

Ending on a High Note....

[Text - Psalm 150]

Pastor Dave Shackle
May 29, 2016

When asked “What’s the most difficult instrument to play?” Leonard Bernstein cleverly replied “Second Fiddle!” For the most part, it’s fairly easy to find people willing to take the spotlight and showcase their skills. Finding people willing to do the less glamorous, supportive work, however, can be a bit more challenging. Yet the truth is you can’t have a successful ensemble without a variety of parts, and a well balanced sound. If a group’s goal is create a positive and pleasing effect, the members have to figure out how to blend their voices, instruments, and efforts. For this to happen, there has to be a willingness to listen to one another, and to one's leader. This same principle holds true for creating and sustaining a good and effective community of faith.

Our magnificent leader, Jesus Christ, not only teaches but also shows us how to graciously work together for the greater good. Like any truly effective leader, he dedicates his life to inspire the lives of all his followers, and to enhance their ability - and desire - to do their very best. Jesus recognizes that *everyone* - regardless of their history or background, gender or status, age or innate ability - *everyone* has something worthwhile to add to the mix! And through his own caring and gracious style, Jesus is able to create and orchestrate a remarkably compassionate and cohesive community; one which continues to be a positive influence in our world today.

Today, you and I come together in Christ’s name to carry forward his vision of One loving, wholesome and harmonious Human Family. And while the major impact of our work takes place outside these walls - through our ministries of outreach, and in our day-to-day living - the *inspiration* for our efforts is often refreshed and refueled right here, through our time together of worship, prayer and praise. For me, our Sunday morning gatherings are absolutely essential in providing the help and hope I need to function positively, in an often negative and

demanding world. And a key component of the energy and joy that I experience here, comes from our marvelous Ministry of Music: a ministry that Dave Debick has faithfully led and augmented for the past fourteen years. Dave is one of those rare, highly talented musicians who can still appreciate, encourage, and utilize the contributions those of us with lesser skills. One of the great gifts Dave brings is his ability to recognize that each of us has some gift or ability that we can use to praise and serve the Holy One. [Mark my words, if he finds out that one of you can play the *spoons*, we'll soon have a Recorder/Dulcimer/Spoon Ensemble - and it will sound delightful!]

In this morning's Call to Worship, the Psalmist invites the people of God to praise God with the sound of trumpet, with lute and harp, with tambourine and dance, strings and pipe; with clanging cymbals and loud clashing cymbals. In other words, it really doesn't seem to matter *what* instrument you use, as long as you *use* it to praise the Holy One! The Psalmist then concludes with this intriguing notion: "Let everything that *breathes* praise the Holy One!" Apparently, as long as you and I have life and breath, we can continue to find our voices and instruments, our tools and talents, to utilize in praising of God and in serving to God's people.

We *can* praise God with the sound of lute and harp, yet we can also praise God with the sound of leaf-blower and hammer. Every month, Marilyn and Doug Wrights faithfully praise and serve the Holy One by preparing the bread and cups for our Holy Communion, just as our bakers and servers praise and serve by providing pastries and cups of refreshment for our guests and members - thereby extending our Table of Welcome. Every Sunday, our teachers and nursery volunteers praise and serve the Holy One by instructing and watching-over God's little ones. And speaking of "little ones" - the Youth of this church step-up "big time" by offer their praise and service in our choirs, at our Hunger Meals, by making and selling crafts or having car washes to raise money to help people in need.

The twenty-one people listed in each week's bulletin as "Participants in this Sunday's Service" each provide an important service that

enhances the spirit of our worship experience - from those who warmly greet us when we arrive, to those who clean-up and lock-up when we leave. And we mustn't overlook the dedicated commitment of my personal favorites, the sound-system operators. [That's because I know that with a flip of the switch they can cut me off if I get long-winded!] So in conclusion, let me *quickly* say "thank you" to all of you who so generously give of your time and talents to faithfully praise and serve the Holy One in this place. And let us all allow this time together to inspire us to find new and creative ways to bring harmony and celebration to every store and food court, workplace and playground, home and gathering, nook and cranny in which we happen to be!