

Resources:

Books on Worship and Music

- *White Soul: Country Music, the Church, and Working Americans* by Tex Sample
- *ReKindling Your Music Ministry* by Stacey Hood
- *The Praise and Worship Team Instant Tune-Up* by Doug & Tami Flather
- *The United Methodist Music and Worship Planner*
- *Choosing Contemporary Music: Seasonal, Topical, Lectionary Indexes* compiled by Terri Bocklund McLean & Rob Glover

Hymnals & Traditional Collections

- *The United Methodist Hymnal* (1989) – and supplements
- *The Faith We Sing* (2000)– Singers Edition, Simplified Edition, Guitar Edition, and Worship Planning Edition
- *Upper Room Worship Book* (2006)
- *Hymns for the Family of God* – non-denominational (1976)
- *Chalice Hymnal* – Disciples of Christ (1995)
- *How Sweet the Sound: Hymns & Choruses with Guitar Chords* – keyed to UM Hymnal (Abingdon Press: 1998)
- don't ignore global, ethnic and non-English hymnals, as they have wonderful music that is great to learn.

Praise & Contemporary Collections

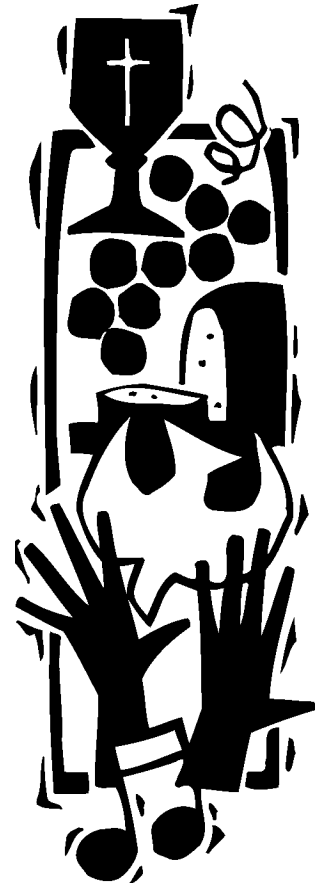
- *The Praise & Worship Fake Book* – Hal Leonard Co.
- *Maranatha! Praise Chorus Book* – the “Red Book” (1993)
- *Maranatha! Praise Hymns and Choruses Book* – the “Green Book” (1997)
- *Integrity's iWorship* – Songbook, CD-ROM & CD collections

Electronic resources for music

- *UMC Hymnal CD Accompaniment Edition* - \$350
- www.ehymnal.com – free downloads with pay upgrades
- The Digital Hymnal device (Gulbransen) – \$1300-\$1500
- www.integritymusic.com – iworship (DVD or MPEG) contemporary worship music videos for use in congregational singing in churches
- www.ccli.com - Christian Copyright Licensing for using new music and movies in worship and SongSelect music collection

Sweet & Sour

Hitting the right note in worship music



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Music has the power to amplify experiences. When the music is just right, our hearts are lifted beyond the words, beyond the image, into a richer experience. This is why worship music is so important, and why we have to take so much care in its selection and planning. Worship music includes congregational singing, choral music, praise bands, organ pieces, soloists, recorded music, and all the various ways music is incorporated into worship.

What is the role of music in worship?

Worship is about a real encounter between worshippers and God. Worship music supports this encounter. Worship music is neither casual "jamming" nor rigid performance, because for both the focus is on the musicians themselves, not on God. In his "Directions for Singing" that preface many Methodist hymnals, John Wesley writes, "Above all sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing him more than yourself, or any other creature."

Take a couple of moments to think about the role of music in your congregation. Answer these questions with you worship leaders:

- How much time in worship do we devote to music (singing, organ, choral, special, etc...)? How does that compare to our time spent in preaching, praying, or announcements?
- How satisfied are we with the quality of our worship music?
- How do guests and visitors experience our music?
- How are we preparing and planning music for worship? How much time do our worship leaders spend on it? How are we investing in our worship leaders' training and spiritual lives?
- How often are we experiencing the presence of God during worship? What part is music playing in this experience?

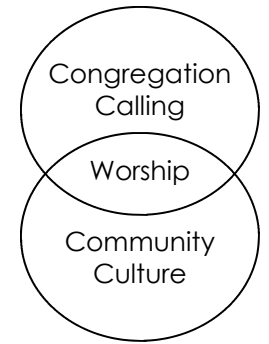
What kind of music should we have?

There is nothing morally, theologically or artistically superior about one style of music over another. All are born out of God's creative gifts alive in a people, a time and a culture. In choosing music for worship, the key question is not style, but is: *What music will best support a real encounter with God for those we serve?*

Engaging worship that supports this real encounter happens at the intersection of the congregation's calling and the community's culture. God has a specific calling for each congregation's ministry. This calling is discerned through prayerful exploration of

the gifts of the congregation's people, their traditions and the mission values of the congregation. The community culture is informed by the kinds of people who live there, their customs, and the needs of their social condition.

The best music for worship speaks in the indigenous language and culture of the people that the church is called by God to serve. It is never just about the tastes of the leaders or the congregation's current members. It always seeks to engage the Gospel into the community's culture, without compromising Christ's radical message of grace and justice.



How do we plan for good music?

People – find and invest in the right people

Music leadership is a critical part of your church's worship leadership team. In addition to musicality, music leadership should have good team skills, strong faith, a desire to make and grow disciples through music ministries, and sensitivity to your community's culture. Sometimes it can be hard to find music leadership, so you might need to invest in musical training for people in your congregation or you might need to begin to evangelize among musicians in your area.

Playing – cultivate a climate of learning and enjoying music

Organize your music ministries to allow sufficient time for playing music together and practicing. Minimal rehearsal time that is rushed and disorganized will significantly diminish worship music. All of the worship leaders should learn and sing the congregational singing pieces for each service. Allow time for relationship building and fun. It's not called "playing music" by accident.

Prayer – the Holy Spirit is the greatest worship leader

Adopt a discipline among your worship and music leaders that will support their personal spiritual development. If your music leaders aren't connected to God, it will be difficult for them to help others encounter God during worship. Surround your worship planning with prayer, and enlist the entire congregation in interceding for your music and worship leaders. Seek God's guidance in planning worship music, and allow space for the Holy Spirit to work in you.