

Preacher: Pastor Twyla

Scripture: Psalm 148

Praise for God’s Universal Glory

¹ Praise the Lord!

*Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise him in the heights!*

*² Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his host!*

*³ Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars!*

*⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens
and you waters above the heavens!*

*⁵ Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for he commanded and they were created.*

*⁶ He established them forever and ever;
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.*

*⁷ Praise the Lord from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps,
⁸ fire and hail, snow and frost,
stormy wind fulfilling his command!*

*⁹ Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!
¹⁰ Wild animals and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds!*

*¹¹ Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!*

*¹² Young men and women alike,
old and young together!*

*¹³ Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for his name alone is exalted;
his glory is above earth and heaven.*

*¹⁴ He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his faithful,
for the people of Israel who are close to him.
Praise the Lord!*

Don and I were at the beach for our recent vacation. It is my favorite place to go for vacationing. I try to disconnect from my work while vacationing, but try as I may, that’s never one-hundred percent possible. This time, one of the things I had on my mind was Music Sunday. That really was not a problem for me. In fact, it offered me an opportunity to meditate on the

sounds I was hearing: like the crashing of the waves onto the shore, the blowing of the wind, the cries of the seagulls and singing of other birds, the laughter and conversations around me, all kinds of sounds that were music to my ears, music that relaxed, warmed and refreshed my spirit.

Psalms 148 is one of many sacred songs and poems used for worship found in the book of Psalms. The psalmist calls on the heavens and the earth to praise the Lord. When we read this psalm, our minds are opened to understanding that praise is expressed through words, instruments, sounds of and the beauty of nature, many of the same kinds of things that I mentioned that I experienced as music while on my vacation. Praise offered to God, reaches God and is music to his ears.

Music is a universal language. Music that directs our attention towards God and God's values can stir our emotions with feelings of love, hope, and peace, feelings that influence who we are in relation to God, brothers and sisters in Christ, and the world. They inspire our way of living so that all around us can see Jesus through our words and actions.

However, we also know there is music that does not glorify God. It rejects God and Christ's teachings. Songs and rhetoric filled with words of selfishness, prejudice and violence, voices and weapons exploding with sounds of degradation and hostility. This kind of music stirs feelings of anger, frustration and even hatred within those who don't know the universal glory of God, and when taken to heart, it influences people to live nothing like Jesus.

The music we are hearing today on this special day, instrumental and vocal, is music that unites us and glorifies God. The psalms encourage us to make music to glorify God, and, I believe, to listen to music that glorifies God, and keeps us focused on God.

While I was looking online for worship resources for this service, I came across this prayer that I think speaks to what I am trying to say this morning. I found it on a Mennonite website called, Leading worship. Let it be a prayer we offer on this special day.

“Thank you for the music all around us.
Each morning, we hear it from the moment we open our ears;
the low notes of wind around the eaves,
the whoosh of water as it comes from the tap,
the glug glug as it drains,
the throaty whistle of the boiling kettle,
the metallic tap of the spoon against the cup,
the jazz percussion of our feet on the steps.
The sounds of our day,
so familiar we hardly pay attention.
Thank you for the ability to hear.

Thank you for the sounds of life:
the chatter of the squirrel,
the deep purr of a cat,
the sharp calls of a blue jay,
the sound of someone we love laughing.
Give us wisdom to enter this day with good sounds,
tones and pitches and words that affirm, encourage, cherish,
our sounds affecting the world in a positive way.

May 18, 2025 – “Listen to the Music”

We pray for all who sing a sad song today;
the grieving, the lonely, the lost.

We pray especially for those who have lost their voice
and feel silenced or oppressed.

There are many singing freedom songs around our world,
and so today we pray for the safety of these singers.

Give their song the strength to convince and convert,
the power to ward off war.

There are too many war songs,
we don't want to hear another one.

Thank you for your songs, love songs, which we are invited to sing.

Thank you for all the parts you've made for the song;
soprano, alto, tenor, bass.

Thank you for the children's part and the senior's part,
thank you for the youth part and the part for middle agers,
thank you for the crazy baby descant
that we all love to hear.

You are the Great Composer .

We long to be composed each day in your image,
singing your elegant score truly, clearly,
following your rhythm by heart,
finding our voice in your beautiful world.

Hearing you in the music of life.

This is our prayer. Amen.”