

MUSIC

THE PRACTICE

At theStory we sing songs together that reflect and express the designs of a loving Creator. Worship through music is not just expressive but also formative as it brings our congregation into a dialogical encounter with the living God. We make music because we long for God and for living in harmony with the Kingdom of God. Singing is a core practice at theStory because it recruits us into the story of God reconciling the world to himself in Christ. We have three foundational values that set the stage for all music at theStory:

1. Everyone Is Included

Worship is a collective, communal, congregational practice that includes everyone in our community. Children and adults alike, who are part of the Sunday morning gathering, are welcome to play an instrument of their choice, use the microphones or play one of the many percussion instruments that are made available at the front. It is essential that we can hear each other and that everyone is given ample opportunity to participate at their own discretion.

2. Worship Tells God's Story

Worship is about God and His wonderful story of rescuing his creatures and creation. We aim to steer away from songs that sing about ourselves and how much we feel affectionate and gracious towards God. The primary focus of the songs should be about God's saving action in history and anticipating God's culmination of his saving deeds in the new creation. Worship is about remembering what God has done and in hope for what God will do not just for us as individuals but for the whole world.

3. Music Is The Sound Of Rightly Ordered Relationships

The importance of 'one voice' is deeply embedded in church history. Since the Psalms, music has been an expression of unity for the church. By singing together, we are living out the reality of what the body of Christ looks like. Singing is both an enactment and exposition of the church's unity.

THE THEOLOGY BEHIND THE PRACTICE

Participating in communal singing is an act of will. Lifting one's voice at a rugby or baseball game unites a disparate group behind a favorite team. Lifting voices in an environment of oppression is an act of unified opposition to injustice. In the defiance that prompts the singing, there is the understanding that one is not alone. Others acknowledge the injustice and raise their voices in dissent. More importantly, singing in defiance of injustice is a sign of hope that evil power used to provoke pain will not ultimately prevail. Hoping for justice is a point of intersection between political protest in the streets and eschatological expectation that sustains Christian liturgy.

- Michael Hawn

Singing has the greatest value in kindling our hearts to a true zeal and eagerness to pray. Yet we should be very careful that our ears be not more attentive to the melody than our minds to the spiritual meaning of the words.

- John Calvin

What stands at the very center of worship is Word and sacrament, through which God's vision for the world is proclaimed and enacted. What contextualizes this worship more than anything else is its music. Music is the vehicle that communicates worship in the language of the people. Music is also the vehicle of our personal response to the story of God's work in history.

- Robert E. Webber

The singing of the church is one way by which God is made known. The church's singing does not only 'kindle the heart'; it is also a means by which the church grows in wisdom and understanding of God. Music strengthens not only the heart of the church but the mind as well.

- Stephen R Guthrie

