

Lord all these years. Donald is not a published professional musician; however, what he does do, Saturday after Saturday, is drive nine miles out of town to his Berea Moravian church to prepare for worship. I asked him once why he drove out to the church and didn't just prepare for worship on his home piano. With a smile he said, "It just doesn't sound the same on the piano." True worship leaders like Donald live a life dedicated to their Lord, their church and their craft in their calling as worship leaders.

The Rev. John Wallace is the pastor of Waconia Moravian Church in Wisconsin.

Ramona Routh

I am honored to have been asked to be one of the respondents to Rev. Knapp and Mr. Nickel's article on worship. First, I must say; what a wonderfully written article, full of passion for God and for worship! Like it says: "Worship is not about what you get out of it, it's about our giving it all to Him!" Amen, brothers!

I would like to begin at the end. I would say that my background in worship and in all the liturgies began at a very young age. I was born and raised in the Moravian Church. I have to be totally honest: when I was young, I found the music and the liturgies very slow and ominous. During my teens, I would continue attending our church as well as attending Wednesday night and Sunday night services at various churches that my friends attended. The churches included Baptist, Presbyterian, First Assembly of God,

There are many such worship leaders like Donald in our denomination that devote countless hours of practice time to prepare us to honor the King. To those worship leaders of music, I, and many other pastors of this Moravian Christian experience, say thank you for serving the Lord and bringing glory to His name. Matthew and Bob, thank you for your insight and passion for worshipping our Lord.

and Methodist. That is where I gained a truer understanding of the unity of churches. I felt God in all of those churches as well as my own. I began to see that God wasn't calling us to be divided but united in our faith in Christ.

I also attended summer camp not only as a camper but also as a counselor. In fact, this was where I was called into ministry. It was during these years that I fell in love with more contemporary music. This music touched me to the core and helped my gain a better understanding of Christ and of God's love for us! At the time I felt that our worship missed that connection with me.

When I was in my twenties, my family moved to a neighboring town to care for my grandfather. Because I found that the Moravian Church in that town didn't meet my spiritual needs, I chose to join the church my grandfather and parents were attending. Although this church

met my emotional and spiritual needs, there was something missing: the liturgies of the Moravian Church.

I continued attending summer camp, and after my call into ordained ministry, I went back to college. Still, the chapel services in college missed something. They met my spiritual needs, they even encompassed contemporary music, but they lacked one thing; Moravian liturgy. By the time I returned to the Moravian Church, we were using a different hymnal. Although I deeply loved the 'tradition' of growing up with the red hymnal, at this point, I found myself saying: "Ahhhh!" The liturgies and hymns hit home with me!

Thinking back, although I was not in the Moravian Church when all the controversy hit about changing the hymnals, I realize that some people could relate to a comment made in the article with regard to controversy about worship. I feel that Bob and Matt's comments relate. He said, "We learned to embrace the healthy tensions of diversity of taste and preferences because we feel these competing viewpoints push us to work hard at creating better worship." He goes on to say, "As in any family structure, differences of opinion will always occur. However, a solid structure will allow healthy differences to occur without harming the family itself."

Matt's comment about Moravian liturgy creating unity made me think. I agree we unite as a congregation when we come together and pray the same words to the same God. I feel that is one of the most important tasks that worship leaders face is to invite God's spirit to be a part of the planning for worship. Whenever that planning occurs, we must do whatever it takes to

keep God first and foremost in our thoughts and allow the Spirit of God to fill us in every step of the way! This allows for the Spirit to 'rush in' the midst of the service! That is truly when we feel 'helpless in His love!'"

I too believe that our heritage is very important to who we are as Moravians. Matt and Bob shared their thoughts about how to make our liturgy more relevant to those who are worshipping. He said that one way that Sturgeon Bay has tackled this is to have short lessons before the liturgy or even classes to explain the meaning of the liturgies and the history of the music. I feel that this is an awesome idea! I hope to begin to do this in the congregation I serve. I think that had this been done when I was a kid, it would have helped me to not find the music and the liturgy so ominous!

When I began to gain a whole new understanding and appreciation for the words we say when we pray our liturgy together actually happened one day in seminary. One of the preaching coaches was attending the worship service I was leading in my appointed congregation. When I told the congregation to turn to page___ as we read together our liturgy, the coach made the most eye opening statement, "We are not *reading* our liturgy, we are *praying* our liturgy."

Another eye opening experience happened while at Moravian Theological Seminary. When Rev. David Bennett began serving as the chaplain of Moravian College and Seminary, he brought an immense amount of talent. One of his greatest talents had to do with liturgy. Dave wrote or compiled his own liturgy for our

various services. In fact, I still have most of these liturgies and use them often (I hope you don't mind Dave!).

Before these experiences with non-Moravian-hymnal-liturgies, I would have said that I was intensely apprehensive about writing my own. After the exposure he gave to MTS and our worship experiences, I feel much more at ease to share my talents with any given congregation. I believe that many of us, like Bob at Sturgeon Bay, have the gifts to share our words, and our prayers in liturgy. We must trust God to show

us how, allowing Him to give us courage to allow 'the Spirit to rush in!'

In conclusion, borrowing Matt and Bob's words, although tradition, planning and education must always serve to deepen our worship, it is always and ultimately about the Lord! We must always allow His presence to move through us. Regardless of what means of worship we use, traditional or contemporary, we must allow God's Spirit to rush in. "We need never to take for granted how good it is to be in worship" ...when we are worshipping the Lord!

The Rev. Ramona Routh is pastor of Moravia Moravian Church in Oak Ridge, North Carolina.

Robert Peek

Brother Craig Atwood's request for me to respond to the theme "styles of worship" and "attitudes toward them" reminds me of the Saturday newspaper's Religion section. There, hoping to appeal to the masses (albeit appealing to certain interest), worship events described as "traditional," "informal," or perhaps "contemporary" are listed. The issue(s) relating to how we worship in a particular church seems to always to be just under the surface. My response, rather than taking sides will be to share where Immanuel-New Eden Moravian Church is at the moment.

To understand where we are one must regress about six years to the time when I first became the pastor of two churches in Winston-Salem; Immanuel Moravian Church and New Eden Moravian Church. Beginning April 2000 I

shuttled between the two churches on Sunday and other times to lead worship

To set the stage and keep the focus for this effort it is important to describe as Sturgeon Bay did the parameters of a "Moravian" congregation. Immanuel Moravian Church could be described as a traditional Moravian church

- The organ was the primary worship instrument
- The *Moravian Book of Worship (MBW)* was the primary worship resource
- Liturgy was used in all worship services
- All of the traditional Moravian worship forms were observed.

Every thing was in its proper place. The offering plates and polity during worship were standardized. The pastor was expected to preach from behind the pulpit.