

JULY

"Keep Doing That"

by Deaconess Student Hannah Koby

Hymn Suggestion

"When in Our Music God Is Glorified" (ELW #850, LSB #796)

Scripture

"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God... Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words." Romans 8:14-16, 26

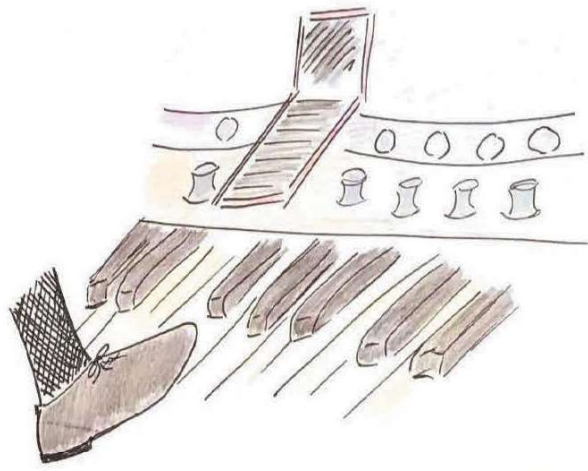
Devotion

Have you ever heard music or viewed art that strikes you in the depth of your being? Have you ever thought of that moment as being at prayer?

When I sit on the organ bench to share music with others, I hope to touch and connect with my listeners on that deep level. But for this to happen, I need to be deeply engaged myself. When I lose myself in what I am doing musically, it is a marvelous feeling. Some call this being engaged on every level of our being - emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual - "flow". I call it a Holy Moment.

In my college organ recital, it happened to me while performing Felix Mendelssohn's Sixth Sonata in which he used the melody "Vater unser im Himmelreich", the Lord's Prayer in German. Perhaps I played it more musically than the other pieces, but I

discovered that I'd not only connected especially deeply with myself, but the listeners, too. I think that in such moments, we are sharing a story beyond words. Afterwards, a mentor asked me, "What was different for you about playing that piece?" I hesitated, then finally said, "I was praying through the music". Looking at me intently, she said, "Keep doing that."



We each have stories. Some are too painful to share. At other times, we just don't know how to put our experiences into words, especially our encounters with the Holy One. Then sometimes, through listening to or playing music, our spirits call out, and we trust that God's Spirit of God cries out with us and we are heard in Heaven -- God with us.

Simone Weil wrote that *"prayer consists of attention. It is the orientation of all the attention of which the soul is capable toward God."* There is a reason why the Christian community is -- and always has been -- a singing and praying community. We make music because the story of our relationship with God is deeper than words, so we must pray and proclaim beyond words, too. Through praying and singing, we are connected with Christians across time and space, sharing the story of God's work in our world.

During the isolation of recent years, praying and singing – in our own spaces and yet together at 'Virtual worship' – we've been reminded that time and space cannot separate us from God's love which calls and re-forms us in every age anew. However you pray – with or without words – "keep doing that".

Questions for Reflection & Discussion

- In what ways does your community pray?
- How does it connect you with God and with one another?
- What do you do with all your being? Could that be prayer?

Prayer

Our Father in heaven, we thank you for calling us to be your children and to be part of your story. Teach us to use our unique gifts to pray to you and to connect and share your story with those around us – even when words fail. Amen.

About the Author

Hannah Koby is a deaconess student and a church musician currently on internship with the ELCA Wittenberg Center in partnership with the LWF Center Wittenberg (Lutheran World Federation) in Lutherstadt Wittenberg, Germany.