

Haslett Community Church-United Church of Christ  
Second Sunday after Pentecost- June 6, 2010

Scripture lessons: Psalm 96:1-6 & Ephesians 1:3-14

SING THAT SONG

The songs the church sings are a mighty means of the Holy Spirit. Two weeks ago on Pentecost Sunday we celebrated the Spirit's work of breaking down the numerous false barriers within and between us that cut us off from the fullness of life God longs to give. Often, the Spirit uses God's song to get this work done.

St. Paul, even though he was in prison, sang it in his letter to the Ephesians from which we read a few minutes ago. The heart of its melody goes like this: "With all wisdom and might, (God) has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, *to gather all things in him*, things in heaven and things on earth" (1:9-10).

How great is that?!! No more pecking orders, no more we's and they's, no more us's versus them's, no more false barriers within and between us. Instead, there's to be only one great unity of love throughout the whole wide earth. That's the song the Holy Spirit sings and calls us to sing. Here's one of my favorite illustrations of its power.

One Sunday morning, Anne Lamotte, after years of drug and sexual addiction, suicide attempts, and deep depression, heard the sounds of gospel music coming from a church across her street. The building wasn't much to look at- just a ramshackle place with a tiny cross on top. *But the music forced her to stop and listen.*

She heard the words of gospel songs she remembered from her childhood. She decided to come back the next week, and the next, and the next, but only to stand outside and listen. After many weeks she finally got up the courage to move into the doorway and listen from there. The congregation of 30 or so people radiated kindness and warmth. But Lamotte says, "It was the singing that pulled me in and split me wide open."

In time she got the nerve to walk inside, sit in the back, and let the singing envelop her. The music, she says, was like breath and food. She writes, "Something inside me that was stiff and rotting would feel soft and tender. Somehow the singing wore down all the boundaries and distinctions that kept me so isolated. Sitting there, standing with them to sing, sometimes so shaky and sick that I felt like I might tip over, I (still) felt bigger than myself, like I was being taken care of, (being) tricked into coming back to life."

That's what singing God's songs does for us. It wears down all the boundaries and distinctions that keep us isolated. Singing them, we feel bigger than ourselves. We're taken care of. We're tricked to coming back to life.

With God's songs, we come together as one. We're made able, like St. Paul and Anne Lamotte, to look at life straight on, even at its hardest and darkest parts. We're made able to face up to our own personal imprisonments- even to the sentences of death under which we all live.

We can face up to it all, not with any bleak despair or sunny optimism, but with sheer faith, hope, and love in the God who makes us and all things one. That's the music we make as Christians and the song that our choir leads us in every week. They'll lead us in it again now with more of their favorites from this past year. Hallelujah!

*(The choir went on to sing "Fairest Lord Jesus", "The Heavens Are Telling", and "Just a Closer Walk with Thee").*