

89th Annual Reunion Service, Central Mine Methodist Church – July 30, 1995

Minister: Rev. Dr. Daniel Rosemergy

Organ Preludes: Donald M. Ross

***Introit:** Grant Me True Courage, Lord

Greetings: Charles Stetter

Hymn: Holy, Holy, Holy

Invocation and Lord's Prayer

***Anthem:** In Love We Come to Thee (G. F. Handel)

Responsive Reading: Selections from Psalms 95 and 96

Hymn: All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name (Diadem)

Scripture Readings: Romans 12:1-3, 9-18, John 4:20-24

Vocal Quartet: Joys Are Flowing Like a River (Ferguson/Marshall)
Pat Mitchell, Donna Koskiniemi, Pete Manderfield, Dan Rosemergy

Pastoral Prayer & In Remembrance: Mildred Vine (1899-1995)

Announcements and Remarks: Charles Stetter

Offering and *Offertory Anthem: Psalm 150 (Cesar Franck)

Doxology

Sermon: **To Worship and To Love** (Abridged)

As each year passes, I appreciate even more the writing [*More Copper Country Tales*] of Alfred Nichols about this area. He loved the people and valued the simplicity of their lives. All that they did—work, play, and worship—flowed together in a wonderful harmony of living with one another and in God's presence.

Series: Work, Play, Worship. This is the third part (after 2 years) of a series inspired by Gordon Dahl's *Work, Play, and Worship*. He suggested that all too often we worship our work, work at our play, and play at our worship. He urges us instead to find a unified balance to experience our work as play, to see our play as worship, and to make worship our work.

Worship. Worship can be the integrating center of our living, including our work and our play. Worship should be the foundation of spiritual growth and is vital to our humanity because it helps us know who we are, why we are here, and why we do what we do. In deep ways, folks here at Central worshipped in that way, perhaps not in those words, but it was happening at the core of their beings. Their awareness of God's presence and action in the world was all encompassing: in their awe in the stillness of a mine shaft, in their appreciation of the beauty of nature, in the excitement of a hammer/drill context, in the joy of a gospel song. They worshipped God in all they did.

When I say *worship*, *what do you think of?* Generally, 9 of 10 people think of Sunday/Wednesday worship services at churches. *When do you feel worshipful?* Regrettably, often not during a church

worship service. *What is your approach to worship?* Do you worship or do you just sit there letting worship leaders worship for you?

While true worship is central to our very existence, we don't do it well, in part because the institutional church has so restricted our sense of what worship is and often doesn't even do that well. This likely has much to do with why 60% of Americans choose not to go to institutional worship, yet over 95% believe in "God" and are searching for meaning in their lives and claim that they are "spiritual," not "religious."

Reflecting on Worship. Dahl suggests that we play at our worship when we should be working at our worship. He points out that for most of society, worship is an optional bit of time for giving a nod to God: "Our common worship often takes place in an unreal world, alienated from everyday life. The setting, the hymns, the language are from another time and place, and seem irrelevant to the real issues in our world of work and play."

Most often, congregations want worship to last no longer than an hour. In a cartoon from *Preacher from the Black Lagoon*, there are signs in front of two churches across the street from one another. On one sign, "Service of worship is 60 minutes" is crossed out with "58 minutes" below it. Across the street, the church sign reads "Service of worship is 59 minutes" and the preacher comes out and writes in "57." We want to rush through worship, get it over for the week.

Movements in worship. To be attentive to good corporate worship is to be aware of worship's movements that give it meaning based on our emotions and needs and the opportunity to respond again to the stories of our faith. Those movements are: adoration/praise; confession/pardon; hearing the Word in scripture, music, and sermon; response—affirmation, offering, commitment. But *these should be movements of our private and personal worship each day.*

Drama in the cycles of the church year. Cycle 1 is Advent/Expectation, Christmas/Birth, Epiphany/Manifestation of Jesus' ministry and teaching. Cycle 2 is Lent/Holy Week—life journey, wilderness, temptation; Easter—Resurrection, new life, new creation; Pentecost—Spirit, birth of the church. This powerful drama is often missed in our collective worship, and often we don't connect it with our own life drama. God is present with each of us, every moment of every day. Worship should make us aware of that, relating the story, the spiritual, to our everyday life.

Religious educator Maria Harris writes, "Ironically and paradoxically, the reason for having a community like a church is to point us to the presence of the holy everywhere—not just to the presence of the holy in church" ["A Worship Way of Knowing"].

Jesus at Jacob's Well. Jesus talks with the Samaritan woman at the well. She says, You're a Jew. What do you think about this debate as to where we should worship? My parents worshipped in the temple on the mountain, but you say that Jerusalem is the place where we should worship. Are you right or are we? Jesus lifts that question beyond place and says, "The hour now is near when true worshippers will worship God in spirit and truth." God is Spirit, always presents in our lives, at work, at play, at worship.

We must worship in *spirit*, out of the depth of our need for worship, to find value and meaning in our lives. We must worship in *truth*, out of integrity and a commitment to that which lays claim to our whole selves. What about it? Do we rebuild temples with our worship, or are we willing to let our worship be a bridge between our faith and the world?

Harris picks up the same theme, pointing out that in the Gospels, Jesus never points to a place but reads the scriptures and makes connections to the world outside. It's a worship way of knowing. "Being

worship-centered pulls you outside. What we're talking about is gratitude and awe and wonder and the sense of the gift of being alive Walter Bruggeman talks about gathering and scattering; we gather so that when we leave that gathering, we are better able to worship everywhere. And that feels to me to be a very important way to know God."

To worship everywhere. We need to be the scattered church worshipping everywhere, every day, in the middle of the ordinary events and activities of life—our work and our play. "Worship is the way we learn to live in the world as witnesses to the Gospel" [Theodore Jennings, "Worship and Life: The Dance of Freedom"]. It's difficult to think of worship beyond the sanctuary. "Liturgy" might help us make that connection. The word means the action of the people. Worship is not the special presence of a priest, rabbi, or minister, but the task of all the people of God. It is not only quiet meditation but also is action. "Worship is the deeds we perform as the people of God" [Jennings]. It's an easy step to worship as our vocation. We worship as we live, and hopefully live as we worship.

In Romans, we heard Paul's exhortation to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, our spiritual worship. Among the early Christians, the term sacrifice was used to refer primarily to the lives they led. Through their lives, love, deeds, and service, they reflected God in their daily existence. Their whole lives were seen as spiritual offerings. Paul here, I'm sure, is talking about liturgy—the work of the people. When he speaks of us being one body, he refers to that which connects us to one another. When Paul tells us to present our bodies to God, he means all our relationships. We are shifting our perception of how God works in our lives and our response. We now look for God in the ordinary, as being present in all of creation at all times and places. Therein we find harmony and wholeness. Worship, then, can become the integrating center of our lives. In worship, our lives should gain renewed meaning and purpose. But our worship is meaningful only as we bring our full lives to it, with a sense that all we do is worship.

Spirituality: True Worship. Opening ourselves to the presence/spirit of God each day is/should be at the center of worship that integrates our lives. Corporate worship that captures the joy of our faith and reminds us of the story and guides us in our everyday living is important, but it is not enough. Spirituality is at the heart of our worship this morning because it was at the heart of the Central residents. The stories tell of work, play, worship. They're not separate or fragmented. Work flows into periods of rest and storytelling; play and singing fills the spirit leading them to prayer; and worship happens whenever they are suddenly awed by a God-filled moment. We all have such moments, but too frequently don't call them worship, don't consciously say the words, "It be Sunday 'ere hev'ry day" [*Long Winter Ends*]. Open your senses each day to such moments of worship.

We've talked about work, play, worship. You ask: What about love? God is love—those who dwell in love dwell in God. We are called to love in all our work, play, and worship. We are God's people, so we worship in spirit and in truth, in God's love.

Hymn: Love Divine, All Love Excelling

Benediction, Response, Postlude

Organist: Donald M. Ross

***Choir Members:** *Sopranos:* Sue Adams, Mary Henderson, Pearl Jalkanen, Betty Martin, Deanna Martin, Pat Mitchell

Altos: Carol Bard, Flora Graham, Carolyn Meyer, Connie Plymat

Tenors: Richard Hutchison, Peter Manderfield, Mark Spreitzer, Jack Trudgeon,

Basses: Dr. Fred Bryant, Jay Martin, Stanley Martin, Jack Porritt

Executive Committee Members: James R. Brooks, Dr. Fred W. Bryant, Gary A. Bryant, Robert J. Bryant, James K. Curto, Jeffrey Nicholls Curto, David C. Heikka, Hollace G. Roberts, Donald M. Ross, R. Charles Stetter, David H. Thomas, Harry J. Vine, Dr. Brian D. Wake, John E. Wilson

Special Event in Conjunction with Central Mine Reunion—Eighth Gathering of the Cornish Cousins, July 27-30, 1995 hosted by the Keweenaw Kernewek (Copper Country Cornish Society) and co-sponsored by the Cornish American Heritage Society and the Cornish Connection of Michigan