

Music and Vital Congregations

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Music plays an integral role in the life of every congregation, whether small or large; rural, suburban, or urban. This presentation is for congregational leadership and musicians together. Specific topics will include how to build or rebuild a music program, the relationship between music and preaching, the role of music in the day school, music as youth ministry, music as outreach, and developing a vision for your congregation. The principles presented can also be applied to other areas of program ministry in the congregation.

This is **NOT** about...

- big music programs vs. small music programs...
- traditional vs. contemporary services...
- growing vs. shrinking churches or programs
- young vs. old members

This **IS** about being

- a faithful congregation...
- a place where people are comfortable participating in the service...
- a place that is sincere in their purpose...
- a place that has a deep understanding of what worship is...
- a warm and hospitable community of believers...
- a place where music is loved and supported...
- a place that is bringing up the next generation...

Ask yourself about the vitality of your congregation...

Here is a rhetorical question, ask yourself... if you were a visitor... would you come back to your church a second time... would you look for an opportunity to learn more... would you join your congregation? Why or why not.

Is music a vital part of your congregation?

- Do most people sing in some way every service?
- Do they sing with enthusiasm or mumble?
- Are children, youth, adult, and elderly all singing... at least some of the same music?
- Are people given opportunities to participate in music other than congregational singing?

Building a Vital Music Program

Essentials:

1. Musical Leadership
2. Pastoral Support
3. Congregational Support
4. Adequate Resources

Rebuilding a Vital Music Program

- Any healthy program ministry has “chapters”
- Any healthy program ministry is continuously evolving
- Any healthy program ministry is preparing for the next generation
- The most effective program ministry connects people with the worship life of the congregation

Preaching and Music

- What can you quote off the top of your head? A phrase from a sermon OR a hymn / song?
- When music carries text, it is preaching something, it better be good!
- Music exists in church to support the Word and preaching. “Music is the handmaiden of theology,” - Martin Luther

The Children's Choir

- This is the next generation, prepare!
- It connects them with the worship life of the church.
- It cultivates in them a willingness to serve.
- Give them music and an experience to grow into.
- RSCM America / *Voice for Life*

Music in the Day School

- Music curriculum should develop music literacy and musicianship in all students
- Music curriculum should teach music (hymns/liturgy/songs) that are part of the congregation's liturgical life
- The day school service should reflect the congregation's liturgical identity

Music as Youth Ministry

We lament that we see people fall off the radar, often following 8th grade confirmation or after high school. In order to change this trend we need to examine how we are raising young people in the faith long before they reach this age. Music provides an opportunity to incorporate youth into the worship life consistently leading into adulthood.

Music as Outreach

- How can music or music education bring people into the pews?
- How can the music program be an opportunity to build relationships with people?

Vision

- The person who creates it...
- The staff who support it...
- The congregation who buys into it...

Individual Questions

- What are the strengths of the music program where you are a member?
- What are the weakness of the music program where you are member?
- What would you like to see improve?
- What can YOU do to see the music program strengthened?

Resources

- Roberts: Music and Vital Congregations: A Practical Guide for Clergy
- Westermeyer: The Church Musician
- CTSFW Organist Workshops

I'm here to help...

Please don't hesitate to contact me with questions:

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