

Joyful Noise!

A monthly column
with all the noise
that is news about
Music & Worship at
St. John Lutheran
Church

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Happy Birthday Word and Worship

Our 9:30 **Word & Worship** service will be 10 years old on April 7th! Since this service has become such an important part of our weekly service offerings, I'm going to provide a little background and trivia on the details surrounding our "contemporary" worship

In the beginning...

The idea for the 9:30 **Word & Worship** service came after Pastor Dan Stalker attended a worship conference. He was contemplating a "new" type of adult Sunday School class that would include music along with the lessons, but this conference introduced him to "contemporary" worship. As a result, he formed a small committee to investigate possibilities and find a way to introduce this joyful worship style at St. John. Because of my experience in contemporary and gospel music styles, he asked me to assist, along with Julia (Rosenbohm) Hagge. Using resources purchased at his conference, we quickly saw that what he'd experienced was not a "Sunday School Class with music", but a more "relaxed" Lutheran worship experience. We decided to structure a service with minimal liturgy, plenty of good music from various books, and an informal "sermon" style. Pastor Stalker coined the name "Word & Worship".

Why 9:30?

Once we committed to developing a new alternative worship service, we had to decide WHEN to hold it. We noticed

that during the 9:30 Sunday School hour, many parents delivered their children and sat in their cars for an hour or just dropped the kids off and drove away, presumably going home or elsewhere for breakfast. Providing a worship opportunity at 9:30 made perfect sense, AND, it was in keeping with Pastor Stalker's desire to provide a pastor-led "classroom" experience through his informal sermons. Our hope was to attract people in the 18-40 age group, also allowing parents with very young toddlers a chance to worship in peace while their restless young ones were in Sunday School.

Will anyone come?

Before the 1st service, we set some "goals". We decided that if we didn't regularly have 25-40 people attending after three months, that we would declare the service a failure and cease offering it.

YES... they came!

Attendance at the 9:30 service started strong and continues to grow. It's not unusual to see between 100-130 people at that service. Attendance at this service is often the largest of our three services.

Who comes at 9:30?

The 9:30 service attracts worshippers of ALL ages. I am extremely surprised and pleased by the number of "senior" members who regularly attend 9:30. We serve life-long St. John members, newer members, visitors and future members.

Hymnals & Inserts

LBW doesn't contain many contemporary or "Gospel" hymns, so we often use the Red "Hymns of the Living Church" books. However, those books are over 25 years old, and lots of good "new" songs like "On Eagle's Wings" aren't in them. We subscribe to a copyright service from 2 major suppliers which gives us permission to photocopy hundreds of new songs as inserts. We also got a great deal on the 3-book set of "Glory and Praise" folk hymnals when the Peoria Cursillo Center switched to another book. Now, we've added "With One Voice, so we have LOTS of variety for exciting music!!

Upbeat MUSIC!

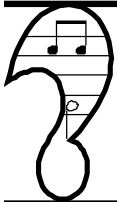
We knew that the music we were envisioning needed more than traditional piano/organ music. In 1992, the church purchased a state-of-the-art Yamaha SY77 synthesizer, allowing me to arrange complex accompaniments for hymn singing and our choir. I must act as a symphonic arranger and plan out what instruments I want for each song and which notes they will play. A typical 3 minute song takes over an hour or two of work to prepare the program, which is called a "Sequence" stored on a computer disk.

Baptisms abound

Since 1994, 53% of the St. John baptisms had been at 9:30 (64% last year). 101 souls entered our rolls through this service in the last 10 years!

9:30 has the personal touch

There are a lot of "personal touches" in the 9:30 service. I designed our logo, (notice the "W" in Word is an open Bible, and the "W" in Worship is a stained glass window & cross). My wife Pepper sculpted our stoneware pottery communion ware, and bakes our communion bread using a special recipe, and Harold Vires hand-crafted our wooden communion table/altar.



Why do you go to the 9:30 service?

This month I asked this question to several randomly-selected "regular" 9:30 attenders. (who have attended St. John for a combined total of over 220 years!)

- A mother in her 30's said *"Convenience, mostly. It lets me go to church while my (Pre-school) kids are in Sunday School. I can't get us all ready in time for 8:00 and 10:45 is just too late."*
- A woman in her late 40's said she enjoys the *"more relaxed worship and the music."*
- A couple in their early 60's said *"It meets our needs. we originally started because the time was convenient. Now we're retired, and keep coming because we like the music. I wish we would have had this type of service when my kids were small."*
- Another retired couple said *"We like it. It fills our needs. We like the time and the more relaxed service."*
- One couple in their early 60's were drawn to 9:30 when they saw it announced in the "Jottings". These regular worshippers drive from Elmwood each Sunday, always attending at 9:30: *"We like the music. I grew up with the liturgy, but appreciate the less formal atmosphere. It's more inviting to visitors. Also, with our long drive, the time is good for us."*

Meet the Choir

We continue to introduce our dedicated singers in the Gospel Choir. Unlike kids sports, where the kids do all the work and the parents fork out all the money, choir is a family activity that lets EVERYONE participate at NO COST, except for your TIME. Now, meet our featured family.



John Rosenbohm is one of those people that makes you say "Where does he find TIME to be in choir?" Besides singing bass and tenor (his range lets him sing both parts, as needed), John farms, recently earned his CPA, works as a tax preparer, and serves on the board of Prairie Farms. In his "spare time", he's Vice President of the St. John church council. John is a life-long member of St. John. He studied accordion as a child, and plays with our Polka band every Oktoberfest. He sang in the Limestone choir and the Rockettes & Rocketeers swing choir. John joined the St. John choir in 1967, actually BEFORE it became the "Gospel Choir". He and Jane raised four children and have three grandchildren. John's favorite radio station is WBNH (88.5 FM) Pekin, which plays Moody Bible broadcasts and traditional Christian music. He also likes "Oldies" and EZ listening, and especially, show tunes. What role does music play in John's worship experience? *"I like it. It's important. Music can set the tone for worship. I enjoy the harmonies of music."* Jane Rosenbohm has been a member of



St. John since 1971, and a choir soprano since 1991. She grew up in the Presbyterian church, and sang in school choirs including the University of Illinois, and played saxophone. Besides singing with us, Jane

teaches 7th and 8th grade literature in Brimfield, having recently earned her Master's Degree from Bradley. Her favorite radio station is WBNH. Jane enjoys a wide selection of music, including all types of Christian music, classical, jazz, swing/Big Band, Oldies, Show Tunes, Country/Western, EZ Listening, but her favorite is Christian Gospel. What role does music play in Jane's Worship experience? *"To me, music is a crucial part of worshipping God. I believe we were created to connect with God through music, whether or not we are musically talented. Music is another way God reveals His love to us. For me personally, worship without music is like a room without a window."*



John and Jane's youngest daughter Jessica is a life-long member of St. John, and a choir alto since 1995. She sang in school choirs at Logan elementary and Farmington High School, and had music lessons

as a child. Jessica works at Joann Fabrics in Peoria, and enjoys listening to Country/Western and Christian Gospel music.. What role does music play in her life? *"I really enjoy being in choir, singing, and listening to music."*

Until Next Month: Remember...

"Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs." Psalms 100:2 (NIV)

Soli Deo Gloria (To God alone be the Glory)

Donald L. Bauer Choral & Contemporary Music Director