WHAT MAKES ME SING
MUSIC SUNDAY
Rev. R. Jeffrey Fisher

Children’s Message:
Pastor Jeff speaks:

Good morning everyone. It’s nice to have you up here on this beautiful day. How wonderful. Come on up. Let’s talk a little bit about music and praise today. God invites us to praise Him at all times. And we do that a lot of times musically. How many times a day do you think you listen to music? Much? How many of you sing? Some of you sing. Do you sing in the shower? Do you sing in the car? Well, God doesn’t ask that we’re good at it. He just asks us to do it! Sometimes we’re just invited to praise Him. Do any of you feel happy when you sing? For a lot of us music is attached to a lot of memories. There are some songs that take us to certain events in our life…parties and celebrations. Sometimes even the sad events. They remind us, hopefully, of God’s presence in our life.

How many of you have happy feet and want to dance? I would dance right now, but there’s not enough room. I love to dance. But the fun thing, sometimes even in church, don’t you feel like you want to stomp your foot because some music lends itself to those kinds of things.

Music, all forms of music, is out there for us. And a lot of it comes from a whole host of instruments. These are just the more formal instruments in our world. We have…do you know the four classes? We have brass, strings, woodwinds, (boy yells percussion!) You got it, percussion. If we were going around the world, there’s all kinds, probably thousands, of different musical instruments that people use to bring joy into their lives and to bring joy to God as we praise Him.

How many of you have a headset or earbuds or something so you can hear music? I kind of thought you youngsters would have that. Some of our older folks like to do that because we like to drown out and hear with clarity the music we love.
You know people throughout the ages have always enjoyed listening to music. A long time ago before they had hearing aid devices, sometimes when we lose all our hearing... Do any of you still have one of these? Laughter! Probably not. It’s like a funnel and when you speak in to it, the noise will go right in to your ear so you can listen to it. So there’s all kinds of ways because we don’t want to lose the ability to listen to music and to listen to others.

I’m going to show you some other things of antiquity. How many of you know what this might be? It’s a radio. My father always said he couldn’t sing but he could really play the radio quite well.

I want to go back another distance further. What’s that? No, that’s not a Frisbee! Laughter! It’s a record. And they came in 45 which was small, then 33 and 78. People a long time ago, right after the dinosaurs, had these things.

We would set them on a turntable and now this is a turntable like my grandfather had. It also had a horn to project the sound but there are a lot of more modern things. People want to hear music.

And after the records came these things. Do you know what they are? They’re cassettes!

Now in your generation or younger, perhaps, these look like speakers but they’re iPods.

You can put lots of music on them not only for our glory but we celebrate God. We like to hear music; we like to dance; we like to shout out; we like to enjoy the blessings from God.
All through the Psalms of which there are 150, the Psalmist will sing praise. Sometimes in trouble and sadness. Other times just praise to God for the good. “I will sing to the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.”

The psalms would tell us sometimes we look to the mountains. And how can you not look at that beautiful photo and say “Praise God”. It is so beautiful. You have the plains and the snows.

You have the mountains.

Sometimes you can be out on a mountaintop. That would be pretty neat to be up there. Wouldn’t it? And you look out over a valley. This young woman had to hike way up there in the mountains to this very scary point. Looking out over the valley and you shout your praise. At Christmastime you sing a song “Go Tell It to the Mountains”.

Sometimes we’re down in the plains. And even in the plains, we sing praise to almighty God. Even in the desert parts of our life where it’s dry.

But something happens when we hear music because when we listen to the right music, our mind is all happy. How about that?

Because music feeds our soul and music allows us to sing. Even if we don’t sing well, we can still sing.
You can start singing when you’re a little boy or girl.

And you can sing up to this man, Tony Bennet, in a song he sang with Lady Gaga. He is 92! Yes, that’s pretty frightening. Isn’t it.

And a lot of the animals like to make noise, too. Do your animals play and sing?

And sometimes when you are out on the ocean, have you ever been out on the ocean and heard the sea lions barking at each other?

And the birds make music and they want to share with one another. Because music is a gift.

Again, “I will sing to the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.”

I’m going to ask you to stand with me and we’re going to try a new song right now. It’s called “He Has Made Me Glad”. And I’m going to see, not singing at least, but if you can clap your hands. And we’re going to ask the folks out there to join us. So let’s do that.

Thank you for coming up today and you have a blessed week.
Message: 
Testimony by Marti Derr:
I have loved music since I was just a little girl. I remember when I was about six years old, my dad was preaching at a bunch of different churches during the summer. He would preach about the value of family and family devotions, and then he would have me sing “Oh how I love Jesus.” It all went well until he was in a church of about 1,000 people and I kind of got stage fright at that place!

I went on to participate in choir at church, and in Varsity Singers in high school. When I was a student at Messiah College I was part of a music ministry team that traveled every weekend to perform in churches on behalf of the college. Then everything went quiet for a while. Marriage, having children, being a missionary in London for 8 years. I did not get involved again in any regular music until a few years ago when I joined the choir here at Calvary. This spring I had the chance to sing as part of a Choral group with the Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra.

Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life. ~Berthold Auerbach

I believe from a young age music has been clearing away the dust from my soul. When words could not reach me, music could. When words could not soothe me, music has. Music has been a friend for me. I have been raised with great hymns of the church and know many of them by heart. Although those would be Presbyterian hymns, not so much the Methodist hymns. But so many of those words live with me and bring comfort.

From “And Can it Be?” God loves us enough to come live among us. He left His Father’s throne above—So free, so infinite His grace—Emptied Himself of all but love, And bled for Adam’s helpless race:’Tis mercy all, immense and free, For, O my God, it found out me!

From “Great is thy Faithfulness” God is faithful ~ as steady as the sun, moon, and stars. Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest-Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,Join with all nature in manifold witness To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

From “the Love of God” We cannot adequately describe the depth of God’s love for us. Could we with ink the ocean fill. And were the
skies of parchment made Were every stalk on earth a quill
And every man a scribe by trade To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry Nor could the scroll contain the whole
Though stretched from sky to sky

**Precious Lord Take my Hand** ~ God carries us through the storms of life and will lead us home. Precious Lord, take my hand
Lead me on, let me stand I'm tired, I'm weak, I'm alone. Through the storm, through the night. Lead me on to the light
Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home

**Stars Below** ~ one of the songs that I want at my funeral.
Sometimes my mind can wander beneath the night’s display
Lost in the beauty that my Lord has made
I imagine angels gathered around the master’s feet
Below them lies all space and time where constellations meet
And the beauty of the heavens, diamonds flung across the night
Will one day be a floor for me, forever shining bright.
I’ll dance on stars below, and walk down streets of gold
It will take at least a million years, just to see how far they go.
Forever and ever dancing, on stars below.

Now there are special moments that come to all our lives,
To give us glimpses of the other side.
So listen with your heart now, for only hearts can hear
The glorious sound of heaven’s song that draws us ever near.
And soon the bright & morning star will split the Easter sky.
Those who’ve kept the faith on wings of grace will finally start to fly.
We’ll dance on stars below, and walk down street of gold
It will take at least a million years, just to see how far they go.
Forever and ever dancing, on stars below.

**Testimony by Dennis Helsel:**

Good morning!
I am Calvary’s version of Don Rickles.

The Choir Director, Deb Benedict, has asked several of the choir members to share “Why we sing in the choir.” My answers may not reflect the views of management!

First-I never have to worry about what to wear. Second-I have excellent seats and a reserved seat for all major holidays. Third-From my seat I can gawk, smile, ignore, guess who’s sleeping and otherwise enjoy the rest of the congregation. Fourth-The pastor is nearly always looking the other way. Lastly-My lovely wife encouraged me!!!!

Seriously,

I joined the choir to help fulfill the calling of Psalm 47:6 “Sing praises to God, sing praises to our King, sing praises.”

Let me share how this scripture has directed me. Before coming to Calvary I often figured ways for the choir director to pay me not to sing. Deb made it clear from day one, she would not! I had to make a decision and make it fast. And here is what I came up with:

As a new choir member, choir was a great way to make new friends.

Choir is therapy. No matter how I felt arriving at choir practice, I left feeling better.

I love to sing; however, God did not bless me with a great voice or musical inclination just a loud, obnoxious one. The choir ac-
The choir helps me understand better scripture passages, Jesus and God through weekly practices involving insight into the words of the song.

The choir encourages others through song.

Finally, I like to see people smile and you know the choir makes people smile.

In closing, I leave you with this thought: In the 90’s, Kirk Franklin and his group, The Family, produced and recorded one of their very first hits, “The reason Why I Sing!” I’ll share with you the very simple yet meaningful chorus:

“I sing because I’m happy
I sing because I’m free
His eyes are on the sparrow
That’s the reason why I sing
Glory Hallelujah
You’re the reason why I sing”

COME JOIN THE FUN!!

Testimony by Linda Hoffman:

My Name is Linda Hoffman and I am an alto in the Chancel Choir. I began singing when I was in elementary school for the School chorus as well as the Children’s Choir in my church. I continued singing through high school in choruses and joined the adult choir in the church as a teenager. Since I lived in the country and did not drive yet when I joined the adult choir, my aunt would pick me up and bring me home for our Wednesday evening rehearsals. When I was a student at Messiah College, I sang in a choral group as well as the community Oratorio Society.

I joined the Chancel Choir of Calvary Church over 25 years ago. Why do I continue to sing? I love music, I love to sing within a group but not as a soloist. I also feel the friendships I have formed within this choir are a special bond. We get to sing, laugh and share our stories of daily happenings among friends.

At our Wednesday rehearsals the choir not only practices our music selections but we also share our praises and our prayer concerns and close the evening in prayer. Sometimes I am called upon to pray and one of the things I occasionally include in my prayer is for God to protect the choir members as we travel to and from church. This is very important to me because of one evening when I was a teen and my aunt was driving me home from choir rehearsal. Fortunately on that
particular evening there were at least 2 other teens in the car because a thick fog had enveloped the countryside and we could not see farther than a foot in front of the car. One stretch of the 2 mile distance to my home was very flat and open farmland. One of the teens in the car hung his head out of the car window to direct my aunt where to drive. It was the scariest night and I was so thankful when I was home as well as my aunt and the other teens. So praying for our safety is very important to me.

So why do I sing……

The family this choir has formed
The praises we sing to our God
The care we share among each other.

If you have been given a gift of singing, please join us.

Testimony by Jay Grubb:
Good Morning! My name is Jay Grubb. I have been attending Calvary since about 1974, and I became a member of the Church in 1976, on a Confession of Faith. This is My Story.

I grew up in the Sixties. I lived in West Hanover Township, and like Pastor Jeff, I spent a lot of time working on farms and helping my Dad doing construction work. While in school, I never participated in any kind of organized singing that I can remember. My music teacher at West Hanover Elementary was Mrs. Lutz, and at Lower Paxton Junior High was Miss Lauterbach. All I can remember about them is what they looked like and Miss Lauterbach telling me that I was a baritone.

I listened to WSBA radio and all they played was the Good Stuff! I enjoyed singing along. I think that my favorite song was a Bobby Rydell song, *Wildwood Days*. I still sing that one today, once in a while. Don’t worry, I won’t sing it now!! I do not have a very good voice, and I know it.

Our children were born in the late Seventies, and they participated in the Children’s Choirs here at Calvary. Me, it never crossed my mind to join the choir. I had no singing background at all. I enjoyed the choral anthems, and the soloists such as Dick Bair, Ada Mae Saxton, and Byron Brought. I must say that I did enjoy singing to the girls at bedtime though.

Then in 1983, one day my throat became scratchy, I had difficulty talk-
ing, eating, and drinking. I went to the throat specialist and he told me that my right vocal cord was paralyzed, reason Unknown, and nothing could be done. The possibilities of aspiration of food or of having a tracheotomy still exist. It took several years before I could speak without coughing, or even sing a simple hymn. So since 1983, my right vocal cord has been paralyzed. No way I could ever sing in a choir, or even try to sing Wildwood Days.

Kelley started ringing handbells in 1987. I would take her to practice, and Linda Lee, the Director, quickly recruited me to be an “extra”. That is how I got started in Bells.

Then on January 4, 1989, at 12:10pm, I was at the ATM at the bank at 7th and Boas, and I had a strange feeling. The next thing I remember was lying in the ER at Harrisburg Hospital. I had suffered a seizure, the grand mal kind. I had 13 stitches in the back of my head, some broken teeth, gashes in both lips, and stitches to put my tongue back together. Because of the tongue injury, my speech was affected.

I surrendered my Driver’s License for 14 months and just about lost all of my self-confidence. I dreaded playing bells in front of you. I was so worried that I might have a seizure in front of you, and how embarrassing that would be. So when it was time to ring, when the Bell Choir would stand up, I would say “Lord Let My Bells Ring, So That They Sing For You.” My knees would knock, kind of like driving over rumble strips. Members of the congregation helped me a lot during this difficult time, not only with rides, but more importantly with kind words, words of support, and words of encouragement.

My confidence returned in the mid Nineties, and I continued to ring Bells, but because of the paralyzed vocal cord, group singing was not on my radar.

About 4 years ago I was thinking about stopping handbells. I was getting into my mid Sixties, the music seemed more difficult, faster tempos, trickier syncopation, and the bells seemed heavier. Deb had invited me to try the Choir, just to see how it went. So I decided to try it one time, and I discovered that I liked it!!
Right around the same time, Pastor Ron gave what I call The First Do Something sermon. That was when he introduced the “Do Something” sign the first time. So I remember it as the “First Do Something” sermon. At the end of the service when he was standing there holding the sign, I realized that he was talking to me and that I needed to do something. You see, my spiritual compass was wavering, it wasn’t always steady. So while I was standing during the closing hymn, I prayed:

Dear Lord,
I need to do better,
I can do better,
And I am going to do better to serve you, starting right now.

Right there I decided that I was going to keep ringing bells and that I was going to become a “Regular” with the Choir. I decided that all of that baggage that I was carrying around about my vocal cord and nervousness about having a seizure – well I turned it over to the Lord. It is not like at the airport where they have that fifty pound restriction, the Lord will take it all, no questions! It was that easy! So if you are carrying around some baggage like I was, lighten the load, and take it to the Lord. If you know someone who is experiencing a similar struggle, I will be glad to talk with them.

Choir practice is a mid-week pick-me-up. Cindy and Deb and all of the members welcomed me. We are fortunate to have two professional musicians. No one cares that I am not a virtuoso. No one cares that my singing resume is blank. No one cares that I only have one vocal cord that works. No one cares that I have a seizure disorder. They were glad I came. I sat next to Jordan Thompson at the first rehearsal and cautioned him that he was next to a 64 year old rookie. He laughed and said “You will be fine!” At the end of the first rehearsal, Marilyn Perry – I did not even know her name at the time – came up to me and said “Thank you for bringing your voice”.

Each rehearsal is completely organized, no wasted time. I never thought that I would be part of a cantata, but they are fantastic. Bobby Rydell may not like it, but I find myself singing choir anthems rather than that Sixties music. I have a list of my Top Ten anthems. I often sing anthems while I am feeding the animals. The goats seem to enjoy “Joy On The Mountain”! But the most special part of each rehearsal is this. Unless you have been there, it is something that you really can’t fully appreciate. Each rehearsal is actually a worship service. Everything is done for the glory of God. At the end of rehearsal, we are all
invited to share any Joys or Prayer Concerns that we may have or maybe some special need that you might have. Then we close with a prayer. Choir has changed my life.

That is my friend Lillie. She is the lone on the left. And here is a cardboard sign I made. I keep it stuck in a crack in a board in the barn. On the front side it says “Do Something”, on the back side it says “Thank You”. Every time I go in the barn to feed the animals I look at that sign and think of my commitment to the Lord. It reminds me that just like the animals need daily care, I need to care for my spiritual condition every day.

A couple years ago I replaced some of the barn floor. On one section I painted the finished floor white and then painted a compass needle. I walk in that door twice a day, every day. I always look at that compass needle, for it serves to remind me that my spiritual commitment needs to be steady.

So if you like to sing, come to choir practice. Don’t wait as long as I did. Maybe we could sing a duet some time!

Ringing and singing, two great ways to do something to serve the Lord.

Here is the most important thing about my story: God is a God of Love. There is no way that He could Love us any more than He does. And there is no way that He would Love us any less.

Someday, I will put my bells down for the last time. And some day I will close my choir book for the last time. And when it happens it will be on His terms. The Lord will tell me when to do that, He will let me know.

This is the other side of the cardboard sign. And these are eggs from Roger and Sherry Krebs’ chickens. I am renting them right now and even the chickens are able to do something. Thank you!

**Benediction:**
All joined in Singing, *God Be With You till We Meet Again.*