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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



ELCA Worship News

SEPTEMBER 2015

Dear friends,

My pastoral care professor in seminary, created a bumper sticker, "WIGIAT." It stands for "Where is God in all of this?" The "this" being: life, the world, the church, the good, the bad, the ugly, the joy, the fear and so on.

It seems to me to be an appropriate question to ask often these days. Over this past year, we have witnessed violence rip and tear through this world and this country ranging from: Ferguson, Staten Island, Baltimore, Charleston, Chattanooga, Virginia and the so many more states and cities that never even make the news. We feel horror at what we see through the terror of the Islamic State group (ISIS) or the breaking of hearts at natural disasters in Nepal and so many other places in the world.

William Sloane Coffin reminds us, *"The world, of course, is in a frightful mess, but because of us, not because of God. God could only clean up the mess by taking away our freedom. But without freedom where could love be? So paradoxically, it is because God is a loving God that there is so much suffering in the world. But because God is a loving God he is suffering too, and suffering also through the bodies and souls of his creatures, which is why Paul writes, 'For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake.'"*

Each and every time we gather for worship, in our midst, we have a profound opportunity that the world cannot give. We gather around the gifts of God's grace; these gifts that remind us "God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.*" (1 John 4:16,18). Worship provides us with that profound opportunity to be reminded that we are not alone in the "this" of life. Worship provides us with an opportunity to be reminded, "WIGIAT" that God was, is and will be forever with us.

The "God with us" dwells in, with and among us. We are not alone. This is made so beautifully manifest each time we gather as the assembled body of Christ. We bring the brokenness of our own lives, the brokenness of this world, and the brokenness of our relationships with one another; we bring this and join it together with

Christ's own broken body, and we are re-membered. We are made new. We are fed. We are sent forth to remind this broken world that God is in our midst. We need not fear, for perfect love has already cast that aside.

May it be so!

The Rev. Kevin L. Strickland
Assistant to the Presiding Bishop
Executive for Worship



WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE CHURCH?

TUNE UP worship band gathering

On Sat. Aug. 8, the TUNE UP worship band gathering was held. More than 100 worship musicians, pastors, sound techs and video techs assembled on the campus of Westbury United Methodist Church in Houston for a multi-denominational training event. For the third year in a row, the event was organized by the Worship Excellence Team of the ELCA Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod to improve the quality of band-led worship in smaller churches.



Participants came from across Texas including San Antonio, Austin and the Houston vicinity, and represented more than 20 congregations from Lutheran, Nazarene, Baptist, United Methodist and nondenominational church bodies.

The gathering began with opening worship and a panel discussion about the issues facing church musicians today. Then everyone divided into instrumental/vocal/tech tracks and conceptual tracks. The instrumental tracks were divided by specific area (worship leader, acoustic guitar, electric guitar, bass guitar, keyboard, drums, Latin percussion, vocals, sound tech and video tech). Conceptual track offerings included sessions on hospitality in worship, multicultural worship, creative worship planning, and loops and multi-tracks in worship. During the "Coaching for Bands" session, a volunteer church band received feedback and help with their music from a panel of track leaders. Then an "Instant Band" was formed from volunteer participants who had never played together. They were able to learn and arrange a song on the fly. An optional post-event included a tour of the worship technology at Houston's First Baptist Church.

One attendee commented, *Great clinic! Thank you very much! My band mates and I returned home fired up for the future of our band!*

Watch the [event website](#) for details on upcoming events.

Dr. Clayton Faulkner and Richard Birk
Event Organizers
Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod Worship Excellence Team



Share your event

Are you planning a worship event in your congregation or synod? [Share it](#) with us for this newsletter! *Due to publication schedule, items should be submitted a minimum of 10-12 weeks before the event.*

Share your story

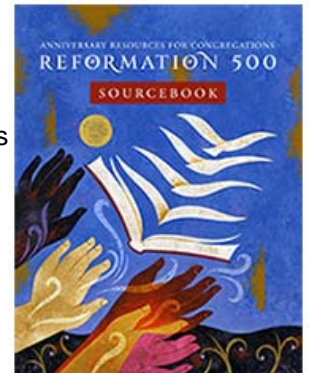
We love highlighting worship events from across this church in this newsletter. To submit your story, send a brief article and pictures to worship@elca.org

AUGSBURG FORTRESS

How do we observe the 500th anniversary of the Reformation? Reformation 500 Sourcebook: Anniversary Resources for Congregations

This sourcebook will be an essential guide to congregations as they plan the various ways to observe the Reformation's 500th anniversary in 2017. Gathered in this resource are a variety of ideas for planning worship services, educational events, music festivals, service projects and connections with other Christians. A CD-ROM of reproducible, customizable content is also included. Available June 2016.

Visit www.augsburgfortress.org/ref500sourcebook to preview materials, download the sourcebook sampler and pre-order your copy today.



EVENTS AND RESOURCES

Learn how to form disciples at Sacramental Training Institute St. John's Lutheran Church, Sacramento, Calif. Oct. 1-3, 2015

Learn what it means to be a discipleship congregation. Pastors, musicians, seminarians and lay leaders are encouraged to attend this event offered by the North American Association for the Catechumenate. It is being co-hosted by St. John's Lutheran Church, Trinity Cathedral and St. Martin's Episcopal Church.



A team composed of Episcopalians, Lutherans and Presbyterians will lead participants through an inspirational, practical, three-day training designed to introduce this ancient spiritual practice for youth and adults to their congregations. Congregational leaders already involved in the catechumenate process are also encouraged to attend and find new ways to enrich this journey of faith formation.

For scholarships, contact our registrar, [Devra Betts](#). You also may download a brochure or register online at the [association's website](#).



[Music that Makes Community](#)

Cathedral of the Incarnation, Baltimore – Nov. 20
The Bishop's Ranch, Sonoma County – Jan. 17, 2016

Music that Makes Community Inc. is a not-for-profit organization that connects a worldwide network of practitioners and leaders who share a practice of paperless song leading. They partner with hosts to produce conferences and workshops to teach, to practice and to create resources for making connections and building a repertoire of songs for paperless song leading.



These conferences are perfect for anyone – pastors, lay leaders, choir directors, Sunday school teachers, organists and more – who seeks to find ways of engaging an assembly in song in a truly authentic way. No previous experience necessary!

Hear what Lutherans are saying about Music that Makes Community:

Thanks for your encouragement to do this. I know this is going to have an impact on Morning Prayer. Even the keyboardists among us, including myself, came to see the value in leading voice-to-voice, and face-to-face. All of us came away transformed by the power of this form of music-making. – Lorraine S. Brugh

Theoretically, I've always known that music creates community, but this was an experience of that reality. Singing together without paper not only creates community, it empowers and transforms it. I really believe singing in this way changes the ways that we are church together. – Bradley Schmeling

To learn more about upcoming events and see the growing number of resources on our newly redesigned site, go to www.musicthatmakescommunity.org.





Registration is now open for fall classes at **The Center for Worship & Music Studies**, a new kind of training program committed to supporting the full diversity of musical gifts in the church.

Based in Minneapolis, both face-to-face and distance learning options are available. Students can work toward a Certificate in Worship & Music Leadership, or just take individual classes. Their five areas of study include Biblical and Theological Studies, Program and Administration, Skills Development, Repertoire Studies, and Technology.

Visit the center's [website](#) to learn more or to request a printed catalog.



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