

Shout!

By Rev. Todd Farnsworth

Psalm 100



1 Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. **2 Worship the Lord** with gladness; **come before him** with joyful songs. **3 Know** that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. **4 Enter his gates** with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. **5 For the Lord is good** and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

On this choir Sunday it is appropriate that we look at the place sound makes in our time of worship. The NRSV translates the word SHOUT to read “Joyful noise.” And I have to admit, that for the purpose of decorum, “a joyful noise” sounds a bit more controlled. In scouring the archives for translations to this familiar Psalm, I came across this Brother Isley edition of the 100th, and I believe it utilizes the word, “shout” to capture the psalmists intent. In this translation we witness a call and response between the people and their Lord.

Psalm 100 (Brother Isley Edition)

Let the people say, You know you make me wanna Shout, Kick my heels up and Shout, Throw my hands up and Shout, Throw my head back and Shout, Come on now Shout!

And the Lord did respond to the people's shouting: Say that you love me. Say that you need me. Say that you want me. You wanna please me. Come on now...I still remember, When you used to be 9 years old. I was a fool for you, from the bottom of my soul. Now that you've grown up, Grown enough to know, You wanna leave me, you wanna let me go.

And the people responded to the Lord by singing: I want you to know, I said, I want you to know right now, You been good to me Jesus, Better than I been to myself. And if you ever leave me, I don't want nobody else. You know you make me wanna Shout! Softly. Shout. Loudly. Shout. You make me want to Shout!

Our music program at BCC creates this call and response through the use of sounds. Joyful sounds:

- Whether it is Kathy and Karen playing their instruments sweetly around Christmas time, the Quartet bringing harmony to the chaos of life, or the Majesty of a combined congregation/choir choral belt out of the Hallelujah Chorus at Easter, the dynamic sounds move us to experience God in new ways.
- When Tony sits down and strums his guitar while singing a popular piece of music in the setting of worship, or Gloria lifts up a song of the

Spirit our ears are attuned to hearken for the Holy in different places than we are accustomed to listening.

- When the children sing at the pageant or on special Sundays we can hear the budding desire to connect with something beyond themselves; something that they are just beginning to understand, even as we are just beginning to understand what it means to be fully loved no matter what.
- When we are blessed by one of our Heim Scholarship performers we experience that love of God growing and maturing and striving to respond to the beauty that the Holy has wrought in our lives. We witness a honing of the message that calls us to draw closer to the glory of our Creator.

I must admit, that most of this would not happen without the leadership of Fimi. I see her working behind the scenes making connections, nurturing relationships, always seeking out new souls to make a joyful noise unto the Lord. (Just look at the line up for our Holiday Choir! That's a lot of new people gathered to give thanks and praise!) Always practicing and proselytizing to call us to SHOUT! In Jesus' Spirit! Fimi has the gift of that call and response Brother Isley and the original Psalmist wrote about. I believe that she understands that our focus is on praising God, who has known us *since we were 9 years old* (and younger!), and who will know us til after death through the sweet sound of our shouts of love. *For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.*

Fimi calls and the choir responds across generations. They participate in rehearsals on Thursday nights and commit to singing on Sunday mornings and at other significant worship services including memorial services and Maundy Thursday. Without their dedication and weekly testimony of *thanks and praise* our times of worship would be sorely impoverished. They are a more polished version of US in the pews. We show up without having rehearsed and because of their leadership and inspiration, we make a joyful noise, anyways! We join in their Sacred Shouting, their Heavenly Heal Kicking, and their Hallowed Head Throwing back in a *Hallelujah* of praise!

On this Choir Sunday, let us thank Fimi and the Choir, all of the musicians, soloists and duettists who have helped us to worship the Lord in gladness this past year. Their efforts have been a blessing to us all...it makes me want to SHOUT! In Jesus' name...but I think we should all just listen to Kathy and Alan make a joyful noise, instead.