

Raising the Bar Line

Engaging Congregations
Through Experiential
Music & Worship Arts



choristersguild

By Dr. Terri Sinclair
and Kirsten Ellefson Foyles

Contents

INTRODUCTION 4

DAYS FROM THE LITURGICAL CALENDAR AND CHURCH YEAR

Advent 7
Epiphany 10
Transfiguration Sunday 13
Lent 16
Palm Sunday 19
Pentecost 22
World Communion Sunday 25
All Saints Day 28
Christ the King Sunday 31

OTHER SPECIAL DAYS AND OBSERVANCES

Mother's Day / Father's Day 34
Confirmation / Graduation 37
Patriotic / Social Justice Themes 40

BIBLIOGRAPHY 43

ABOUT THE AUTHORS Back Cover



Introduction

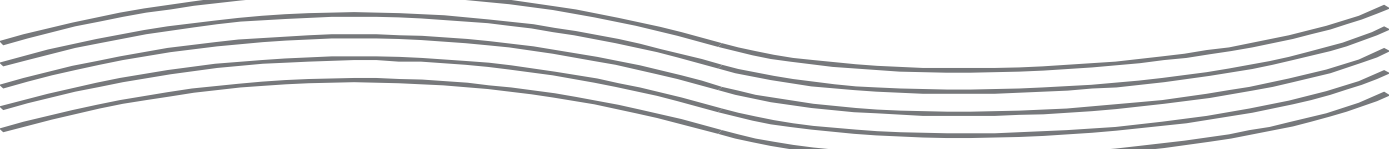
We work together in a multigenerational music ministry at Community Presbyterian Church in Pinehurst, North Carolina. In our music and worship planning, we found a wealth of resources to assist with the incorporation of traditional hymns of the faith, and a lack of resources for meaningful incorporation of more contemporary songs into worship. We also found numerous resources for adult choir, youth choir or children's choir, but those resources were not always relevant for the multi-generational approach we desired.

We previously conducted research to find current contemporary Christian songs that were applicable to specific dates within the liturgical calendar. We then expanded the concept to include a brief history of each date and an indication of which songs were most suitable for children's voices. We published our research, through Choristers Guild, in a series of articles entitled *For Every Season, There Is a Song*. This series focused on application of contemporary Christian music to different liturgical dates, with special emphasis on music that was particularly appropriate for congregational singing, as well as for children's voices.

Our next step was to research, brainstorm and create opportunities for creative worship and to explore ways to merge the music from our research into those creative elements in our worship services at CPC. Our congregation responded so favorably, we created a workshop entitled Creative and Intergenerational Expression of Music in Worship in which we offered ideas and strategies for congregations to experience music in worship through visual, aural, and kinesthetic ways. We made a connection between the songs, a specific liturgical date, and the active, multi-generational involvement of the congregation.

Based on the positive feedback and level of interest in our concept, we decided that a logical next step would be to create a worship planning resource that was centered around the theme of our workshop. We wanted our resource to focus on music as a way to actively and creatively engage the congregation in worship through participatory activities. We also wanted to focus our creative worship ideas around the liturgical calendar dates that would be applicable to multiple denominations. In an effort to make this a comprehensive worship planning resource for those dates, we included a brief history and/or lesser known aspect of each liturgical date, a creative worship element centered around the date, and an explanation that would allow children to understand and connect with the concept/story of each date.

Finally, we reduced the comprehensive song lists from our articles down to a short list of 20-25 songs that we most highly recommend, based on their lyrical connection to the date



'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, you are important among the rulers of Judah. A ruler will come from you. He will be like a shepherd for my people, the Israelites.'

Mathew 2:6 ICB – quoting Micah 5:2

Advent

Includes the 4 Sundays prior to Christmas Day

Advent (Latin for “coming”) is the beginning of the church year and foreshadows one of the holiest events Christians celebrate – the coming of Jesus. While the themes of Advent are familiar - hope, peace, love, joy – there is a historical and theological debate as to whether Advent should be a penitential or joyful season. A penitential spirit would emphasize not Jesus’ birth, but rather his second coming at the end of time; whereas the birth of Jesus results in a joyful focus on the season.

There are complicated theories as to how these joyful and penitential philosophies merged, but it is believed that additions to the Roman liturgy by other regions in Europe codified a hybrid philosophy on Advent. This hybrid liturgy was eventually adopted by the Roman church and became the basis for the structure and themes of Advent many churches celebrate today. Some denominations and churches that focus on the joyful themes of Advent have changed the liturgical color of Advent from purple to dark blue to differentiate Advent from the clearly penitential season of Lent.

Through a Child’s Eyes

Advent is the season before Christmas when we get ready for Jesus to be born. Preparing for important events in our lives helps us get excited about them and enjoy them even more. One way we prepare our houses for Christmas day is by decorating evergreen trees. During Advent, one way we prepare our hearts for Jesus’ birth is by lighting a candle each week. Each candle represents a gift that Jesus will bring to the world when He comes: hope, peace, love, and joy. Just like putting lights and ornaments on an evergreen tree prepares our homes for Christmas day, lighting the Advent candles each week and learning about the gifts Jesus brings prepares our hearts to celebrate his birth on Christmas Day.

During the children’s sermon, each child could be given a Christmas coloring page to prepare for their parents as Christmas gifts. Distribute two crayons to each child (ex: purple and blue). Tell them to color only the parts of the picture that they want to be purple and blue, and that they will get more colors the following week. Explain that this kind of picture will

take more planning and more thought than if they had all of the colors available to them at once. The next Sunday, distribute green and yellow crayons and remind them to add only those colors to their pictures. The following week give them orange and red crayons. There will be much excitement on the final Sunday when you give them all of the remaining colors to complete the picture. The children can present the pictures to their parents on Christmas Eve, and explain how they had waited and planned for each color on the page. This kinesthetic activity will help children understand the concept of waiting and preparation – both key components of Advent. Adults in the congregation could also be encouraged to enjoy this activity with one of the numerous adult coloring books currently available.

Creative Worship Element: Watching & Waiting

During the first Sunday of Advent, ask the congregation to close their eyes and answer a couple of simple questions silently without opening their eyes. Ask them the color of an object in the room, what someone in church is wearing that day, how many people are sitting in their row, or whether the blinds are open or closed. Then ask them to open their eyes and evaluate their accuracy; it is surprising how many seemingly insignificant details we can overlook in the midst of our hectic lives. Next introduce mindfulness-based awareness and the practice of examen. These concepts encourage us to be aware of the moment and our surroundings, and to then become aware of and open to God's presence in that moment. During this season of Advent, challenge yourself to look for God's presence in every moment of your life.

Children's/Congregational Worship Songs

Songs that can be sung by children or youth alone, but also provide opportunities for the children and youth to lead congregational song.

"Abba, Abba, Hear Us," We Cry (Text: Andrew Donaldson; Music: Korean Trad., 2001)

A Baby Will Come (Bill Wolf, 2010)

Advent Hymn (Watching, Waiting, Longing) (Rick Lee James & Ted Rastatter, 2011)

Advent Song (Mary Lu Walker, 1998)

Almost There (Michael W. Smith, Wes King & Amy Grant, 2014)

Bethlehem Wind (Joseph M. Martin, 2006)

Days of Elijah (Robin Mark, 1996)

Emmanuel Come (Cindy Morgan, Jon Steingard & Todd Fields, 2013)

Fear Not (Paul Marino & Jeremy Johnson, 2010)

He Came Down (Trad. Cameroon; Trans. John Bell, 1986)

Hope Is a Light (Daniel Charles Damon, 2007)

In Excelsis Deo (Jordan Critz & Matt Boswell, 2008)

Light of the World (Lauren Daigle, Paul Duncan & Paul Mabury, 2014)

My Soul Magnifies the Lord (Chris Tomlin & Daniel Carson, 2009)

My Soul Proclaims with Wonder (Text: Carl P. Daw, Jr.; Music: John Carter, 2014)

Prepare the Way of the Lord (Taizé Community, 1984)

Song of Hope (Heaven Come Down) (Robbie Seay, Taylor Johnson, Ryan Owens, Chase Jenkins, Dan Hamilton & Tedd Tjornhom, 2007)

The Advent Road (Text: Charlotte Lee; Music: Douglas E. Wagner, 2010)

There Is Hope (Christopher Machen, 1999)

When Jesus Comes (Text: Mary Kay Beall; Music: John Carter, 2011)

When Love Is Born Anew (Charlotte Lee & Douglas E. Wagner, 2004)

Witness to the One True Light (Daniel Charles Damon, 2007)

Choristers Guild Corner

Selected anthems from the Choristers Guild Catalog • www.choristersguild.org

A Litany for Advent | McRae | **CGA570**

A Waiting Carol | Kemp | **CGA555**

Advent Blessing | Crunk | **CGA1273**

Advent Celebration | Patterson | **CGA1159**

Advent Joy | Hopson | **CGA870**

Ale Pun | Schram | **CGE37-CGE41**

An Advent Carol | Lindh | **CGA648**

Come, Come Emmanuel | Bailey & Mayo | **CGA1031**

Come, Lord Jesus, We Are Waiting | Christopherson | **CGA592**

God Is Never Late | Smith | **CGA1440**

Hope Will Come | Brighton | **CGA1136**

How Will We Know Him? | Algozin | **CGA634**

Jus' A Little Farther to Go | Bolt | **CGA752**

Let Every Heart Prepare a Throne | Patterson | **CGA1320**

O Come, O Come Immanuel | Sleeth & Marshall | **CGA721**

O Come, Redeemer of the Earth | Hanson | **CGA1405**

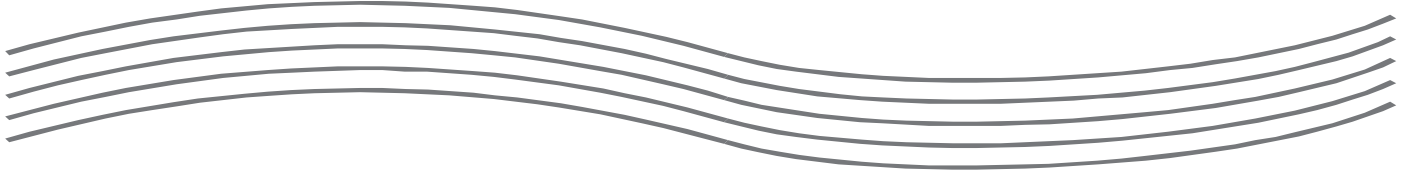
One Simple Candle | Butler | **CGA1130**

Sing a Song of Advent | Hopson | **CGA1040**

Sing and Rejoice with Heart and Voice | Clemens | **CGA799**

Thou Shalt Know Him | Burrows | **CGA1410-
CGA1411**

Whoever Welcomes You Welcomes Me | Schultz | **CGA1067**



They spent their time learning the apostles' teaching. And they continued to share, to break bread, and to pray together. And everyone felt great respect for God. All the believers stayed together. They shared everything.

Acts 2: 42-44 ICB

World Communion Sunday

First Sunday in October

The idea for World Communion Sunday began in the Presbyterian Church as a gift to the universal Christian (ecumenical) church.¹ First celebrated in 1933, at a Presbyterian Church in Pittsburg, PA, World Communion Sunday gained strength and popularity during World War II.² In a time when the secular world was in chaos, the Christian world designated this day as an opportunity to bring Christians of all countries and traditions together. World Communion Sunday is now celebrated by numerous denominations and cultures as a reminder that we are all one in the family of God. This liturgical date recognizes both our unity in Christ as well as our diversity of cultures.

Through a Child's Eyes

Do you have any brothers or sisters? Do you have family members (aunts, uncles, cousins) that live in another state? In another country? In lots of other countries? Well, you may not know this, but every single answer to those questions is, "Yes!" When you are baptized into the family of God, you become an important part of a huge family that has relatives in every country around the world. It is hard to imagine that you have brothers and sisters in Christ living in South Africa, China, Mexico, Syria, and Iceland. As a Christian, you are a member of this family that includes 2 billion people in 195 different countries.

World Communion Sunday is a special day when we think about everything we have in common with those 2 billion family members, and they also think about us. One thing we have in common with Christians around the world is that we all celebrate communion to remember that God so loved the world, he gave us his son, Jesus. To celebrate our gigantic and wonderful Christian family, we all have communion on the same day once a year and we call that day World Communion Sunday. Now when you look at a huge map of the world you can remember that you have family in all of those countries, and once a year you celebrate a wonderful family tradition together.

Creative Worship Element: God So Loved the World

This creative worship element allows the congregation to engage in World Communion Sunday through kinesthetic and visual experiences. As they enter the worship space, give each person a small sticker in the shape of a heart. Display a world map in a central/easily visible location in the front of the worship space. During communion, invite the congregation to place their hearts on the map over a country or region for which they would like to offer a prayer for peace, healing, or hope. Then offer them the opportunity to visit a prayer station for further personal reflection. The map covered in hearts is a powerful representation of God's love for the world and the collective power of prayer.



Children's/Congregational Worship Songs

Songs that can be sung by children or youth alone, but also provide opportunities for the children and youth to lead congregational song.

All Are Welcome (Hans Peterson & Larry Olson, 1999)

All the People Said Amen (Matt Maher, 2013)

Be One (Natalie Grant, 2015)

Behold the Lamb (Keith Getty & Kristyn Getty, 2009)

Children of God (Steven Curtis Chapman, 2007)