

The *intercom*

In Church and Community



From the Senior Pastor Generosity Beyond the Offering Plate



Dear OSL family,

If you've joined us for worship lately, you will have heard us talk about offerings that don't fit in the offering plate. When we think of "offering," we typically imagine a gift of money we place in a container specifically made to receive it. But that's a rather small view of offering.

There are many ways that we make an offering to God for the sake of something bigger than ourselves. Sometimes we give the gift of time. I was with a group from OSL recently that prepared and served over 300 meals at The Banquet to our neighbors who live with housing and food insecurity. It was a gift of several hours and a great experience of "connecting faith to everyday life."

Sometimes we give the gift of **prayer**. Often when we don't know what else to do for someone close to us, we offer to pray with them and for them. Even on social media, in all of the ways we stay connected with each other via technology, one of the most common sentiments I see is the 🙏 emoji, the praying hands. The gift of prayer can be a powerful reminder of the bonds we share with each other and a way for us to place our trust in God's goodness at times when the future may seem unclear.

Sometimes we give the gift of a particular **talent**. We might coach our kid's sports team. We might serve at church as a Sunday School teacher, a confirmation mentor, a sound or TV tech during worship, or a member of a committee or the Governing Board. The truth is, God has gifted each of us with specific talents and called us to use them not only in service to ourselves and those close to us but also in service to the larger community.

In this issue of *The Intercom*, you will read about some of the ways that our gifted musicians are offering their skills and talents in creating music for worship here at Our Savior's. As you



Ministry Spotlight Original Music at OSL

By Pr. Justin Kosec, with accompaniment by
Gene LeVasseur, Matthew Tylutki, Deanna Wehrspann, and Denny Gale



"Is this the bathroom song?" my wife asked.

"The what?"

"The bathroom song. The song you and Gene wrote in the bathroom."

Well, to be fair, the story was a bit more complicated than that. But the basic detail was right. "Yes, this is the bathroom song."

My wife was talking about "Promises, Promises," a song you've been hearing in worship here at OSL during Lent. Worship and Music Director Gene LeVasseur and I didn't write the song in the bathroom. But that was where the idea started.

As we washed our hands, Gene shared his recent trouble finding music for our Lenten theme on promises. Despite the abundance of language in the Bible around promises and covenants, Gene said he had gone through the 800 songs in our hymnal and found almost none that addressed the topic.

So Gene had resolved to write a song. He shared his general concept; but also that he'd been struggling to find the right words. I left the bathroom thinking about Gene's ideas. Soon I had a few phrases I teased into a few lines. I shared those with Gene, and he started to play with a few melodies. His notes on rhythm and musical meter helped me fine-tune phrases and eliminate other lines from the draft text. Gene

emphasized shifting emotional tones in the text with key changes. As we finalized the text, Gene added vocal harmonies and composed different versions for the band-led Celebrate service and for the organ-driven music in Festive.

This led to our Lenten song, "Promises, Promises." Or, as we call it in my house, "The Bathroom Song."

This is only one fascinating story about original music developed for our worshiping community through our music ministry. Here we'll share the stories behind other songs that have grown from the collaboration of our remarkable team of composers and musicians.

"The Lord's Prayer" and "The Lord's Prayer 2," written for worship by Gene LeVasseur

When we resumed in-person worship we made many changes to our services.

We removed many elements of unison speech and song. The Lord's Prayer was something we decided to have sung by

the musicians. Last summer I composed a version that adds a sense of joy to our "conversation with God." Thankful, adoring, and enthusiastic faith were the feelings I was after. I approached this methodically: I assembled the melody, rhythm, and harmony using my music theory knowledge. I presented



From the Senior Pastor, *continued*

reflect on their story and the gifts they routinely offer, I invite you to consider the treasure trove of talents with which God has blessed you. As you think about your unique skills, try to identify ways you could make an offering of those talents that doesn't necessarily fit in the offering plate but certainly would be a blessing to someone else. Once you've landed on something, have fun being generous and know that in your own way, you are bringing the Kingdom of God a little closer through your generosity.

In Christ's love,

Pr. Randy Gehring

Holy Week at Our Savior's

Palm Sunday – Saturday, 5:00 P.M., Sunday, 8:45 A.M., Sanctuary; 10:15, Celebrate Center. Palm branches for those worshipping from home via TV (FOX, 9:00 A.M., KSCB, 1:00 P.M.) or Facebook Live (Celebrate, 8:45 A.M.; Festive, 10:15 A.M.) will be distributed at the south entrance on Saturday, March 27, 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 noon.

Mundy Thursday – 6:30 p.m., Celebrate Center. In-car worship via AM radio, south parking lot. Holy Communion in both locations.

Good Friday – 6:30 p.m., Sanctuary. Live-streamed live on Facebook at 6:30, televised on FOX at 10:00.

Holy Saturday – "Stations in the Street" by Scott Erickson, a self-guided devotional meditation, will be in The Gathering Place all day on April 3, and online on Facebook and the OSL website.

Easter Sunday – 7:00 a.m., Sanctuary; 8:45, Celebrate Center; 10:15, Sanctuary. The 8:45 and 10:15 services will be streamed live on Facebook and broadcast on FOX (9:00) and KSCB (1:00) respectively. Should attendance exceeds COVID-19 room capacity of 175, The Gathering Place will be used as overflow.

a simple version to Denny and he convinced me to keep many of the more complex chords that have a hint of jazz.

As we approached Lent I was asked to consider writing another version of “The Lord’s Prayer” that would invoke different feelings. In Lent, it is traditional to refrain from singing any songs with the word “alleluia”; and our worship becomes very focused on our need for a savior. I wanted the music to have a great sense of confession, so the line “forgive us our sins” resonated in my head. I struggled for weeks with the right balance of major and minor chords, tension and tonal melody, free and metered rhythms. This time, music theory was failing me. I was sitting in my office praying about three specific challenging issues in my family. I sat at the keyboard and just played freely while I prayed silently. And then I ended by singing the Lord’s Prayer to my improvisations. Five minutes later it was complete in my head. Twenty minutes later I had it written down. I’ve had no editing since. I believe the Holy Spirit interceded as tears flowed, which is very rare for me. I thanked God for the music and my stress regarding those three specific challenges left me. Praise God!

“SING”cerely,
Gene LeVasseur

On Composing Regularly for Worship



We’re currently using a *Kyrie* I wrote alongside the “Promises, Promises” piece Gene and Justin wrote for Lenten worship, and I also write much of the music you hear in our “Freddy’s Faith-

Full Friends” children’s videos. But the vast majority of my music compositions are just threaded into music already chosen for worship. I might write an introduction for a hymn of the day; or write accompaniment parts for instruments to play alongside the organ. I would say that everything I do compose is to fit the necessities of the text, theme, and personnel for a particular worship occasion. The church has a long history of such contextual composition. As a church musician, Bach wrote most everything for a specific worship service and never expected anyone to perform it again. This is why you’ll hear him recycle so many ideas in his pieces. A couple Sundays a month—and whenever we have other instrumentalists playing in church—you’ll hear music I have written. At OSL, we’re just the latest congregation to live into the long tradition of composing music to lead God’s people into a new day.

—Matthew Tylutki

“Our Hearts Are Burning,” music by Deanna Wehrspann, words by Justin Kosec. Written for South Dakota Synod Day 2020

When I compose choral music for the church, it’s essential that the biblical text and/or poetry I use be non-superficial and give meaning for me. Pr. Justin had written a piece for liturgy called “Our Hearts Are Burning,” based on Luke 24 (the Road to Emmaus story), but he wasn’t sure how to use it in the liturgy. I found the text powerful, thoughtful, and current. The text led me to a simple melody of universal longing; it led me to music both minor and major, considering world problems and yet ultimate hope; it led me to heavy bass notes depicting the nail blows on the cross, as well as triumphant chords of Easter glory: “Our tired bones return to dust but we rise to breathe again.” I’m thankful to collaborate around vivid, thoughtful inspiration!



—Deanna Wehrspann

On Writing and Adapting Songs for Worship



At OSL, our Celebrate (contemporary) worship service differs from contemporary services at other denominations in the amount of music. Because we’re liturgical, we usually need about

eight pieces of music every Sunday. Many of these are recent contemporary songs. But some are in-house compositions. And more than a few are arranged especially for our band.

When I hear a song on the radio, I often have to adapt it so it will work in worship. I need to find the appropriate key for our singers and players. Some songs need to be shortened. And writing vocal parts for our talented singers is another necessity for some songs that don’t contain harmony vocals.

During my time in contemporary worship, I have written nearly 60 songs, a few of which are in the OSL rotation. I think one measure of a person’s passion is whether they lose track of time in the work. For me, I often lose track of time while arranging and writing music.

—Denny Gale



909 West 33rd St.,
Sioux Falls, SD 57105

(605) 336-2942
www.oslchurch.com

INTERCOM (USPS311210)

Published monthly by:

Our Savior's Lutheran Congregation

909 West 33rd Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57105

Periodicals Postage Paid at Sioux Falls, South Dakota

POSTMASTER:

Please send address change to INTERCOM,
909 West 33rd Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57105

The *intercom* March 2021

In Church and Community

A Publication of Our Savior's Lutheran Church

Worship Services

Saturday Evening – 5:00 P.M., Sanctuary

Sunday Morning

Celebrate Worship – 8:45 A.M., Celebrate Center

Festive Worship – 10:15 A.M., Sanctuary

Holy Week Schedule on Page 2

Television and Internet

Celebrate: 9:00 A.M., KTTW (cable channel 9; channel 7.1)

Festive: 1:00 P.M., KSCB (cable channel 30; channel 53),

Facebook Live, 8:45 and 10:15 A.M.

Website: oslchurch.com

Social Media

twitter.com/oslchurchsf ♦ facebook.com/oslchurchsf ♦

youtube.com/oslchurchsf ♦ instagram.com/oslchurchsf

Cover banner photo by Jeon Sang-O on Pixabay.com

Offering plate photo via Backgrounddownload.com

Faithful, Hopeful, Loving Generosity

Your support of OSL's mission to proclaim Christ and nurture faith that connects to everyday life is life-changing, both for you and for those whom our ministry reaches. Thank you! May God bless your faithful, hopeful, loving generosity.

Ways to Give

First Fruits Giving –

electronic contributions

Text Giving – text *sharing* to

73256 and follow the link

My OSL – keep current, and

quickly set up scheduled and

one-time giving

Learn more at oslchurch.com/giving