

Notes on Music for the Worship Service

1. General Philosophy: I believe that all music in the worship service should help people worship God. People worship in all sorts of different ways, and they need different types of music depending on their personality and what they're going through in life right now. It's good to have a mix of different styles. Fast, energetic, fun songs will wake them up and get them engaged so that they can pay better attention to the messages in the sermon. Quiet, contemplative music gets their brains off of their to-do lists and allows them to be still and focus on worshipping God. Some people are moved more by classical music, and others by hymns and contemporary songs. I try to strike a balance and offer a little of everything, though at this point in time I tend to skew towards the sacred, offering mostly a mix of traditional hymns and other gospel tunes that I hear on YouTube and Spotify. I find that if I vary the music enough, everyone is satisfied, no matter their personal preference. They know that if their preferred style is not featured this week, it will be soon.
2. Resources:
 - a. www.lectionary.com- find this week's lectionary readings
 - b. www.BibleGateway.com- look up lectionary readings to find themes to use in song selection (or just look it up in your Bible...)
 - c. Google searches- songs, lyrics, sheet music, topics
 - d. YouTube- look up a song or keywords from the desired topic
 - e. Spotify- get a free account and listen to all sorts of songs on demand (artist gets a fraction of a cent per play). Free version does have ads between songs, so be aware of that if you're using it during the service.
 - f. Amazon, iTunes- purchase songs for around \$1 each and build up your library (while supporting the artists and ensuring that there will be more music available)
 - g. www.hollyalouse.com- 14 CD's of church music- enough to get through an entire year, including special seasons; includes preludes, postludes, offertories, responses, and hymns. Also offers sheet music of public domain hymns- limited current selection, but more songs available by request at any level of keyboard proficiency (Simple arrangements really can be beautiful- I promise!)
 - h. Hymnal indices- the topical index in the back of every hymnal is great for looking up hymns to use for a particular topic
 - i. Spreadsheet- For organizational purposes (and easy referencing), I have developed a spreadsheet of all the songs I know or have access to (not just the ones in the hymnals). I included the last date used, title, source, keywords, and notes. It's a lot of work up front, but saves a ton of time in the long run.
 - j. www.openhymnal.org- free, legal sheet music for public domain hymns; also has MIDI files so you can hear the songs being played
 - k. www.hymnary.org- database of hymns; click on Lectionary and get this week's lectionary readings plus a list of suggested hymns with links to lyrics, MIDI files, and sheet music if available