

Joyful Noise!

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

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Gospel Choir Reunion June 10th!

On Sunday, June 10th, a giant "reunion choir" will sing for both the 9:30 and 10:45 services. This reunion is part of the St. John 150th anniversary celebration.

Our 24-voice Gospel Choir will grow to 58 voices as singers return to help us celebrate. Our special guests for this reunion will be Pastor and Marilyn Weber, who will be honored as one of our returning former pastors on that date.

The reunion choir will sing two songs at each service. One, "*If My People*", was the theme song of the very first cantata presented by the budding Gospel Choir in the mid 1970's. The second anthem, "*Celebration of Joy*", has perfect words to accompany the spirit of the day.

Calling ALL singers!

We tried to notify ALL FORMER choir members, but if you were missed, YOU ARE WELCOME to come and sing. Plan to be at both of these rehearsals:

Saturday June 9th 6 PM - 8 PM

Sunday June 10th 8 AM - 9 AM

and plan to sing at BOTH the 9:30 and 10:45 services on June 10th!

In the beginning...

Pastor Donald Weber and his wife Marilyn were big fans of "Gospel" music. In the mid 1970's Gospel groups like the "Bill Gaither" singers were very popular, but their music was rarely presented in Lutheran churches.

Even though St. John had had an adult choir for some time, Marilyn wanted a way to introduce the joyful sound of Gospel music to the congregation. She published bulletin announcements looking for anyone willing to join a "gospel singing group", and the church hired Limestone Band directory Charles Cunningham to direct.

Soon, this group replaced the traditional choir, and the combined result became the "Gospel Choir". They presented their first cantata, "*If My People*" in 1976, and the choir has continued to prosper ever since.

the beat goes on...

In 1977, Marilyn convinced a young piano player and his wife (Pepper and I) to transfer to St. John. Marilyn moved from accompanist to singer, and I began accompanying and selecting music for the choir.

When Chuck retired in the mid 1980's I was hired as official director. My musical tastes include many styles, so the repertoire was expanded to include traditional, contemporary, and light classical styles as well as gospel music. Our selections now span over 500 years of sacred music.

Our choir is well known throughout the conference. We've presented cantatas at many area churches and the Lutheran Home, organized and sang with mass-choirs for community Thanksgiving services, Civic Center services, Lutheran Home fund-raising concerts, and the installation of all three of our ELCA bishops. We've

sung in THREE STATES, as we've presented cantatas by invitation in Northern Wisconsin and Merrillville Indiana.

I am truly proud to direct such a dedicated group of singers! At one time, we had 44 singers. Today, we have 24. More are ALWAYS WELCOME to join in this important outreach!



Thanks to Brian Kapp

04-21-1998

HMMMM ... KIND OF IRONIC THAT I HEARD
YOU SINGING "CROWN HIM WITH MANY CROWNS"
EARLIER

Meet the Choir

This month, we continue to introduce our dedicated singers in the Gospel Choir.



Renelda Owen has been a member of St. John since 1972, coming to us from Zion Lutheran in Peoria. She joined our choir in the early 70's

singing alto. She currently sings tenor. Renelda took accordion lessons as a child, so she reads music. She has been singing in choirs since she was 14 years old, starting in the Manual High School A cappella choir, and later attended Bradley and sang in one of their choirs. While working at Commercial National Bank in Peoria, she sang with their Employees choir as well as Zion's church choir. *"I would be completely lost if I couldn't be in a choir".*

Besides singing, Renelda worked in the Limestone High School Guidance Office for 21 years before retiring in 1991. She was married to Cliff Owen for almost 48 years before his recent passing, and together, they raised three children, all of whom were confirmed at St. John by Pastor Weber. She is now the proud grandmother of nine grandchildren.

Renelda likes almost all kinds of music, but her favorite styles are Contemporary and Traditional Christian, Gospel, Classical, Swing/Big Band, Easy Listening, and Country. What role does music play in Renelda's Worship experience? *"Music is an integral part of the service. Hymns and usual choir music relate to scriptures of the day and the sermon, bringing the whole service together - complete. I can't imagine going to a church without music."*



150th Anniversary

- P June 10th: Pastor Donald Weber returns.
P June 10th: Hear the 60-voice reunion choir sing.

Remember, on these special days, there is **no 8:00 worship service!** We will have Word & Worship at 9:30 and Traditional worship at 10:45, followed by a reunion potluck.

We'll See you in September...

June 10th will be the last appearance by the Gospel Choir for the summer. We will return in September. While we are gone, watch for appearances of the "Summer Singers" one Sunday each month, which is a scaled-down choir singing something easy. If you ever thought about joining choir, you might want to try *Summer Singers* first. Watch the July and August weekly bulletins for rehearsal information. **PLAN AHEAD** - next fall, choir rehearsals will be on THURSDAY evenings instead of Mondays.



Question of the month: How come we never use the Red "Hymns of the Living Church" hymnals except at 9:30?

In the 1970's (WAY before LBW and *With One Voice*), those hymnals were purchased to give us access to many of the popular "Gospel" songs such as "How Great Thou Art". Now that we have newer hymnals, many of those songs are already available to us.

However, there are still a lot of good "Old Time" gospel songs in that hymnal, so, we WILL use that book to sing some beloved gospel hymns one Sunday this summer. **WHEN?** You've got to **COME EACH WEEK** so you don't miss it!

Submit your questions to the church office or Email me at donbauer@att.net.

Until Next Month: Remember...as you enjoy our reunion choir...

⁹ *After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.*¹⁰ *And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."*
Rev 7:9-10 (NIV)

Soli Deo Gloria (To God alone be the Glory)

Donald L. Bauer Choral & Contemporary Music Director