

# **Viva Vox**

*Volume 2, No. 2*

by Ralph Gehrke & Kurt Eggert



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# The Gospel of Christ: “The Living Voice”

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This is the fourth in this series of pamphlets designed to stimulate us, pastors and church musicians, to more strenuous efforts to make the musical parts of our Sunday service more and more a living, gospel-centered experience.

We invite all receiving these letters to contribute. Send your articles, comments, questions, and suggestions to either of the undersigned editors

*Ralph Gehrke*

*Kurt Eggert*

*“God has made our heart and spirit joyful through His dear Son, Whom He offered for us to release us from sin, death, and the devil. He who earnestly believes this cannot keep quiet about it; he must sing about it joyfully and exult over it and speak about it so that others hear of it and come to it.”*

— Martin Luther in his “Preface to Valentin Babst’s Hymnbook,” 1545

# In This Issue...

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**Good Shepherd Sunday at Sun Prairie** – A summary of our last Church Music Seminar.

**Planning the Music for the Easter Season** – An essay delivered at the last Seminar meeting.

**Service Guide** – Helps for planning the Service music for Sundays of Epiphany, Pre-Lent, and Lent.

**Grace Notes** – A page of assorted quotes and comment.

## COMING EVENTS

*Church Music Workshop* — A week-end workshop for church musicians and pastors to be held Sept. 28-20 at Northwestern College. Discussion and demonstration of proper church music, especially for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany seasons. Make reservations with Prof. Hilton Oswald, 814 Richards Ave., Watertown.

*Reformation Hymn Festival* — OCT. 28 Hymn Festival for interested choir members at St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church, Jefferson, Wis; Sunday, Oct. 28, 2:30 PM.

*Music Workshop* — A Church Music Workshop for interested organists, choirmasters, pastors, and friends of good church music will be held at Northwestern College on September 28th and 29th. Invitations have been sent out to friends who are on the mailing list of the Church Music Seminar. Others who wish to participate may register by writing to Prof. Hilton Oswald, 814 Richards Ave., Watertown, being careful to note whether or not overnight lodging will be needed (our Watertown group will try to find private lodging for guests coming from a distance). Advance registration is necessary in order to arrange for meals, lodging, programs, etc.

A nominal fee of \$3.00 will cover all expenses of the Workshop,

A group of “planning leaders” is preparing to help the members of the Workshop get acquainted with good choir and organ music for the Sundays and festivals of the Christmas-cycle. There will be organ recitals, group choir-singing, discussion of the Sundays and selections for the Sundays, tape recordings of choir and organ music for the season, and a display of organ and choir publications. Packets of all choir music under discussion will be furnished for the use of each member of the Workshop, as well as work-sheets for the various Sundays of the Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany seasons.

**Friday Evening:**

5:30 Supper in the new NWC Dining Hall  
6:00 Vespers with the students in the new College Chapel  
6:15 Registration  
6:45 First Workshop Session (At the College)  
    (“Planning the Music of the Advent Season”)  
9:00 A Social Hour

**Saturday Morning:**

8:30 Matins at St. Mark’s Church  
Second Workshop Session (At St. Mark’s Church)  
    “Planning the Music for the Christmas Season”  
Problems of Organ Registration  
Recital of Works of Helmut Walcha  
11:15 Noon Meal at the College (Served early because of a College football game)  
11:15 Leisure to inspect organ music and book display or the new College buildings, etc.

**Saturday Afternoon:**

12:30 Third Workshop Session (At the College)  
    “Planning the Music for the Epiphany Season”  
Round Table Discussion  
3:00 Adjournment

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## *Good Shepherd Sunday at Sun Prairie*

A bright spring sun struggled with clouds that had been breaking into intermittent showers as we gathered in Sun Prairie for our fifth Church Music Seminar. The functional, yet beautiful modern architecture of Peace Ev. Lutheran Church invited us to a meeting to consider the Sunday services of this fresh springtime of the year, the joyous season of our Lord's glorious Resurrection and exaltation. We entered the sparkling, glass-enclosed narthex, and after checking our registration slips and receiving our programs there, we entered the church proper. Around the inside walls an exhibit of Church Year Illustrations was displayed. It included colored seasonal mottos, pictures, symbols (many printed by the Stauda-Verlag in Germany), and two large, handsomely colored "home-made" charts that had been originally prepared for the centennial of St. Mark's church in Watertown to illustrate *Our Way of Worship* and *The Church Year*. These materials had been collected over a period of years by Prof. Gehrke and are used in his classroom at Northwestern College; they gave us many ideas for decorating our classrooms, parish halls, and meeting rooms in a way that can emphasize the message of the Church Year for all who use such rooms.

After an opening prayer and a brief welcome by Host Pastor Emil Toepel, our seminar began with an interesting essay by Pastor W. Wegner, "Planning the Services of the Easter Season." This issue of *VIVA VOX* brings our readers this thought-provoking (and, we also hope, action-provoking) essay. The ensuing discussion showed that there was general agreement among us on the essayist's main point: the necessity and the great value of careful and early planning for our church services.

### **1.1 A PLANNING SESSION**

Next came a semi-dramatic discussion entitled "The Pastor, Organist, and Choirmaster Plan the Festival Service for Pentecost," with three panelists (the Rev. Eldor Toepel, Mr. Bruce Backer, and the Rev. Kurt Eggert) seated around a table, simulating "an ideal planning session." Naturally in such a pre-arranged "discussion" there was a bit of unreal "stage-acting", but our panelists had previously met and worked out a detailed outline of their main points, so that there was no confusion and they could speak with comparative freedom. We hope that the following description (which is in the nature of an interpretation rather than a stenographic report) will convey to the readers who were not present some of the valuable suggestions

that came out in the discussion, even though it is difficult to convey to them all the live, and sometimes humorous “give-and-take” of the discussion, and utterly impossible to give them an adequate impression of the tape-recorded organ and choir music which our Organist and Choirmaster had prepared for purposes of illustration and demonstration.

### **Preliminaries**

“The Pastor” began this meeting with preliminary remarks concerning the festival itself. “While,” he said, “Christmas, Epiphany, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension are all high festivals, it is the Feast of Pentecost that in a way crowns them all. For it is the Holy Spirit that brings the gifts of all these other high festivals and makes them our own. The central fact of our celebration, the Coming of the Holy Spirit, is announced by the Introit, incorporated into the Collect, described in the Epistle; I shall explain what this means to us as individual Christians in the Sermon, which will be based on the Gospel and have the theme: ‘Rejoice in our Savior’s Priceless Pentecostal Gift, the Holy Spirit!’ The tone of our service will therefore be one of joy and jubilation.” Pastor Toepel also mentioned that, in keeping with local practice and with age-old Lutheran custom on high festivals, the Pentecost Service would be a communion service. “We should be careful, therefore,” he continued, “not to arrange for so much special music that the service will last too long. If we begin at 10:30, the people should be on their way home by noon.”

### **Prelude and First Hymn**

“Pastor, have you chosen the opening hymn as yet?” asked Organist Backer.

“Yes,” answered Pastor Toepel, “I have tentatively chosen Hymn 224, ‘Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord.’”

Choirmaster Eggert expressed his joy at this choice, and briefly pointed out the superiority of this hymn with its majestic melody and Gospel-centered text to such Pentecost hymns as, for example, “Holy Ghost with Light Divine” which (as he illustrated by humming and singing a bit of it) had in our old hymnal a waltz rhythm and melody that got in the way of the words.

“But can our congregation sing Luther’s great Pentecost hymn? Do they know it?” asked Organist Backer.

Since the discussion revealed that the melody was only partially known, it was decided to hold a Hymn-Sing at the end of the service on the preceding Sunday; the choirmaster also pledged himself to practice the hymn with his choir so that they might lead the congregation, while the organist (who was in our “ideal” parish also principal of the Day School)

said he would have the children learn it in school.

“Mr. Organist, now that we have settled on the hymn, what sort of a prelude for this hymn do you have in mind?” asked the pastor.

Our Organist then illustrated (via the tape-recorder) three possible preludes: (1) the “thematic prelude” by Zachau (Choralvorspiele alter Meister-Straube), a brief but lively chorale prelude that interpreted the entire melody from beginning to end, (2) a “free prelude”, that is, one that had no connection with the melody of “Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord”, the Prelude in F by Buxtehude, and finally (3) the simplest of the three, the Fugetta from Keller’s 80 Chorale Preludes which interprets the long, flowing lines of the first phrase of the chorale. After some discussion which indicated a general preference by the group for the thematic-type prelude (though no absolute rejection of all “free preludes”), the organist expressed his satisfaction that this early planning would enable him to prepare a more difficult but very rewarding prelude for the festival service.

### **Introit**

“Will the Introit be read by the pastor, or could it not be sung by the choir,” asked Choirmaster Eggert.

“Might the people not think, ‘That’s Catholic,’ if the choir chants the Introit?” queried the Organist.

The Choirmaster held his ground: “I think we ought to have the Choir sing it on this festival. In fact, I think that singing the Propers in a simple unison setting is a much better practice than having the pastor read them. At first I was myself dead set against singing the Propers — until I heard some choirs do it well; then, as I sang them myself with my choir, I became convinced of the superior value of singing them. Very often, when it is merely read, the Introit is stood through and stood for, rather than listened to and understood. But if we sing it in unison in a simple setting, that will focus the congregation’s attention on the words. Some time we must try it and see. But, for this festival, I have another suggestion; and it is this: that a free musical interpretation of the Introit be used instead of a chant-setting. I have my suggestion here on tape, so that you can hear how it sounds.”

At this point we heard Carl Halter’s arrangement of “Come, Holy Spirit, Fill the Hearts of the Faithful” (CH 1034). It was agreed to use this as the introit. It should be noted that this planning group was not adding any new parts to the liturgy, but only planning for special festival settings for the regular parts.

## Gloria in Excelsis

“I was wondering how we are going to treat the ‘Gloria in Excelsis,’” said Organist Backer. “I must admit: I have trouble concentrating on the wonderful text of the Gloria as I sing it in the rather monotonous, sing-song setting which we use every Sunday. Wouldn’t it be better to substitute a hymn verse on occasion? For instance, the fourth stanza of the metrical version of the Gloria (Hymn 237, All Glory be to God on High) has a text that is very fitting for this Sunday:

O Holy Ghost, Thou precious Gift,  
 Thou Comforter unfailing,  
 O’er Satan’s snares our souls uplift  
 And let Thy power availing  
 Avert our woes and calm our dread.  
 For us the Savior’s blood was shed;  
 We trust in Thee to save us.

“Such a substitution,” our Organist continued, “of the metrical version for the prose chant-version is good Lutheran practice. Our congregation knows the melody well. Wouldn’t it help them in their worship if they could sing this version on Pentecost? We could print the verse in the bulletin to avoid any paging around in the Hymnal.”

“That’s all right,” said Pastor Toepel, “I don’t object to such legitimate substitutions of one musical setting for another; but we’re planning, I’m afraid, too many innovations for this particular service. Let’s not confuse the people by making them follow what would be an unexpected change in the liturgy, I realize full well that this change can be indicated on the hymn-board or in the bulletin, but I’d prefer that we stay with the regular setting this time, and let the general Pentecost festival spirit interpret the Gloria for us as we sing it in the regular setting.” It was so decided.

## Gradual

“Speaking of substituting fitting hymn verses for liturgical parts,” said the Pastor, “couldn’t we substitute a Gradual-hymn for the reading of the Gradual-verses — I mean a hymn that is traditionally connected with this particular Sunday and its Gospel, such as 231 ‘We Now Implore God the Holy Ghost?’”

“I don’t think we need to use a hymn version of the Gradual,” answered the Choirmaster, “because for this festival we do have Gradual-verses that are easily understandable the first time one hears them, which is unfortunately not always the case. Just listen as I read the Gradual from the Hymnal: ‘Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created; and Thou renewest the face of the earth. Hallelujah! Come, Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of the

faithful: and kindle in them the fire of Thy love. Hallelujah!’ Everyone can understand these verses and get their connection with the rest of the readings. So I’d suggest that we use the Gradual just as it stands. We can however have the choir sing it according to one of the simple settings in Prof. Buszin’s ‘The Graduals for the Church Year.’”

At this point in the discussion, Choirmaster Eggert distributed to us xeroxed copies of this Gradual-setting, so that we could ourselves join the tape-recorded choir in singing the easy unison setting of the Gradual for Pentecost.

“We do have another alternative”, continued the Choirmaster; “at this point between Epistle and Gospel, the traditional place for special music in our Lutheran Church, we could use a Choir anthem instead of the Gradual. I have two suggestions for you. The first is an anthem to be sung by the choir in unison. It is Troutbeck’s ‘Come, Let Us All This Day’ (on a melody by Bach, E.C. Schirmer’s Choral Songs No. 500).” After hearing this, the Choirmaster continued, “The next anthem is in four part harmony for the most part. It is Lenel’s arrangement of ‘Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord’” (Concordia, CH1041).

After hearing these various suggestions, the pastor and organist indicated a preference for having the “Bach anthem” take the place of the Gradual. The Choirmaster was amenable, but urged that, whenever such an anthem be used, there be no break in the service, but rather that it be considered an integral part of the service, substituting for the Gradual and, like every Gradual, expressing the believers’ response to the Epistle that had just been heard and making the transition to the Gospel which will be heard next.

### **Creed and Pre-Sermon**

“We could sing the Creed instead of speaking it,” suggested Pastor Toepel. “We could use the metrical version, No. 251, ‘We All Believe in One True God.’ But the trouble is, our congregation hasn’t mastered that wonderful melody yet. I guess we’ll have to wait until a later date before attempting that. Now let’s see, what comes next? Oh, yes, it’s the Pre-Sermon Hymn. Well, here I suggest No. 231 ‘We Now Implore God the Holy Ghost.’ Is that agreeable?”

“That’s a wonderful hymn,” commented Choirmaster Eggert, “especially if we don’t drag it out, but think of each of the half notes in the first phrase as a quarter note. The melody should flow along rather than march. This prayer in song uses such simple language that even our children will be able to sing it with understanding.”

“Perhaps then we can sing this hymn antiphonally,” suggested the Organist. “I’d like to have our school children participate in the service at this point.”

“But won’t that take up a lot more time?” asked the Pastor.

“No,” answered the Organist, “not any more than if the congregation sang all 4 verses itself. No prelude is necessary, or even advisable, for the pre-sermon hymn, just enough of an introduction to set the tempo is all that is required. So we wouldn’t be prolonging the service at all. Let’s have the congregation sing stanzas 1,2 and 4, and the children sing the third.” This plan was adopted.

### **Offering and Voluntary**

The next point of discussion was broached by the Organist, who also explained his principles in choosing the organ music to be played during the Offering. “The voluntary doesn’t have to be slow;” he said, “it doesn’t necessarily have to be soft either. It shouldn’t make a break in the unity of the Service. I suggest a chorale prelude based on the pre-sermon hymn, ‘We Now Implore God the Holy Ghost.’ Here I have two versions to illustrate my point. The first is J. Walther’s chorale prelude; the second is my own combination, which includes (a) Bach’s harmonization of the hymn (Riemenschneider edition), then (b) a Fugetta on the first phrase by Zachau, and (c) a repetition of the Bach harmonization.”

After hearing these, it was decided to use the latter “combination” as the Voluntary on Pentecost.

### **The Communion Service**

Our panelists had at this point exceeded the allotted time of one hour. Therefore, taking note of the time, they finished things off by quickly summing up their suggestions as to the musical parts of the Communion Service. Luther’s “German Sanctus”, No. 249 “Isaiah Mighty Seer” was to be sung by the choir as the first communicants approached the altar. During the Distribution the Organist planned to break up the Communion Hymn (235, “O Holy Spirit, Enter In”) into two or three larger groups of stanzas instead of interrupting the congregation’s singing after each stanza for an organ interlude. As interludes he planned on using “chorale preludes” based on the Communion Hymn. The choir was also to participate by singing choral harmonization of the stanzas. Finally, the organist planned on taking special care to have the congregation sing the last group of stanzas toward the end of the distribution, so that the congregation might end its communion with joint singing.

Because of the lateness of the hour, discussion was brief, which was a

draw-back, since there was much to discuss. We could have only a short recess before the Vesper Service.

## **1.2 VESPERS AND LUNCHEON**

For our Vesper Service Mr. Henry Krenz was guest organist, the local pastor, liturgist, and the Rev. Mentor Kujath, preacher. Again a small group of Northwestern College volunteers under the direction of Prof. Oswald helped us with the Psalmody, singing this time both the Psalm (Sing Unto the Lord A New Song, Psalm 98) and the Antiphon (God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power! Hallelujah!), while we, as the congregation, joined at fitting junctures with stanzas from 187 "Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands." The Hymn, "Ye Sons and Daughters of the King," was sung antiphonally between the choir and congregation. The sermonette, in keeping with the Sunday and season of the Church year, focused our attention on the object of all our church music, "the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls" to Whom we, who were as sheep gone astray, are now returned. We are happy that we can close our seminars with such worship. The Vesper service, like all our divine services, is not a place to "show off new ways of doing things," but a worship of God, Who speaks to us through His Word and to Whom we speak in prayer and praise.

At the luncheon served by the local ladies in the basement of the church we had time for making new acquaintances, for renewing and enjoying old friendships, and also for discussing some of the thoughts we had about the afternoon's session. And as we drove home, we were again filled with many resolutions to implement the discussions of the seminar with concrete action, each in his own assigned place.

# Planning the Music for the Easter Season 2

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*An Essay Delivered at the Last Church Music Seminar at Sun Prairie*

## **2.1 THE CHURCH YEAR AS A SYMPHONY**

The year before last Randolph Crump Miller published a book with the intriguing title: "A Symphony of the Christian Year." While there is much in the volume that is disappointing to the Lutheran reader, the title of the book suggests a concept of the Christian Church Year which is deserving of more than passing attention. Both in the preface and in the first few pages of the book itself the author develops his concept in statements such as these: "Let us look at the Christian Year as a symphony." The central theme of the symphony Dr. Miller rightly finds in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, with "variations on that theme from season to season." He says further: There are slow movements and fast movements, loud strains and quiet melodies, transitions and new themes. As we live through this symphony of the Christian year, we respond with appreciation to the various shades of meaning found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

"The opening movement is one of expectation, looking forward to the advent of Jesus Christ. The overtones of purple indicate the humility and penitence of men in the face of the great gift that God is about to offer. The brief second movement tells the beautiful Christmas story, and the third movement, following so quickly, tells of the spreading of that message throughout the world in Epiphany. The long fourth movement begins with a transition, full of the dynamic expression of pre-Lent reflected in 'he who would valiant be.' This leads into the long and introspective tones of self-searching and religious exercise that turn to the depths of tragedy and wickedness before building to the climax of the Resurrection. This movement continues with the Resurrection theme and then stops suddenly with the Ascension. This sharp break is followed by the great confusion of tongues, as the fifth and final movement begins with great fanfare and then subsides into a long period of interpretation of the story.

"Without the Christian year as a guide, we may get lost in our own popular songs, overplay one theme at the expense of another, reduce the full meaning of the Christian faith to a jazz cult, and therefore fail to see the redemption which draws nigh in Christ Jesus."

## 2.2 PRACTICING THE SYMPHONY OURSELVES

Let us now extend Dr. Miller's picture to include ourselves. If we are correct in picturing the Church Year as a rich symphony, then it is correct, to view ourselves, together with our fellow-believers, as one grand philharmonic society whose privilege it is to perform this magnificent symphony to the "honor and glory of Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever." We are not bound, to be sure, to a slavish, mechanical performance of the score. We are under no obligation to repeat every last grace note heard in previous performance of the score. We have the liberty granted to competent artists to interpret the symphony to the best of our ability and insight. To do this successfully requires not only a knowledge and understanding of the entire symphony, but also an appreciation of each movement as well as its place in the whole, and careful attention to the significance of each theme, phrase, measure and note. Accordingly, just as it would be unthinkable for a symphony orchestra and its conductor to interpret a given symphonic composition without careful planning, preparation, and advance study, so little should we pastors, organists and choirmasters who are entrusted with the leadership of our congregations' participation in the "symphony of the Christian year" endeavor to do this work without similar study, preparation and planning.

Our Seminar this afternoon affords us an opportunity to focus our attention on this matter of the planning of our Services of the Church Year. In the title of this essay, "Planning the Services for the Easter Season," the emphasis is not on "the Easter Season" but rather on the word planning. And in the "Panel Discussion" which will follow we shall have a chance to sit in on a dramatized meeting of "pastor", "organist", and "choirmaster" as they come together to do the actual work of planning a given service.

## 2.3 JOINT PLANNING ON THE BASIS OF THE PROPERS

While it is possible for each of the three to do his planning independently of the others, the ideal situation would be one in which pastor, organist and choirmaster arrange to do their planning for the Services jointly. In their Easter planning meeting, which would ideally take place in the very early part of Lent, they would agree on more than just this that the Easter Season is that portion of the Church Year in which we celebrate our Lord's Resurrection, and that the mood or tone of this Season is one of victorious joy. How fruitful it would be — both for themselves and for the entire congregation — if the pastor and his musical co-workers could engage in careful joint study of the Propers for the individual Sundays of the Easter Season and come to mutual agreement in the formulation of the theme of each Sunday's worship. As an aid to such study they might make profitable

use of the helpful “Service Guides being offered to us by the Editors of VIVA VOX. Similar guidance is available in such readily accessible works as Paul Zeller Strodach’s “The Church Year”, or the analysis of the Propers in “The Lutheran Liturgy” by Luther Reed, or the excellent Church. Year Chart entitled “Das Jahr der Kirche” published by the Johannes-Stauda-Verlag in Kassel, Germany.

After fixing in their minds the main theme of each Sunday within the Easter Season and the relation of the individual Sundays to one another, our planning group is now ready to move on to a consideration of the Services of the individual days within the Season. The simplest procedure that suggests itself here is to discuss in order the individual parts of each service, from prelude to postlude, and come to mutual agreement on what is to be done at each step of the way. The selection of hymns will be made on the basis of their suitability for the respective Sunday of “the Easter Season on which they are to be sung and their particular congruity with the main thought of the Service as it finds expression in the Propers for the day.

#### **2.4 THE ORGAN SELECTIONS**

The organist will then select the prelude which he feels is best suited to convey musically to the congregation the agreed-upon theme for the day. This will mean that in the great majority of cases he will prefer a chorale prelude, or thematic composition, to one of a general nature. For example, in selecting his prelude for *Misericordias Domini* (Good Shepherd Sunday) he will know that no free prelude can possibly do what a hymn-prelude can do to focus the eyes and hearts of the worshipping congregation upon Him Who declares on this day: “I am the Good Shepherd!” The layman who recently said of his organist: “When he plays the prelude, it seems that I can hear the organ actually speaking words to me!” was paying high tribute to the organist’s wise choice of “wort-gebundene Musik” (music bound to a text).

A similar determination to reinforce and interpret musically the main thought of the Service will guide the suggestions which the organist makes in the planning meeting regarding suitable compositions for the voluntary, the postlude, or any interludes to be included in the Service. Permit me to call your attention to the excellent example of this sort of planning as it is described in the current issue of VIVA VOX by Elizabeth Mittelstaedt, Director of Music at Mt. Calvary in La Crosse. She writes: “The organ music for the church services is also carefully planned. The organist tries to submerge her desires and personality and choose music that will help express the theme for the day... If there is a suitable thematic composition, i.e. a chorale prelude, available for prelude, offertory, postlude, and pre-service music,, it is used. When none is at hand, then music is chosen which

will express the same spirit, and, if possible, be in the same key as the hymn which follows or precedes.

## **2.5 THE UNIFYING ROLE OF ORGAN MUSIC**

Helpful suggestions in the matter of selecting organ music are given in Chapter 8 of Prof. Halter's book: "The Practice of Sacred Music." The chapter is titled "The Choice and Presentation of Organ Music" and in it Prof. Halter states: "In general, the function of organ pieces in the service are the following: 1. To set or reflect the spirit of the service. 2. To introduce, ore reflect upon, a hymn or chorale. 3. To provide the framework for, or to reflect the message of the Word and the sermon. These three points are really one, the one point being that organ music never exists for itself in the service, but functions as one of the chief unifying elements. It depends for its validity upon the message and spirit of the service as a whole, the Word, the sermon, and the hymns. Organ music in the service is analogous to the frame of a picture: it is a good and necessary thing, but unimportant except as it serves to point to the picture within" (p. 45).

Prof. Halter makes a special point of stating that the music of the offertory, or voluntary, should certainly also be in keeping with the main message of the particular service, and he deplors the practice of playing as a voluntary something that is merely pretty or entertaining, secular and romantic. He says: "This practice introduces a false note into the service by attracting attention to the music instead of to the sermon and the hymns, and serves to destroy the unity of the service at a most crucial point. It is almost as if the organist were saying to the congregation, 'Well, it's about over, and you can now enter a more congenial world. Don't take what you have heard too seriously,'" (p. 48).

The greater our concern for unifying our Services, the more readily will we recognize not only the desirability of holding the type of planning meetings under discussion but also the advisability of holding them early enough to allow ample time to rehearse and prepare the selections agreed upon by pastor, organist and choirmaster.

## **2.6 SOME QUESTIONS FOR THE PLANNING MEETING**

As our planning group now moves on to discuss the other parts of the service they will want to give consideration to questions such as these: How can we best treat the Introit for this service? Will it be best for the pastor to speak it or for the choir to chant it? Does either method have an advantage over the other in our particular parish as a suitable means of conveying the meaning of the Introit to the congregation? Will we want to use any of the options which the rubrics of our Liturgy offer us in the treatment

of the Gradual, perhaps substituting the Sentence for the Easter Season or a sequence hymn which will underscore the thought for the day and the message of the Easter Season? Will we want to select a de-tempore hymn or hymn verse which we shall sing on each Sunday during Eastertide? Which musical setting of the Hallelujah will we want to use? Will it be either one of the two settings in our Hymnal - or another which we feel to be more distinctively expressive of the joyous tone of the Easter Season? And what about the Creed? Shall we have the congregation speak the Creed, or shall we sing our confession of faith in one of the metrical versions of the Creed, perhaps Luther's hymn based on the Nicene Creed: "We All Believe in One True God"? If we plan to use all ten stanzas of Hymn 206 (Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense) in one or more of our Easter Season Services, would it be good to have the Choir and congregation sing this hymn responsively and, if so, how shall we divide the hymn for antiphonal singing?

And how shall we notify the congregation in advance of the changes or variations which we agree upon for each Sunday? Will it be possible to eliminate the need for disruptive announcements as the Service progresses? Will printed directions in the Sunday Bulletin be sufficient, or will it be advisable to print or duplicate the complete order of service to insure the continuity of the Service and to make it possible for all worshippers to participate with confidence and without distraction or embarrassment? It will serve little purpose for us to plan for special features or occasional variations in our Services unless we can convey the results of our planning to our people in such a way that they can participate in what we have planned with intelligence and understanding.

## **2.7 PLANNING THE CHOIR MUSIC**

What has been said earlier about the choice of organ music applies with equal validity to the selection of choir music: whatever the choir sings ought to be related to the theme of the respective Service. In his previously-mentioned book, Prof. Halter writes these words regarding the selection of the vocal music of the Service other than hymns and liturgy: "The choice of this music is determined first of all by a consideration of its value for the praise of God. It cannot be said too often or too emphatically that a true service of worship is God-centered, not man-centered. The musician must forever ask himself this question: 'Are we offering God the very best of which the choir and I are capable?' Secondly, the choice of music is determined by a consideration of its suitability for the particular service in which it is to be used. This is true of all the music heard in a service, including the hymns" (p.37).

In another paragraph he adds pertinent pointers for choir directors, not to mention a prodding of conscience for pastors when he writes: “When the anthem is chosen simply to entertain or to fill up time, it disrupts the unity which has been so carefully built up by the liturgy and the hymns. The first criterion in the choice of anthems therefore is fitness for the praise of God in the particular service in question. To determine this, the choirmaster must consult the Introit and the Gradual for the day, the hymns chosen by the pastor, the Gospel and Epistle lessons, and the text, and if possible, the main emphasis of the sermon. This can obviously be fully done only if the pastor plans his program at least a month ahead and informs the musician promptly” (p. 38). We might add our suggestion that all of this can best be done in a joint planning meeting.

## Our Unfinished Task

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It is heartening to know that such planning is being done. In the aforementioned article by Elizabeth Mittelsteadt she tells how the choir music for choirs is selected. She writes: "All the music which is used in the service is carefully planned. In August and January the choir music for the months is selected. The words must express, as nearly as possible, the theme for the day (the Introit, Gradual, Epistle, and especially the Gospel are studied); the music must be suited to the words, and it must be genuine church music."

Careful planning of the choral music of the Service will serve not only to unify our Services but also to eliminate such anomalous situations as the one reported in the Music Department of "Lutheran Education" six years ago last month. A choirmaster there related an experience which he had at a Mission Festival Service. After the festival service one of his choir members pointed out to his embarrassment that the speaker had preached on "The Needs of Our Mental Institutions," to which the choir enthusiastically responded with Hymn 509 in our Hymnal: "There Still is Room!"

Now before I close, let me make a confession. I stand before you as an advocate but unfortunately not as an exemplary exponent of careful advance planning of the Service by pastor, organist and choirmaster. I am grateful, however, to the committee which arranged today's Seminar program for giving me this assignment which directed my attention anew to the desirability and need of such planning. As a result of this assignment we have already made preliminary plans to initiate such meetings at Columbus. I trust that this brief discussion will serve to encourage many in this group to join the ranks of those who follow the commendable practice. Their ranks are not over-crowded. There still is room!

*Walter Wegner, Pastor at Columbus, Wisconsin*

## Viva Vox Mailing, etc.

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We feel that all readers should know how our mailing lists are set up and how the pamphlet is financed.

A number of people asked for the opportunity of contributing toward the expenses of VIVA VOX. This opportunity was given at our last Seminar and through a note in the last issue of this pamphlet. Contributions covered the cost of the last issue and 1/4 of the present mailing. The last issue was sent to 140 and cost about \$25 to print and mail. Our present issue is being sent to almost 200. Any contribution that is made flows into the VIVA VOX fund. The Seminars are always sponsored by the host congregations, who arrange the program together with our planning committee and defray the nominal expenses of local meetings. Your contributions are therefore used only for VIVA VOX.

Our mailing list consists of a) those near Watertown who were on our original invitation list, b) others who attended our meetings or otherwise asked to receive the pamphlet, c) people whose names were suggested to us by friends. Since we have a growing list of "subscribers" and a rising cost for printing and mailing, we would like to ask those who have not so far indicated their wish to continue to receive copies to write us now. We hope that we will be able to continue to send VIVA VOX to all who are interested in receiving copies. That is our real mailing policy.

*E.G. & K.E.*

# Grace Notes

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## **EARS AND TONGUES**

“If it were not for ears and tongues, there would be no noticeable difference between the Kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of this world. For outwardly a Christian lives in the same manner as an unbeliever does: he builds, he farms, he ploughs, even as an unbeliever; he doesn’t invent any peculiarly unique tasks or works in eating, drinking, working, sleeping or in anything else. It is these two members of the body, the ears and tongues, which alone show the difference between the Christian and the unbeliever: A Christian speaks and hears in an entirely different manner than an unbeliever; he has a tongue that praises God’s grace, that proclaims concerning the Lord Jesus Christ “He has redeemed us all!” That is what the world does not do; it speaks only of its accomplishments and its sins; it proclaims and praises its own glory.” — Martin Luther

## **HYMN FESTIVAL**

A Reformation hymn festival is being planned for Sunday, October 28th at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Jefferson. Music based on our hymn heritage will be played and sung by the whole group, individual groups of choirs, and guest organists and instrumentalists. Explanatory comment on the music and a brief talk on a theme in keeping with the Reformation festival will also have a part in the program. Some invitations have gone out to choirs in the Watertown area. If your choir has not been contacted and desires to take part, please write Mr. O.W. Jungkuntz, 1106 Center St., Jefferson, Wis., for information and music. Any interested individuals are also cordially invited to attend.

## **BE PRACTICAL!**

Put into practice some of these suggestions: Select your choir numbers from now till New Year’s and hand a singing schedule to your choir members. Schedule a congregational hymn-sing the Sunday before Reformation and practice a (e.g. 247) for Reformation Festival. Pick a definite Sunday and hymn to be sung responsively by congregation and choir and/or children. Pick out the opening hymns to be used up to New Year’s. Make a list of available organ preludes for those hymns. Decide to use at least one good chorale each Sunday. And if you’re really ambitious: Plan an explanatory or narrative Service.

# Service Guide for the Sundays of the Church Year

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This issue of VIVA VOX completes the Service Guide to the Church Year which was begun in the first issue and continued through the last two. Those of our readers who want the complete series in one, handy, re-xographed booklet should write to Prof. R. Gehrke, 803 Clyman, Watertown, Wisconsin. It is hoped that this Guide will serve the busy pastor, organist or choirmaster in planning the variable parts of the service so as to keep them unified and in tune with the Church Year.

## **THE EPIPHANY SEASON**

*“The Glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.”*

### **The Epiphany of our Lord (Jan.6th) “Christ’s Glory”**

“The darkness is past and the true Light now shineth” (1 Jn 2:8).

The Gospels: Matthew 2:1-12 The Wise Men get to Christ’s crib by following the Star and the Word of the Scriptures. And they worship the Christ-child as King and High Priest with gold, frank-incense and myrrh.

Matthew 3:13-17 At the Baptism of Christ the manhood of Christ was dedicated to death in order that we might go forth out of the water as new creatures who will live as children of God eternally.

Hymn for the Festival: 131 The Star Proclaims the King is Here

### **The First Sunday in Epiphany, “The Son of God”**

“We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-Begotten of the Father full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

The Gospel: Luke 2:41 -52 The Son of God is manifested in the holy temple of His city. The Glory of the Son of God shines forth for the first time in the important words of the twelve-year old child Jesus, but He nevertheless willingly subjects Himself to the limitations imposed on Him by His manhood.

Hymn of the Week: 343 How Lovely Shines the Morning Star

**The Second Sunday in Epiphany, “The Bringer of Joy”**

“The Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ”(Jn 1:17).

The Gospel: John 2:1-11 The miracle at Cana shows that the time of grace pre-dicted by the prophets is now here; the Bringer of Joy manifests His glory in His first miracle. And still His final glory is still to come: His sacrifice on the cross; that is why He said, “Mine hour is not yet come.”

Hymn for the week: 134 Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

**The Third Sunday in Epiphany, “The Body’s Savior”**

“He maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak” (Luke 7:37).

The Gospel: Matthew 8:1-13 The Lord heals and cleanses the leper’s body and to the centurion He shows Himself not only as the body’s savior, but as the Savior of all nations. In the centurion’s great faith He sees the dawn of a new day in the Kingdom of God.

Hymn of the Week: 415 Lo, Many Shall Come from the East and the West

**The Fourth Sunday in Epiphany, “The Lord of Nature”**

“For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God” (Romans 8:14).

The Gospel: Matthew 8:23-27 In the Stilling of the Storm our Lord manifests His majesty as the Lord of Nature’s powers, directing them for His disciples.

Hymn of the Week: 383 Seek Where Ye May to Find a Way

**The Fifth Sunday in Epiphany, “The Lord of History”**

“And they shall come from the East and from the West, and from the North and from the South, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God” (Luke 13:24).

The Gospel: Matthew 13:24-30 The Church awaits the Judgment and the complete consummation of the New Age. Meanwhile the tares grow among the wheat; nevertheless the greatest thing that is happening in the world is the growth of the Kingdom of God in spite of hypocrites and false disciples. The Judgment will reveal the true wheat.

Hymn of the Week: 292 Lord Jesus Christ, With Us Abide

**The Last Sunday in Epiphany, “Our Lord’s Transfiguration”**

“God Who commanded the light to shine out of the dark-ness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6).

The Gospel: Matthew 17:1-9 At His Transfiguration our Lord shines forth with all the glory that was in Him, and thus before His Passion He shows us His glory.

Hymn of the Week: 41 Wondrous King, All-Glorious  
or 343 How Lovely Shines the Morning Star

*\*Note: Often the Epiphany Season is shorter than 6 Sundays. The last Sunday, our Lord’s Transfiguration, should be celebrated every year. Therefore, if the season is shorter, the fifth, fourth and third Sundays respectively may be omitted.*

**PRE-LENT: THE THREE SUNDAYS BEFORE LENT**

*“Before the Decision” “Today if ye hear His voice, harden not your hearts.”*

**Septuagesima, “Wages and Grace”**

“We do not present our supplications before Thee for our righteousnesses but for Thy great mercies” Dn 9:18.

The Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16 The Laborers in the Vine-yard and the Grace of the Father Who calls unworthy sinners and makes them rich. The “wages” of those in the vineyard is but a gift of grace, not of their own earning.

Hymn of the Week: 377 Salvation Unto Us Has Come

**Sexagesima, “The Four-Fold Field”**

Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts” (Psalm 95:7).

The Gospel: Luke 8:4-15 The Parable of the Sower and the Four Kinds of ground on which the Good Seed is cast.

Hymn for the Week: 500 May God Bestow on Us His Grace

**The Sunday Before Lent, Quinquagesima, “On to Jerusalem”**

“Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished” (Luke 18:31).

The Gospel: Luke 18:31-43 Christ opens our eyes, so that we find the way to Life, the way on which He travels up to Jerusalem as God’s Lamb.

Hymn for the Week: 409 Let Us Ever Walk With Jesus

**LENT**

*“Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!”*

**The First Sunday in Lent, Invocavit, “Temptation”**

“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil”(1 Jn 3:8).

Gospel: Matthew 4:1-11 Our Lord’s Temptation. Because our Lord rejects the means of “victory” which Satan offers Him (bread, miracle, power), therefore His way leads Him to the cross.

Hymn of the Week: 247 God the Father, Be Our Stay

**The Second Sunday in Lent, Reminiscere, “The Servant of the Lord”**

“The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary” (Is. 50:4).

The Gospel: Matthew 15:21-28 The Syro-Phoenician woman shows us how prayer addressed to our Lord is heard. Behind His threefold “No” she perceives a final and permanent “Yes,” one that extends even to the Gentiles.

Hymn of the Week: 522 When in the Hour of Utmost Need

**The Third Sunday in Lent, Oculi, “The Lamb of God”**

“The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28).

The Gospel: Luke 11:14-28 Christ’s opening the mouth of the dumb man possessed of the Devil is a victorious break-through into the territory of Satan’s power, a break-through which shows who will win the final victory. At our baptism we renounced the Devil’s way of life and confessed our faith in the rulership of Christ in heaven and on earth.

Hymn of the Week: 262 A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

**The Fourth Sunday in Lent, Laetare, “The Bread of Life”**

“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit,” (John 12:21)

The Gospel: John 6,1-11? In the Feeding of the Five Thousand Christ shows Himself as the true Bread of Life for all people.

Hymn of the Week: 3kl Jesus, Priceless Treasure

**The Fifth Sunday in Lent, Judica, “The Great High Priest”**

“For their sakes I sanctify Myself that they also might be sanctified through the faith” (Jn 17:19).

The Gospel: John 8,1:6-59 Christ reveals the “secret” of His high-priestly office. He speaks Who was with the Father as the “eternal Word.” He is “before Abraham was.” Whoever hearkens unto Him gains a share in that Life which is stronger than Death. But those who are blind to His divine majesty cast the true High Priest from their temple.

Hymn for the Week: 141 Jesus I Will Ponder Now on Thy Holy Passion

**The Sixth Sunday in Lent, Palm Sunday, “The Man of Sorrows”**

“He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He hath poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors and He bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12).

The Gospel: John 12:12-24 He Who now enters Jerusalem comes from having raised Lazarus and now takes up the battle with the powers of death in the world. His people greet Him with palms as Victor. The Greeks, who seek Him, make us sense that His sacrifice will bring forth fruit for the entire world

Hymn for the Week: 142 A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth