

May 2022

The Lighthouse

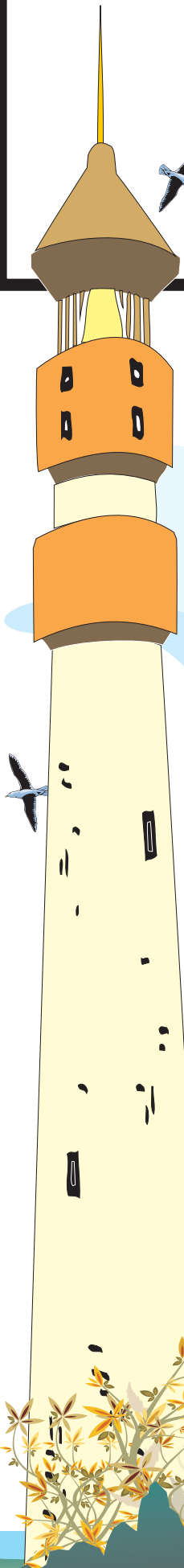
What Makes a Hymn "Good" ?

Our worship together on the Lord's Day is the most important of the week. It is the hub upon which the spokes of our day-to day worship spins which is why we seek to corporate worship a timewhere we can all come face to face with Jesus Christ; to discover "His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth" (WSC Q. 4), to come to terms with our sinfulness and depravity, to receive His abounding grace to us in the gospel and to be driven toward grace-renewal. Oor singing, praying, reading, and preaching of God's Word to us is intended to cause us to engage with God and be engaged by Him so we might "grow in the grace and knowledge" of Christ (2 Peter 3:18).

As I was thinking about how corporate worship ought to look and feel especially as I was considering what we sing together - I was reminded that Martin Luther once said that music has been "given to man alone that he might thereby remind himself that God has created man for the express purpose of praising and extolling God." Since we have been created for the purpose of glorifying God and enjoying Him forever, what we sing on the Lord's Day is designed to bring us to treasure Him more so that He would be faithfully in our daily lives.

Many people today tend to categorize worship music into "traditional" and "contemporary" categories. I do not find these categories to be helpful. As different as those categories may seem to be, both are prone to the same mistake; what C. S. Lewis calls "chronological snobbery." Advocates of "traditional" worship can be nostalgic and fail to recognize the more recent work that the Holy Spirit has done in bringing about high quality. Christ-exalting music. Proponents of "contemporary" worship can be anti-historical and would lead you to believe that the music of the church in ages and cultures past is antiquated and obsolete. "You'll never get the young people if you sing those old hymns, "is their battle cry.

In stead of categorizing our worship into "traditional or "contemporary" categories, I think it is more helpful to share with you the criterions for the music we select for worship here at First Presbyterian Church. Margaret Clarkson, one of the great 20th century hymn-writers (So I Send You, We Come, O Christ, to You, Amid the Fears that Oppress Our Day). has been especially helpful to me in this respect.



In her article entitled, "What Makes a Hymn Good ?" she suggests six characteristics of a good hymn:

1) Good hymns are God-centered, not man-centered: Clarkson does not insist that consideration of ourselves must be removed from our music, but that "when man enters the picture it is to acknowledge the darkness of his sinful nature in the light of such a God, to seek His mercy, and to marvel and rejoice in His redeeming grace."

2) Good hymns are theologically sound: Whereas wrong doctrine in preaching would be noticed, in hymn. It may come to be believed. Luther, again believed that the best way to instruct the church in sound doctrine is through music. So if that is the case, our music must be Biblically faithful and properly focused. Clarkson writes that, "waxing sentimental over an old rugged cross will never save anyone; our faith must be in the Christ of the Cross, in His death, resurrection, exaltation and present ministry for us - and our hymns must say so."

3) Good hymns are doctrinal in content: "The doctrine of good hymns is true to Christian experience as well as to Scripture. It does not describe as commonplace certain emotional, mountaintop experiences that for most Christians occur rarely, if at all. Good hymns express the thoughts and feelings of the average believer, not some super saint. Their doctrine is not only biblical, but down-to-earth and practical, helping worshipers to live as Christians should."

4) Good hymns have words of beauty, dignity, reverence and simplicity: "Good hymns are adult in word and tone. They do not insult our intelligence by requiring us to sing immortal truths in childish or unsuitable modes of expression. They contain nothing to bewilder or embarrass an unbeliever, but will speak to him of a deep, sincere, vital experience of God. While their figures of speech will have meaning for the contemporary worship, they will be in keeping with the worship of God."

5) Good hymns display preciseness and finesse of poetic technique and expression: She suggests that it is not only the content of the hymn that is important, but that the content must be expressed in a musical and poetic form that does justice to the words and carries those words into our souls. And finally.

6) Good hymns turn heavenward: In general, "worthy hymns rejoice in the unity of believers and the communion of saints. They take their place with the warring, suffering and triumphing church universal, identifying as readily with saints of the past as with those of today. Such hymns speak often of the soul's true home."

May God grant to us that we would be known as a joyfully singing congregation, because we have such a great God to sing about !!

For the sake of the gospel
Darin Stone

Thank you for being part of our team and participating in the ministry in Romania.



Matthew 24:6-7 says, "You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places."

I have read the above passage more times than I can count. Did I ever think we would be this physically close to war? How does one prepare for something that is completely beyond experience and imagination? We are being confronted with an equally great question, how do we help those that have fled a war-torn country and arrived in our city?



Check out today's update by watching this short video.

Do you ever find it difficult to pray?

On my heart recently has been the topic of unity. It has been the focus of my prayers for family, marriages, churches, teams, and the countries next door.

My guess is that many of you may pray the same thing right now. Recently, I get on my knees and just don't know what to say, I'm overwhelmed!

I am so thankful for the following verses from Romans 8:26-27;

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless

groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

If you are inclined to **pray** for our family and ministry, keep the things above in mind and also the points below. God help us to listen and pray!

- **Our beloved friends and teammates** have fled their homes in Ukraine. Some of them are with us in Brasov. We are helping coordinate refugee efforts in our city and beyond.
- **Ukraine and Russia.** There are many suffering on both sides of the border. Many may never return to their homes. Bordering countries are receiving hundreds of thousands of refugees. Pray that through this God will raise up an army of Jesus lovers and unite churches at the foot of the cross.
- **The church in Romania and around Europe** will remain strong in its desire to grow in unity, service, and encouragement of one another and the community.
- **Something New.** We are planning a family church camp at the end of April. The theme will be unity in family relationships that comes from our unity in Christ.
- **Leadership Development.** We are currently working with 2 young men who feel God calling them to be part of our church leadership team as elders. Both of these young men grew up in orphanages, have families, and love Jesus!
- **We are thankful** for the privilege of representing you in Romania and being a part of the growing church universal. We are grateful to those that invest faithfully in the ministry to Romania.



Church Plant Project supporting local and international efforts

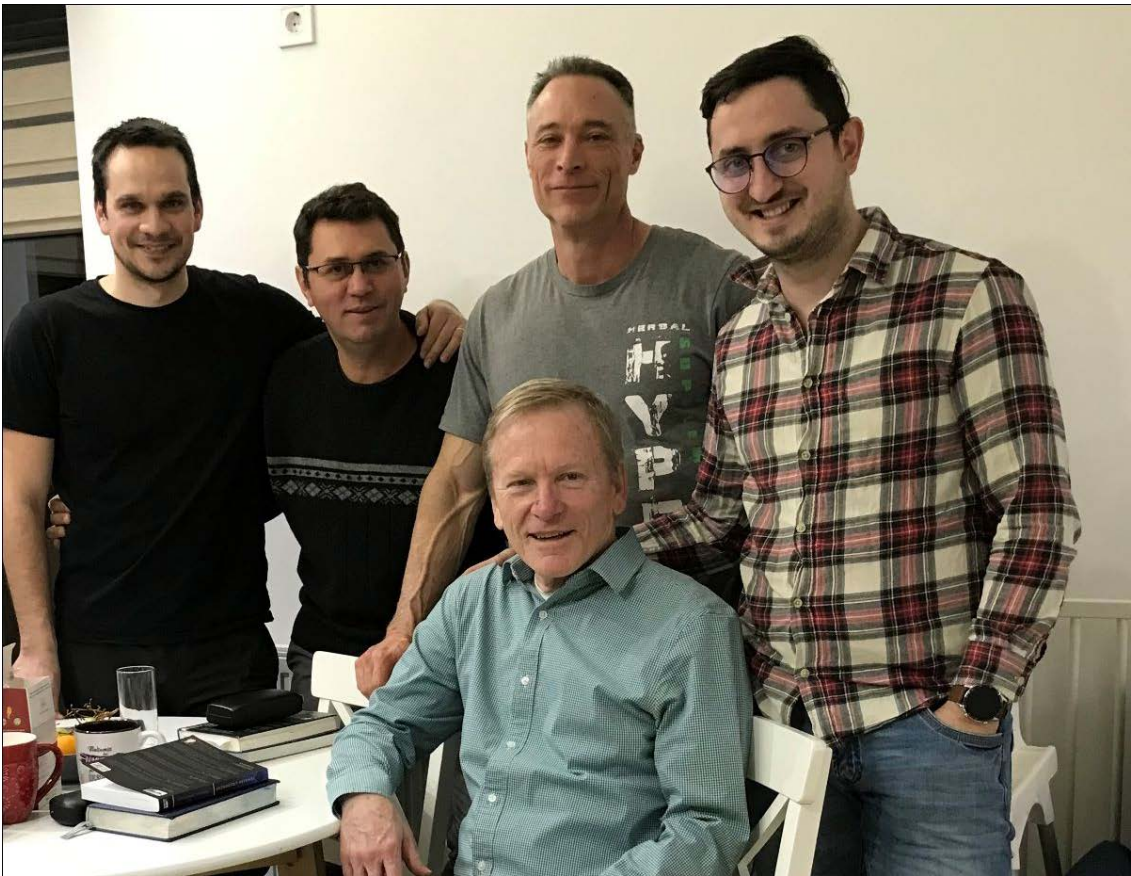


Shannon, Hannah, and I had the privilege of receiving and hosting Bob, Andrea, and Iris after they fled Odessa, their home for over 25 years. They moved into temporary housing on Monday. Bob is the team leader in Odessa, Ukraine.



We also helped receive, feed, and settle the rest of team Odessa and two Ukrainian young ladies that had also fled their homes.

We could really use your support right now. If you would like to support our church planting project you can use the blue button called church plant project above. Financial gifts will help us support our Ukrainian teammates and friends, future refugees as we are able, support our family camp in April, leadership development, and other church community events.



Our leadership team. Please pray for (standing left to right) Ciprian, Dan (elder), Derek (elder), Adrian, seated Maurice (interim pastor). Ciprian and Adrian are serving the church regularly and feel called to serve as elders. We are currently studying and praying together bi-weekly.



Your prayers and financial gifts help us build something that many have never experienced, real loving community. We enjoyed a wonderful meal together celebrating lighter restrictions and the ladies surprised Shannon for her birthday during their bi-weekly study. Please consider giving to support Codlea Christian Community to provide opportunities for our families to serve.

This is your opportunity to make an eternal investment!

Please help us by praying about becoming a financial partner.

If you are interested and want to make this a part of your ministry, please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions. Our goal is to add **20 people at \$50 per month for the next 4 years.**

One-time gifts are also helpful for covering the unexpected, like war and rising prices.

Donation buttons will conveniently direct you to an online option.

Practically speaking, we are experiencing fuel at \$6.50 / gallon and rising, natural gas has doubled in the past month, and electricity is doubling as well. We are expecting prices to continue rising in all areas.

Spread the word and help us GATHER partners to GIVE as we GO!

Many thanks from our family for the opportunity to represent you in Romania. It is a delight and a great encouragement to share with many of you what God is doing in and through us. Blessings to you all!

Our address in Romania:
Str. Iosif Comanescu,7 | Codlea,505100 | Brasov, Romania

NOTICE new donations address:
Donations Address: Mission To The World, P.O. box 2589, Suwanee, GA 30024-0928

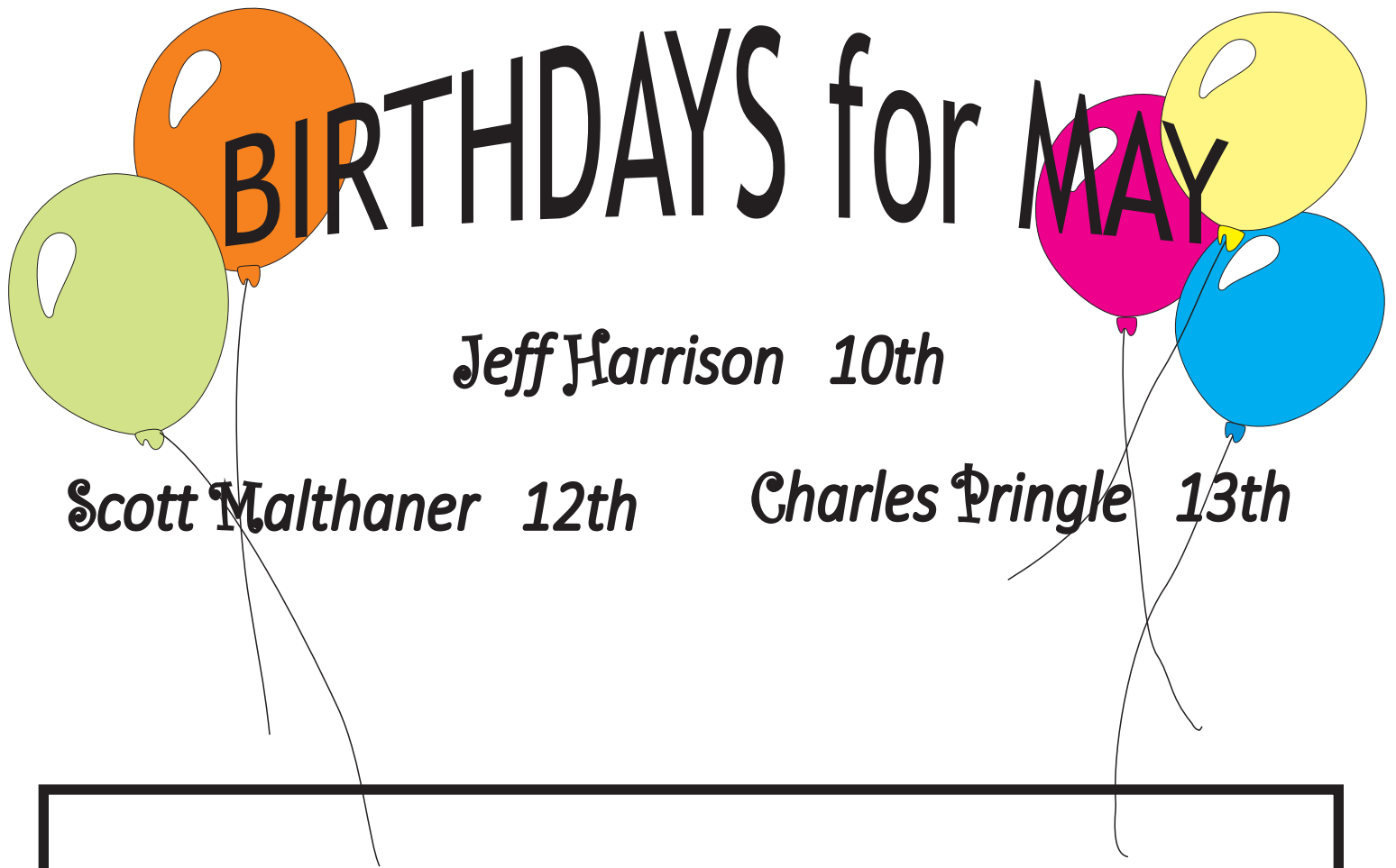
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Check out our website at: <http://told.ro>

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"I thank my God every time I remember you...because of your partnership in the gospel" ~ Phil 1:3,5a



Jeff Harrison 10th

Scott Malthaner 12th

Charles Pringle 13th

Dates to Remember for May

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| May 1 | Communion at the morning service |
| May 4 | Ladies Circle will be at 9:30am in the Parlor. It will be the last meeting until the fall. |
| May 7 | Men's Breakfast at 8:00am in the Fellowship Hall |
| May 8 | Mother's Day |
| May 15 | Monthly Luncheon after the morning worship service, please bring a dish to share |
| May 15 | Evening Communion Service at 5:00pm |
| May 30 | Office will be closed for the Memorial Day Holiday |