

## **Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing**

Litany: Sing a New Song!

(based on verses from Psalms 30, 89, 92, 95, 96, and 100)

Colossians 3: 1-4, 12-17

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A Reflection for Music Sunday

Rev. Donna Vuilleumier

*Sing a New Song!*<sup>i</sup>

(based on verses from Psalms 30, 89, 92, 95, 96, and 100)

Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD;

let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come before God with thanksgiving—with music and song!

It is good to sing praise to You,

and make music to Your name, O Most High; to proclaim

Your love in the morning

and Your faithfulness at night. For You make us glad by Your deeds,

O God; we sing for joy at the work of Your hands.

Worship God with gladness;

come into God's presence with joyful songs—

with thanksgiving and praise!

For God has taken away our garments of sadness,

and clothed us with joy,

that we might sing praise, and not be silent!

We will sing of God's love forever!

Young and old will hear, and rejoice.

For Your unfailing love lasts forever;

Your faithfulness is as enduring as the heavens above.

Sing new songs to God! Praise God's name!

Each day proclaim the good news of God's salvation.

Tell everyone about the amazing things God has done.

May Your ways be known throughout the earth, O God;

Your saving power among people everywhere.

May the nations praise You and sing for joy,

for You govern them with justice,

and guide the actions of the whole world.

*Colossians 3: 1-4, 12-17*

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on

earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

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Adah bore Jubal; he was the ancestor of those who live in tents and have livestock. His brother's name was Jubal; he was the ancestor of all those who play the harp and pipe. Zillah bore Tubal-cain, who made all kinds of bronze and iron tools<sup>ii</sup>.

Adah, Jabal, Jubal, Zillah and Tubal-cain's story is in the fourth chapter of Genesis as they are the descendants of Adam, Eve and Cain and his wife. They are the beginning of civilization in the occupations of shepherd, musician and smith.

Jubal is the forefather of all musicians. Named just once in Scripture, he is regarded as the inventor of all music, the ancestor of all those who play the harp and pipe and more.

Even before Noah's Ark and the great flood we have been making music in our lives: music to dance with joy, to soothe a crying baby, to celebrate at weddings, and to hold our tender grief when a loved one is gone.

In time, the psalmist and king, David, confirmed the men of the Tribe of Levi as the "custodians of the music of the divine service".<sup>iii</sup> Now the music that expressed thanksgiving and lament, joy and sorrow, hope and fear, faith and doubt, began to also be directed to God, and thousands of years later we follow in the musical, worshipful, footsteps of chords, keys, melodies and harmonies of our faith ancestors.

We all have favorite songs, genres and musicians that make up the soundtrack of our lives. We all have favorite hymns that make up the soundtrack of our faith journey. In just a few opening notes or lyrics we can be transported to a place of light, or awe, or depth, or reassurance, or comfort, or memory, or celebration, or joy, in ways that words, that silence, just cannot do.

When our music is worshipful it is not about performance but about praise to God. We are lost in wonder, love and praise.<sup>iv</sup> As we hear music and musicians in worship, our response is worship too. There is truth to the old adage that to sing once is to pray twice as some verses inscribe themselves on our hearts even if we simply mouth the words that make it well with our soul. Music engages a part of us that is not simply cerebral and expresses thoughts and feelings in a way that words alone cannot. Music can be a vehicle to express an intuition or a feeling that stirs in our souls but is beyond language. Gustav Mahler wisely said, "If a composer could say what he had to say in words he would not bother trying to say it in music."<sup>v</sup>

Our praise and worship to the Fount of Every Blessing, to the Giver of creation, life and all good things, to the loving, healing and forgiving Redeemer, to the guiding, inspiring, wisdom Spirit, tunes our hearts to sing of their graces, their streams of mercy, and the binding of our wandering hearts.<sup>vi</sup>

Today on Music Sunday we are especially thankful for and attentive to the music and the musicians which lead us deeper, richer and bolder into the Scriptures and lessons of the day as we gather in person and in pixels to worship. In ways that are traditional, familiar and comfortable, in ways that were pandemic-required enormous learning curves of creativity, and in ways that are sudden, fresh, unexpected breaths of the Spirit in our midst, we follow where voices and instruments take us. “How often making music we have found, a new dimension in the world of sound, which leads us to a more profound Alleluia!”

We follow their commitment—not only to faith in God but to share their gifts with us. We follow their vulnerability—to offer themselves and their music as a part of our worship. We follow their joy—in taking human made objects and notes and words to lead us deeper and closer to the sacred.

In the earliest of the most ancient days, Jubal played the harp and pipe, opening wide the gift of music for all of human living. 3000 years ago David was our songwriter in times of thanksgiving, praise and lament. Today we give thanks for the music and musicians whose gifts in perfect harmony help call us to know the peace of Christ ruling in our hearts so with gratitude flowing we sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. Amen.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2014/04/litany-sing-new-song.html>

<sup>ii</sup> Genesis 4: 20-22a

<sup>iii</sup> Larousse Encyclopedia of Music

<sup>iv</sup> #358 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

<sup>v</sup> Gregory Know Jones, <https://www.wpc.org/uploads/sermons/pdf/September1Jones2013.pdf>

<sup>vi</sup> Lillian Daniel, [https://www.ucc.org/dailydevotional/daily\\_devotional\\_sing\\_once\\_pray\\_twice\\_or\\_just\\_sing\\_already/](https://www.ucc.org/dailydevotional/daily_devotional_sing_once_pray_twice_or_just_sing_already/)