

University Heights Church
of Christ

445 Columbia Ave.,
Lexington, KY 40508
(859) 255-6257

www.uheightschurch.com

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday

Bible Study: 9:45 AM

Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Study: 7:30 PM (This is
immediately followed by a
short worship period)

First Friday of Each Month

Singing: 7:30 PM

LEADERSHIP

Elders

David Collins

John Thompson

Troy Antle

Evangelist

Adam Litmer

Deacons

Richard Brundige

Matt Thompson

Adam Litmer

Bill Morelan

Jim Parsons

Pat Seabolt

Adam Daniels

Jamie Powell

Adam's Office Hours

Tuesday-Friday (8:30-4:00)

psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, we must sing only psalms and hymns and spiritual songs in our worship together. Because He said to sing to the Lord, our songs must be directed towards Him. Because He said to sing to the Lord with our hearts, the words of the songs must please Him. Because He said to teach and admonish one another, we must recognize and accept such teaching and admonishment.

Finally, just as passages of scripture spring to our minds as we proceed through our daily activities, so too we might find ourselves quietly singing or humming a well-known spiritual song. May both help keep us on the straight and narrow path to Heaven where we will sing to the Lord eternally.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Jim Parsons, Declan Weatherholt, Jaclyn Litmer, David Seabolt, Jeff Howerton, Rhonda Boyd, Louis Harrod, Paul Atkisson, Vicky Litmer, Sheila Lawson, Keia Burton, Robert Brundige, Susie Burton, Valerie and Barry Boyd, Janett's mother and stepfather, Sandy Driver, Erlene Young, Burnice Richardson, Ruth Poynter, Larry Sells, Evelyn Damron, Tony Tyree, Jennifer Dunbar, Jean Gartland, John Blessing, Alleen Terrell, the McDonald family, William Roberts, Kip Pearce, Paul Lyda, Fae Thomas

University Heights Messenger

Volume 9--Number 2

January 8, 2017

The Music of the Spheres

John Thompson

Have you ever wondered what life would be like without music? I doubt I can even begin to identify all that would be lost if there was no such thing as music. Seriously limited, perhaps even utterly crippled, would be our ability to express our deepest emotions and feelings for music fills in all of the gaps contained within the spoken word. Nature, for the most part, would be silent: no birds chirping merrily like the piccolo in a marching band; no woodpecker providing a snare drum cadence; no rustling of the leaves building to a crescendo as the wind strengthens briefly. The music God created in nature is captured in the words of two songs. Those songs are *The Sound of Music* and *This Is My Father's World*.

The hills are alive with the sound of music, with songs they have sung for a thousand years. The hills fill my heart with the sound of music, my heart wants to sing ev'ry song it hears. My heart wants to beat like the wings of the birds that rise from the lake to the trees. My heart wants to sigh like a chime that flies from a church on a breeze, to laugh like a brook when it trips and falls over stones on its way; to sing through the night like a lark who is learning to pray

This is my Father's world, and to my listening ears all nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres. This is my Father's world: I rest me in the thought of rocks and trees, of skies and seas; His hand the wonders wrought. This is my Father's world, the birds their carols raise, the morning light, the lily white, declare their maker's praise. This is my Father's world: He shines in all that's fair; in the rustling grass I hear Him pass; He speaks to me everywhere

I invite you to read again the first line of the hymn above, then step outside and concentrate on the sounds, not the man-made sounds, but the God-

made sounds that are all around you. Listen and hear nature singing, like a mighty chorus, the “music of the spheres.”

And then there are the stories that would be lost if we could not compose the music that so artfully tells of the happenings of human life from the most joyful experiences to the most tragic and heartbreaking events.

Of the greatest importance, however, is the fact that without music we would lose an essential avenue of worship, for God truly desires His people to sing. The Israelites were known for spontaneously breaking out in songs of praise and worship to God. Deliverance from the Egyptians was one occasion that inspired them to sing unto the Lord, first by Moses and all the Israelites, then by Miriam and all of the women. **Exodus 15:1**, *"I Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spoke, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."* **Exodus 15:20-21**, *"20 And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. 21 And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."*

There were other mighty miracles wrought by God on behalf of His people, but they were not the only uses of music in worship. Just prior to his departure from this life, Moses addressed the people he had led for more than forty years. Joshua would lead them thereafter, but Moses still had much instruction to leave with them. I find it remarkable that his delivery, recorded in Deuteronomy 32 was in the form of a song, a song given to Moses by the Almighty. Here is what God said to Moses concerning the song: ¹⁹ *"Now therefore write this song and teach it to the people of Israel. Put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the people of Israel. 20 For when I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to give to their fathers, and they have eaten and are full and grown fat, they will turn to other gods and serve them, and despise me and break my covenant. 21 And when many evils and troubles have come upon them, this song shall confront them as a witness (for it will live unforgotten in the mouths of their offspring). For I know what they are inclined to do even today, before I have brought them into the land that I swore to give."* ²² *So Moses wrote this song the same day and taught it to the people of Israel.* (Deuteronomy 31:19-22)

Our own singing in worship is to have an instructive purpose. *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.* (Colossians 3:16) I would suggest that correction delivered in the form of a song is more readily received than if it had been delivered from the pulpit. God, in His wisdom, provides for both in worship that pleases Him. Sermons on the destructive effects of anger and bitterness are surely needed, but we sing a song with the same message and I have never experienced anyone becoming angry upon singing it.

Angry words! O let them never, From the tongue unbridled slip,
May the heart's best impulse ever, Check them ere they soil the lip.

Love is much too pure and holy, Friendship is too sacred far,
For a moment's reckless folly, Thus to desolate and mar.

Angry words are lightly spoken, Bitterest thoughts are rashly stirred,
Brightest links of life are broken, By a single angry word.

The very nature of music often adds so much to the lyrics of the song. *Master the Tempest is Raging* likens the events of life that threaten to weaken and destroy our faith to the terror the disciples experienced in stormy waters of the Sea of Galilee. The refrain of this song is to be sung building to a crescendo and then ending softly so that, through music, we might gain a sense of our own inner storms being calmed by the Savior.

The winds and the waves shall obey Thy will, Peace, be still!
Whether the wrath of the storm-tossed sea, Or demons or men, or whatever it
be,
No waters can swallow the ship where lies The Master of ocean, and earth, and
skies;

They all shall sweetly obey Thy will, Peace, be still! Peace, be still!

They all shall sweetly obey Thy will, Peace, peace, be still!

Much more could be said about virtually every song in our hymnal. Music is such an important part of our worship, but it must please God. It will please God if it follows His instruction. Because He has said to sing, we must sing. Because He said to sing, we must only sing. Because He said to sing

