

The Gift of Music

LYNITA'S PONDERINGS



“Born in song! God’s people have always been singing”. This is the first line of *Singing The Faith* (STF)²¹, written by Brian Hoare, a Methodist Minister and past president of conference. Methodism, it is said, was born in song. The Wesley brothers were inspired by the Moravians during a voyage to Georgia, USA, in 1735. During a storm at sea, they not only prayed fervently but also sang hymns. On their return, and after their respective spiritual experiences, hymn writing and hymn singing became an integral part of Methodist worship. Many of Charles Wesley’s hymns contain theological statements, so it is no wonder that the compilers of the 2011 hymn book decided to call it *Singing the Faith*. And hymn singing is still an important component of our worship services, even though the language and the tunes have changed and people still keep writing worship songs.

But music making and singing go back much further. The Psalms have many references to music on the lyre, the harp and other instruments. And the Bible contains several songs, such as those of Miriam, Deborah, Hannah and Mary, among others.

Music is the language of the soul

There are those who claim that nowadays singing is confined to churches and football matches. I have not studied the evidence, but I find that claim surprising, given the number of choirs in the boroughs of Harrow and Hillingdon and they are not connected to churches. To the best of my knowledge, there are choirs in all parts of the country. These

choirs perform a variety of music, anything from rock to oratorio and everything in between. But music involves much more than hymn singing or choral singing. Music is universal, no matter where people come from. The style, the rhythm and the language may differ, but music in all its variety, helps us to connect with God and others. Music is the language of the soul. It reaches our inner being in ways which the spoken word does not. Music evokes emotions: joy, sadness, peace. And music is also a way of engaging with our communities. Several churches, across denominations, serve as venues for choirs and other music groups, including brass bands, choral music and orchestras. And churches who are fortunate enough to have a band, can involve those who enjoy making music.

There is evidence that music, whatever form it takes, is good for our mental health. We recall how King Saul was calmed down by David playing on his lyre. Psychologists use music therapy for people suffering from depression or other mental health conditions.

People who come to a church for the first time may find the language of our hymns as strange as they find the liturgy. But this does not detract from the fact

that music is a gift from God. And, in one form or another, many of us will continue to offer praise and worship to God through the gift of music.

The last stanza of Brian Hoare's hymn reads:

*"Then the end! Christ Jesus shall reign in his glory.
Then the end of all earthly days.
Yet above, the song will continue;
all his people still shall sing his praise."*

By The Revd Dr Lynita Conradie, Circuit Superintendent Minister

The Sanctuary

50 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

January, marked 50 years since the Sanctuary at Cannon Lane first opened its doors. Prior to then, we worshipped in a farmhouse and later in a multi-purpose hall, until funds were raised to construct a dedicated Sanctuary. Although it is fairly small—holding up to about 80 people—it features a pulpit fall designed for the 1976 opening, incorporating the ancient Christian symbols representing Christ, the Good Shepherd and the fish - Ichthus, Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour.



Since 1976, the sanctuary itself has seen little change, but recently, we've connected it to a new coffee shop to make the church more appealing for community gatherings.

A major event happened in 2017 when a car crashed through one of the walls. Thankfully, nobody was injured, although

worship services had to temporarily move back to the hall while repairs were made. That disruption, though inconvenient, bought everyone closer as we worked together to keep worship going.

Our fundraising efforts now focus on supporting charities such as FirmFoundation.

The Anniversary was commemorated with a display of memorabilia, and we're excited to celebrate Cannon Lane's 70th founding anniversary this November.

By Avis Gerry, Church Steward & Organist