ministry, from worship planning to interacting with members and musicians alike. Although these musical pastors may not be able to play regularly for services on Sunday, they can still use their gifts to the best of their ability to praise God for all the things he has done.

SOLI DEO GLORIA

APPENDIX 1. INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research. My name is Andrew Carter, a senior at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. I am conducting this study as part of my senior thesis project, in which I am investigating *how a musically talented pastor can use his gifts in a way that does not feel like he is wasting them but rather direct those gifts into something that can be edifying for a congregation, specifically in areas of worship*. This project is in partial fulfillment of my MDiv degree. You have been invited to participate in this research because I believe that you can provide valuable information on the topic. I will send you a survey asking several questions about different aspects of worship and how you plan worship.

Your involvement in this research will be shared in the following ways: The information you provide may be summarized, paraphrased, or quoted to help formulate a picture of different principles or applications of worship, which will be included in my thesis.

If you agree to the audio recording of the interview, the recording will be deleted after the research project is completed.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you may choose not to answer any or all questions. You may fully withdraw from the interview at any time and information that you provided will not be reported in the research.

“By signing this consent form, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study under the conditions described.”

Check one:

You may use my name in your study.

You may use the information I provide, but I wish to remain anonymous.

Name: _____ Date: _____

“I furthermore agree to the audio recording of this interview and understand that the recording will be deleted upon completion of the research project.” _____ (initials)

APPENDIX 2. QUESTIONS FOR SURVEY AND INTERVIEWS

Name -

What do you play?

How do you use your theological training to make worship edifying?

How do you use your musical training to make worship edifying?

When planning what you are going to play for a service, how do you decide what pre-service/post-service/offertory/prelude music to play?

How does performance reflect the message and theme of the day? How do you word paint, and how do people respond to it?

When working with other parish musicians, how did you help them find or pick music that fit the theme or message of the day?

Was there ever a time when you had to tell a musician no? If so, describe the scenario and how you addressed it.

How do you combat the temptation of making worship a musical experience (showing off) versus leading the people in praising God?

What do you see as the primary function of worship?

Imagine you are introducing something new to worship (new service setting, new worship style, new hymn, or psalm); how would you go about doing so?

There are a variety of worship practices and norms in WELS congregations. What has resonated with them, and what has not resonated with them? Why do you think certain practices have or have not resonated with them?

Has the congregation said anything about worship services? For example, "I really like how you pulled out all the stops for the final stanza of the hymn." If they have, what have they said, and how does that help you for future worship planning? What concrete feedback have you received from the congregation? How has that affected worship planning and execution?

Describe your philosophy toward hymn selection. Singability versus theme of the day. How do you make choices within the tensions between the singability and the connection to the day's focus?

Describe how your musical abilities have enhanced public worship.

If you were to give at last one piece of advice to an aspiring pastor with musical gifts, what would you give him?

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