

AR&LW NEWSLETTER

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From Our Presiding Member

Dear Friends,

In surveying the landscape of worship practice, many options

abound. Yet the options are far fewer for learning and reflecting with scholars and practitioners who take seriously the long history of liturgical practice, and who want current worship to reflect the riches gleaned from that history.

Welcome to AR&LW! AR&LW is a place where scholar-practitioners and practitioner-scholars meet to reflect on their work with the goal of enriching worship for congregations. As fewer seminaries and higher educational institutions address worship practice, the mission of AR&LW is ever more imperative. If you are reading this newsletter, either you are already a member we hope will be engaged in the pursuit of contributing to your own and others' knowledge of worship practice, or someone we hope will join us in that effort. Worship is the primary activity of the church. Can we do less than to give it our all?

Worship is important not only for theological, musical, or spiritual reasons. *Vanderbilt Magazine* recently reported results from a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The study, "Church Attendance, Allostatic Load and Mortality in Middle-Aged Adults" found of 5,449 people surveyed, 64% were regular worshippers. Non-worshippers had significantly higher prevalence of high-risk values on cardiovascular, nutritional/inflammatory and metabolic scales. Effects of attendance remained after education, poverty, health insurance and social support status

were all taken into consideration. We need to worship, and worship well, as if our lives depend on it, because they might!

The regional meetings of the summer and fall were so successful that we hope to continue them. The engagement of thinking practitioners created their success. The AR&LW steering committee meets in February. We would love to hear from you to know how you would like to contribute and what foci for future meetings would be most engaging.

And put July 22-24, 2018 on your calendar. The AR&LW Annual Convocation will be held at Princeton Theological Seminary during those dates. Activities will include Eucharist services, hymn sings, plenary sessions, workshops, as well as opportunities to meet old and new friends! The program is in the planning stages. Watch for details in Spring 2018.

See you in Princeton!

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by Paul Westermeyer

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Music and the Reformation: An Ecumenical Appeal

Martin Luther is popularly seen as an iconoclast who wanted to discard everything the church catholic had bequeathed to him and to start from scratch with music in taverns. In fact, he gratefully received what he inherited, used it, and developed it. Luther did so because it's what the church expects in its hymnody. The church does not restrict its song to one stream, but draws on the catholic whole. No single source is adequate in itself.

How did we commemorate the Reformation?

There is a woodcut from 1617, the one-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation. It depicts Luther writing his Ninety-Five Theses on the door of the All Saints Church in Wittenberg and with the end of his long pen knocking off the Pope's crown. That woodcut symbolizes the conflict between Lutherans and Catholics. In 1618, the year after the anniversary, the Thirty Years' War began. That war was caused by states struggling over political domination and money as much as by the church. But the church was pressed into it and became complicit in the destruction wreaked by the Thirty Years' War.

The warfare sometimes co-opted the church's singing. "A Mighty Fortress" was perverted into a battle cry, though Luther regarded it as a hymn of comfort. The battle in "A Mighty Fortress" is not against our neighbors, but rather against evil. God wins on behalf of the whole world, the whole creation, and **all** of our neighbors, not just the ones in our tribe.

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Much of our hand-wringing is caused by our getting stuck in the moment, making up a nostalgic past, and ceding everything to the state, its institutions, its statistical tabulations, its perspective, and the importance it attributes to power and money as if they were god. We forget what the twelfth-century monk Bernard of Cluny taught us: "The world is very evil."

But there is now 500 years between us and the Reformation. And we have now to ask: How do we commemorate the Reformation? First, we must tell truth with honesty and compassion. Much of what has divided Catholics and Protestants is about hatred and prejudice, tied to the state, power, and money. That needs to be disentangled so genuine differences can be discussed honestly.

Second, we must live out what the Hymn Society is and does. This involves celebrating our hymnic heritage. In Luther's time the central musical feature was the chorale. Dependent on Gregorian chant and *Leisen*, the chorale migrated to many parts of the world where it encountered other hymnic strands. It is important to reclaim this heritage, especially in those eras when the church has lost its vision in conflicts. The church's hymnody points in a constructive direction, refusing to be confined to one faction's interests against another's.

It also involves laying hold of its power. In the Hymn Society, we regularly study, celebrate and sing the church's song. We need to continue to do so with quiet, passionate, and compassionate persistence. This is not about the state or its priorities. It is not about superimposing something on it from outside itself. It is not about seeking easy fixes. Rather, our activity grows out of the long experience of the being of the church at song.

Details change, but the panoramic landscape remains the same. There are, as there always have been, healthy oases where pastors, musicians, poets, and assemblies sing and work together. There they figure out what to do in the world they are called to serve.

A reading of the world's history tells us that the state may do good things, supporting schools, the arts, justice and peace. But it cannot be trusted and may do the opposite. Nor can the church, its institutions, or its leaders be trusted, especially when they collude with the state and its priorities or make the market into a god. Our celebration helps us to see this more clearly. It teaches us to look below the surface of the evils we face to find networks that seek the common good.

Hymnody gives us perspective. The singing of the church in Psalms and hymns, giving glory to God and expressing peace and good will toward the neighbor, has played a part in the founding of schools, where learning, curiosity and the search for truth have flourished, in the establishing of hospitals, as well as in the forming of those institutions that seek the common good.

Remembering these things is not an exercise in nostalgia. Much of our hand-wringing is caused by our getting stuck in the moment, making up a nostalgic past, and ceding everything to the state, its institutions, its statistical tabulations, its perspective, and the importance it attributes to power and money as if they were god. We forget what the twelfth-century monk Bernard of Cluny taught us: "The world is very evil." And, as Emily Brink remarked when I made a comment about the power of money in this world, "This is not about money, Paul. It's about vision."

That vision about which Emily Brink wisely reminded me is reflected in hymnody's constructively subversive undertow. Another twelfth-century monk, Bernard of Clairvaux, said that "hearing will restore your vision." He may have partly meant that "hymn-singing will restore your vision." Without vision the people perish. Hymnody helps to provide vision. We are not dependent on the state, institutions we create, or

dollars and their power. Our vision is the undertow of a subversively constructive concern for everybody -- which paradoxically includes the state even when it does not support us.

The vision of the church's hymnody is projected in the worship where hymns are sung. Following "glory to God" we remember God's gracious mercy for us, confess the mess our ingratitude makes, sing "grant us peace," and hear God's call to go in peace and serve the neighbor.

That call is not specific. We have to figure out what justice and peace require of us where we live and work. Examples from our past can inspire us to construct schools for study, create institutions of service and care, develop techniques and skills, and form networks of concern for the other. Those who came before us through their versions of these things gave us gifts which help us sing and do what we are called to sing and do.

The work is complex. It engages the perplexities of our age, the disciplines of hymnody, the whole panoply of study that they presume, concerns for others individually, and the communal networks of influence and power that seek peace and justice for the whole world.

The work is not easy. But the burden is light, and the duty is delight. We can do this, not in some great public display or misguided simplistic solution to solve the world's problems, but in our daily vocations as poets, pastors, musicians, or whatever.

Be of good cheer. Celebrate our hymnic heritage. Lay hold of its power, day by day, on behalf of the dysfunctional culture that surrounds us, for the glory of God and for the good of our neighbors.

As Pope Francis said, "Let us sing as we go."

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The Necessity for Counter-Intuitive Worship

The Book of the Twelve is a phrase that designates Hosea-Malachi as a single theological document. A growing consensus of scholarship holds that these twelve writings were molded into a unit at least by 2nd century BCE. Their purpose was to bring hope and comfort to God's people who were scattered around the Middle East in diaspora living (Sir. 49:10).

As I have demonstrated in *Living in the Language of God, Wise Speaking in the Book of the Twelve* (2017), in the Book of the Twelve we have rich trove of what people say in worship. It is a prime source for investigating the language of worship for two main reasons. First, within these twelve texts, more than 70 instances of quoted speech are embedded in prophetic material. Many of these speeches carry worship motifs. And second, because these writings originated separately over a period spanning the eighth to the third centuries BCE, they afford a wide range of existential situations in which worship occurs.

This brief essay about what people say to God in worship supports the conclusion that authentic worship is counter-intuitive and counter-cultural. Of the many examples we can cite from the Book of Twelve, we will highlight that of the prophecy of Habakkuk to illustrate counter-intuitive worship.

In chapter 1, two laments (vs. 2-4, 12-17) in liturgical style give voice to the shame of experiencing God's impassivity in the face of foreign domination. This threat to divine capability is processed through chapter 2, whose conclusion prepares the reader for the theophany of the Day of the Lord described in an inset hymn in 3:2-15. What is striking is that the vision of salvation which is sung is not yet realized, as 3:16 makes clear:

I hear, and I tremble within;
my lips quiver at the sound.
Rottenness enters into my bones,
and my steps tremble-beneath me.
I wait quietly for the day of calamity
to come upon the people who attack us.

As James W. Watts has noted in "Psalmody in Prophecy: Habakkuk 3 in Context," "the tension between oppressive reality (chs. 1-2) and salvific hope (3:2-15) remains taut to the end." In this tension, Habakkuk 3:17-19 records a counter-intuitive position where the speaker rejoices that "God the Lord is my strength [even] though the fig tree does not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines."

Situated in the liturgical context of the inset hymn to God's saving violence in Habakkuk 3:2-15, the taking of this counter-intuitive position (17-19) occurs within the experience of communal worship in the Temple. Thus the Habakkuk hymn identifies liturgical worship and the prophetic vision of God's saving violence as one and the same thing. Other examples where counter-intuitive worship emerges within horrific catastrophes can be found in Micah 7:8, Zechariah 13:7-9, and Zephaniah 2:1-7. Thus the reader is invited to trust that the salvation described in the hymn is available to all who participate in the Temple liturgy.

For additional examples of counter-intuitive positioning, see Malachi 3:16, where a community that is buffeted by doubt draws strength in the context of worship from a book of remembrance of God's name. Or consider Micah 7:8, where those who were mocked for their loyalty responded, "Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a light to me."

Finally, look at Joel 2, where the God of abundant mercy invites, by those same mercies, God's people to lament *before God* the absence of a merciful God. This encouragement to mourn the absence of the God of mercy is couched in the sure assurance that this God *is* merciful. Joel shows that to worship God is to assume a huge amount of counter-intuitive risk-taking. Mourners of absent mercy take the risk, amazingly, to hurl their anguish before the God of mercy.

These statements confront harsh realities of injustice and unfairness which threaten God's credibility and human capability. They point beyond themselves to another setting of reality which is not dependent on empirical evidence, expressing the inner certainty of God's faithfulness, which empowers stamina and verve.

This is a community that will look and act differently from others with which it interacts in culture. The Twelve is keenly aware of alternative ways of living which are nurtured by competing ways of worship. Three prominent alternatives are: (1) worship as a mechanism for prosperity, (2) worship as a projection of human prediction, and (3) worship as a celebration of national exceptionalism.

Worship as the mechanism for prosperity is illustrated in the worship of Baal, which is crystallized in Hosea's statement, "People are kissing calves" (Hos. 13:1-3). This worship strives to reduce the risk involved in ceding life to God by stating at the outset the self-enhancement that is desired as the end result of worship and by organizing ritual to achieve this result.

It is important to understand in our own time how this option of worship strongly informs many white, evangelical conservative voters. But from the biblical perspective of counter-intuitive worship, this option will leave its devotees exhausted, gutted, devalued, and dissipated.

Worship as a projection of human prediction utilizes some natural force such as the rhythms of nature or the powers of reason or the prowess of the human body to bolster a sunny optimism that all will be well. Hosea 5:14-6:6 is an example of the use of the rhythm of nature as the foundation for expressions of overconfidence. This is worship that reflects a form of religion of self-made people who refuse to acknowledge the power of doubt, chance, fate, and waywardness. This is worship that attempts to engineer an outcome of happiness. Sunny optimism nurtures facile assumptions of assured familiarity with God which inevitably disappoint. For example, in Hosea 8:2, Israel, in a situation of crisis, cries out, "My God we—Israel—know you!" only to be unheeded by God because "They do not cry to me from the heart" (7:14). Placed against the standard of counter-cultural worship with its concomitant demand of venturing all on a risk, the option of worship as an exercise in confident prediction is a failure.

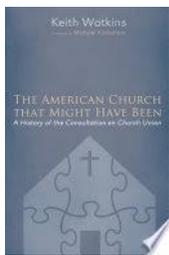
Worship as a celebration of national exceptionalism is founded on an ideology of chosenness held by the Jerusalem establishment. This ideology has been explored by Walter Brueggemann in *Reality, Grief, Hope, Three Urgent Prophetic Tasks* (2014). It informs a kind of liturgical practice whose goal is financial advantage gained illegally from the vulnerable. Priests who teach for a price are in cozy confederation with rulers who give judgment for a bribe and prophets who give oracles for money, a confederation which promotes injustice, violence, and game-rigging. All this is propped up by fraudulent religious language, "Surely the Lord is with us! No harm shall come upon us" (Mic. 3:9-12).

An ideology of exceptionalism erases the need for humility. Thus when this ideology collapses, its adherents are left with no strategy to cope with disaster. Because they have discounted the necessity of throwing themselves utterly on the grace of God, they are denied access to a trust and hope that is counter-intuitive to brutal reality. In the Twelve, the cult of exceptionalism becomes the target of the severest judgment. The ideology of chosenness is shattered by the destruction of the Northern Kingdom in 722 BCE and subsequent exile, completed by the destruction of Judah in 587.

Worship in the Twelve is a contested matter. Every option that supports liturgy as a vehicle for human assertion of control is ruled out. This is underscored by the repeated encouragements to “wait on/for the Lord” (Zeph. 3:8; Hab. 3:16; Hos. 12:16; Mic. 7:7). From the pages of the Twelve emerges a piety that is clear-eyed, honest, and forthright in its grappling with existential situations of extreme stress. At the same time, it leads one to place oneself, with equally clear-eyed and honest forthrightness, within the mysterious embrace of God and of God’s intentions to set things right under God’s mercy and justice. This is a counter-intuitive piety which has huge counter-cultural consequences for communities who intend to live as a countersign to the dominant culture.

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Book Reviews



The American Church That Might Have Been: A History of the Consultation on Church Union. By Keith Watkins with Foreword by Michael Kinnamon. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014. Xviii + 244 pages.

In December 1960, shortly after John F. Kennedy was elected as the first Roman Catholic President of the United States, an event that brought to an end the Protestant political hegemony (at least at the Presidential level), Mainline Protestantism remained a powerful force in American life. In an age when Mainline Protestantism and the ecumenical movement has moved into the shadows of our culture, it might be difficult to imagine the power and prestige of that these denominations had in their grasp as a new decade began, but such was the case when the leader of the United Presbyterian Church and an Episcopal bishop announced their dream of a truly united church. The dream was for Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Methodists, and the United Church of Christ to unite as one church. For a moment in time, it seemed as if such a united church could emerge here in the United States.

This ecumenical moment took place on December 4, 1960, when the Stated Clerk of the United Presbyterian Church, Eugene Carson Blake, at the invitation of Episcopal Bishop James Pike, preached a sermon at San Francisco’s Grace Cathedral. In this sermon Blake laid out a vision of Christian unity that caught the imagination of the nation. Blake and Pike believed that the time was ripe for birthing a Protestant church that could stand tall and influence the nation and the world. There were, after all, models like the Church of South India, already in existence. In the minds of these founding figures, this new church would be catholic, reformed, and evangelical. Eventually nine denominations would join in this venture, and among them would be three African American Methodist denominations.

The story of the Consultation on Church Union (COCU) is an important one, but it is in danger of being forgotten. I occasionally hear younger clergy call for the unification of Mainline Protestantism, along much the same lines as COCU, yet they show little knowledge of this movement for unity. As time passes and the

memory of this effort fades, the story needs to be told. Keith Watkins, Professor Emeritus of Worship at Christian Theological Seminary, has taken on that mission, producing an in-depth history of the COCU.

This book should be of special interest to members and friends of AR&LW, for while COCU failed to create the church envisioned by Blake and Pike, the work done by the consultation had significant impact on the worship and liturgy of these churches. These included the Revised Common Lectionary and agreements on baptism and church membership.

As for COCU, while the vision was articulated in 1960, it was not until 1962 that the consultation finally got underway. It would continue in existence until 2002, when COCU evolved into Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC). During the forty years of COCU, representatives of participating churches gathered on a regular basis, including nearly annual plenary sessions. Those involved in this work explored points of agreement and disagreement on matters theological, liturgical, and structural.

Interestingly, the consultation came to agreement on a basic theological foundation early on, agreeing to ground their work in Scripture and the witness of the creeds. They found agreement on baptism, allowing for both infant and believer's baptism. There would be freedom in terms of form and understanding of baptism, though the participating denominations were to refrain from requiring rebaptism for those moving from one denomination to another. It took much longer to come to agreements on the Eucharist. Significantly, the participating churches could never agree on what constituted the ministry of the church. Episcopalians held tightly to the belief that the Episcopacy was not simply an administrative entity, but a sacred entity. At the other end, non-episcopal churches were not willing to accede to the requirement of being reordained by bishops in apostolic succession.

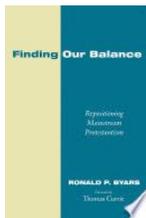
While early on it appeared that the merging of the churches would be accomplished by the end of the 1960s, by the end of the decade interest in actual union began to wane. Churches found themselves giving their attention to issues other than the ones that were the focus of the consultation, including the early signs of decline in membership and attendance. Despite the many distractions, the participating churches continued to forge ahead, hoping that the Plan of Union that was agreed upon in 1970 would receive support from the churches. That support, however, would never be forthcoming. With waning support for union, the churches began to look for ways to come together without moving toward full merger. By the 1980s the churches began speaking in terms of covenanting to live as one church, while keeping their separate identities intact. The hope was that memberships and ministries could be reconciled, even if churches continued to worship separately.

One of the most significant components of this work, which Watkins highlights, is the contribution made by the three historically black churches that were involved in the consultation. They brought in a dimension to the conversation that had rarely been considered in ecumenical conversations—and that was the issue of race in America's churches. It needs to be remembered that the original four original denominations, while differing in their polity and at points in their theology, were rather culturally homogeneous. The addition of the Disciples and United Evangelical Brethren didn't change that very much. The injection of race into the conversation also made the work of the Consultation more complex. The churches involved in the conversation were required to deal with the reality of racial injustice embedded in church structures. It also had to make sure that "the new church order its life so that people of color would be able to maintain the

dignity and freedom of action that they had enjoyed in their separated churches” (p. 188). In other words, the price of union for churches of color could not be willingness to be assimilated into a church defined by white values and experiences.

Despite the failure to fulfill the original vision, the COCU served to push Protestant denominations to consider ways to express Christian unity visibly and recognize each other’s ministries and sacraments as valid. It also lifted up the issue of race and the possibility of moving toward reconciliation. We may have a long way to go on all these issues, but we benefit today from these efforts, especially the contributions made to conversations about liturgy, preaching, and the sacraments.

This is an important book written with great care and passion by one who not only studied the movement, but participated in it. Watkins served on the Commission on Liturgy for many years, and brings that experience into the conversation. Therefore, this is both history and memoir, even if the more personal aspects are sublimated into the broader story. It is scholarly, but very accessible for readers willing to engage in the conversation. While AR&LW might be Reformed in its orientation, there is considerable overlap between it and the vision espoused by COCU. It might be the story of an American church that might have been, there is much to learn from the efforts undertaken by COCU that can inform our current conversations as we forge ahead in an increasingly complex and diverse nation, one that looks very different from the one that existed in 1960, when Blake and Pike shared their vision. Having a thoughtful guide is mandatory, and Watkins is just that needed guide.



Finding Our Balance: Repositioning Mainstream Protestantism. By Ronald P. Byars. Foreword by Thomas W. Currie. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015. Xiii + 124 pages.

It is no secret that mainstream Protestant denominations are struggling. We can see it in declining membership and attendance, the disappearance of younger generations from the churches, and in financial struggles of congregations and denominations. This reality has raised an important question of identity. Who are we? What do we stand for? What is the theological foundation for our faith as we live within an increasingly pluralistic context?

Ronald Byars, Professor Emeritus of Preaching and Worship at Union Presbyterian Seminary, seeks to "reposition" mainstream Protestantism. By that he means recovering our theological nerve. He's concerned that the embrace of Tillich's "Protestant Principle," which included a hermeneutic of suspicion, has called into question much historic doctrine and liturgical practice. This has undermined the churches’ ability to navigate a world in which they no longer have cultural hegemony. There is much to like here, as well as aspects that are troubling. At points he comes across as a theological curmudgeon, seeming to pine for a different era. At the same time, he wants us to reflect on our roots, and not be afraid of "orthodoxy." That is, a healthy faith is not one where “everything goes” theologically. Then there's the issue of liturgy. What is appropriate as an expression of worship?

Byars' book is divided into two parts. Part one focuses on authority (especially biblical and creedal) and the definition of orthodoxy for mainstream Protestantism. As to the former, he invites us to consider the nature of religious authority. How do we decide what is right and good? Then he takes us into a conversation about orthodoxy. By orthodoxy, he means that since Christianity is communal and not private (despite our current state of affairs), we should see some things as being settled. This is the role of the creeds, which define the church's theological boundaries. This is an issue that needs exploration among non-creedal communities, such as my own. Byars believes that boundaries are necessary, if they're not drawn too narrowly. In other words, theology matters. In his mind, the opposite of orthodoxy is "triviality."

With this foundation we move into part two, which deals primarily with liturgy and worship, along with attentiveness to the poor. Byars is concerned about what he calls "mid-American generic Protestant worship." He's concerned that without deep roots, we end up with banal, boring, trivial worship. We end up with calendars defined by secular holidays rather than the story of God's engagement with the universe. He speaks of preaching as being a sacramental act, which makes it more than a lecture on a religious topic or a moralistic diatribe. Preaching is intended to manifest Christ in the assembly. He counters the idea that ritual is bad, and that everything must be new and spontaneous to be of value. These are Enlightenment/utilitarian values, not spiritual ones. He's suggesting that the churches pay more attention to longstanding liturgies, rather than trying to come up with new and exciting alternatives. Personally, I like some creativity, but I get his point. We can be too cute in our desire for novelty, and miss the boat theologically. What he wants us to get is that form matters, because the form of the liturgy helps form God's people. With that in mind, he devotes a chapter to what happens on Sunday, reminding us of its importance, suggesting that both Word and sacrament are essential. Here he pushes back on the typical Protestant aversion to weekly communion (something I heartily agree with), while also suggesting that we pay attention to the wording of our Eucharistic liturgy, rooting it in tradition. He recognizes the importance of local inculturation, but is concerned that the form of the liturgy not get lost. My concern here is that I'm not sure he is as clear as he could be as to how this takes place. There is, it seems, a privileging of more European understandings of liturgy that are assumed rather than explicated.

Finally, in the concluding chapter, Byars makes clear the importance of caring for the poor. He uses as a vehicle a conversation about the offering and stewardship. He reminds us that in the early church the bringing of offerings was not to subscribe the budget but to provide for the poor. This is an intriguing chapter, both in its observation about stewardship and its emphasis on caring for the poor. While at times I found him to be a theological curmudgeon (even when I agreed with him), I found him in this concluding chapter to be prophetic. He even encourages direct action, or what some call community organizing, as an expression of worship. He challenges the typical application of the "Protestant Work Ethic," which he suggests has been unfortunately reworked to remove the Protestant part, so that the poor are blamed for their poverty, and the valuing of labor is not encouraged. Again, this is rooted in conversations about theology, about orthodoxy, about accountability.

As one who is part of a non-creedal community, I'm not sure Byars has all the answers. Some of what he suggests is not workable in my context. But we can attend to our theology, which in my case is rooted in Scripture. At least, that has been the foundation of our orthodoxy. For more progressive Christians, this might seem old hat and too restrictive, but sometimes we need to be called back to our roots. I believe that

this is what Byars wishes to do, even if we need to push on those boundaries he lays out, asking good questions about what it means to hear the polyvalent voices present in the church.

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AR&LW Regional Meetings, 2017

This past summer and fall AR&LW held three regional meetings organized around the theme “Challenges to Worship in a Post-Election Church.”

The first took place on June 11 and 12 at Zion Lutheran Church in Dallas. Together with the Church Music Institute and Brite Divinity School, AR&LW hosted the Rev. Dr. John Buchanan and Drs. Quentin and Mary Murrell Faulkner as featured speakers. They were joined by several worship leaders and workshop presenters. Among the topics engaged include “worship as subversive activity,” “how excellent worship/music forms us spiritually, creates community and prepares us for service,” and “the task of preaching in a difficult cultural environment.”

On August 13 and 14, Michael Brown convened a small group of pastors and a church musician at Calvin Presbyterian Church in Tigard, Oregon to explore together the question, “what is working in worship and what is hard work?”

The third and final meeting was held on October 3 at the Princeton Theological Seminary Library in Princeton, New Jersey. Co-conveners were the Rev. Drs. Gregg A. Mast and Fred R. Anderson. Dr. M. Craig Barnes, President of the seminary, welcomed the participants. The Rev. Dr. Micah McCreary, the Rev. Dr. Heidi Neumark, the Rev. Dr. David Davis, and Mr. Noel Werner gave brief plenary presentations intended to stimulate discussion among the participants about worship planning and leading for “faithful living in a time of crisis.”

The Hymn Society Annual Conference, 2017

The Hymn Society, in cooperation with AR&LW, held its annual conference at Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, July 16-20, on the campus of Conrad Grebel University. The theme was “Now Thank We All Our God: Celebrating Congregational Song Since the Reformation.” AR&LW members who contributed to the event include Paul Westermeyer, Emily Brink, and Bruce Taylor.

Dr. Westermeyer delivered a plenary address, “Music and the Reformation: An Ecumenical Achievement” (of which an abridged version appears in this newsletter).

Emily Brink and Antonio Alonso presented on “The Psalms: Bread of Heaven in the Wilderness of our Exodus.” They emphasized the singing of Psalms as an act of “radical hospitality.” They also recognized the need in worship for lament, to which the Psalms give expression. Brink and Alonso challenged the participants to compare the Psalms with their own congregational repertoire to see to what extent they are singing the truth about themselves. The Psalms provide a vocabulary for those worshippers who are in grief or distress. They enable us to pray and protest well. They also bridge traditions and thereby call the church to deeper unity.

Bruce Taylor planned and led the AR&LW Service of Word and Sacrament. There was good attendance, ecumenical participation, and helpful service provided by several AR&LW members. A generous offering was received for a local ministry that helps those trapped in poverty.

Rev. Taylor also conducted a workshop, "Using Congregational Song to Enrich the Sacraments." In this presentation, he drew from the AR&LW resource *Invitation to Christ-Extended* to show how the rich musical resources he shared would add voice and depth of understanding to the sacramental experience.

Finally, mention must be made of the Night Prayer services, which were based on three different Psalms, one per evening. There was good attendance, with a few of the Lovelace Scholars helping to provide leadership. These services were a wonderful way to end some very full days! I am thankful that I myself was able to contribute in such a manner.

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Holland, Michigan

From our Secretary/Treasurer

The AR&LW Annual Meeting was held telephonically on November 1. Elected to the Steering Committee were Michael Brown, replacing John Brown who resigned due to changes in his pastoral commitments, and Charlotte Kroeker for a second three-year term. Charlotte also was elected Presiding Member and Fred Anderson was elected Assistant Presiding Member. Other Committee members are: Christopher Dorn; Carol Hochhalter; John Rutzler; Paul Westermeyer; and Fritz West, Former Presiding Member.

The members also approved amending the Constitution and By-Laws of the Association to remove provisions which either are no longer relevant or have not been implemented, clarify the intent of provisions, and provide for operational flexibility.

Currently, there are 46 members of the Association (41 individuals – 3 institutions – 2 students), an increase from 41 at the end of last year. Our bank balances mostly in interest bearing accounts totaled \$11,951 as of October 31, 2017 compared to \$11,573 at December 31, 2016.

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Association for Reformed



& Liturgical Worship

The Editor of this newsletter welcomes submissions from its readers written in the spirit of the Mission Statement of the Association of Reformed & Liturgical Worship. The newsletter is intended for the reflective practitioner. That is, its readership is primarily pastors in broadly Reformed congregations who think seriously about worship with a view to leading in a manner consistent with the AR&LW mission. A range of topics is welcome. The newsletter has featured articles on baptism, liturgical leadership, Reformed worship in the contemporary North American context, history of Reformed worship, Reformed theology of sacraments and ecumenism, Reformed worship and justice, recent Reformed hymnals, and weekly celebration of the Table.

Submissions should run from 800 to 1400 words.

Issue Articles Due for Submission January 15-30, Newsletter Distribution- March

Issue Articles Due for Submission September 15-30, Newsletter Distribution- November

If you are interested in writing for us, please contact the newsletter editor at

christopherdorn@hotmail.com.

May your worship be done to the glory of God & the building up of God's people. The Editor

AR&LW exists to cultivate, practice and promote worship that is Trinitarian, ecumenical, incarnational and sacramental, offering a foretaste of the fullness of God's reign.

