



Wisconsin Gossellers

April 2019 Newsletter

Whose Body? Our Body!

Written by Phiwa Langeni

But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love. - Ephesians 4:15-16

In an effort to unite people, Paul likens differences to different parts of a body. I love how he doesn't tell arms to be legs, or hands to be ears, or teeth to be toes. We cannot erase the differences between veins and arteries, even though they're similar. And if we require a heart to be a brain, we put ourselves in grave danger. Likewise, if we erase the HIV+ parts or the disabled parts or the homeless parts of Christ's Body, we cause trauma to the whole Body.

If it's true that we're one Body, then we're called not only to acknowledge the Body's many parts but also to honor the unique expressions of those Body parts. What if the Body of Christ unapologetically cared for its mentally-ill parts and youthful parts and its kinky parts and its rural parts and its non-binary parts and its parts of every language (spoken or signed)?

Whatever your color, race, ethnicity, and tribe may be, every ligament, bone, organ, and cell of your being is important to the Body's existence—to our shared existence. We cannot be whole and healthy if you are not whole and well and included as an indispensable part of this, Our One Body.

Prayer

Remind us, loving God, that umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu—we can only realize the fullness of our personhood with and through others. Amen.

GOD'S "PHONE" NUMBER

**Hello God, I called tonight
To talk a little while
I need a friend who'll listen
To my anxiety and trial.**

**You see, I can't quite make it
Through a day just on my own...
I need your love to guide me,
So I'll never feel alone.**

**I want to ask you please to keep,
My family safe and sound.
Come & fill their lives with confidence
For whatever fate they're bound.**

**Give me faith, dear God, to face
Each hour throughout the day,
And not to worry over things
I can't change in any way.**

**I thank you God, for being home
And listening to my call,
For giving me such good advice
When I stumble and fall.. !!!!!!!**

**Your number, God, is the only one
That answers every time.
I never get a busy signal,
Never had to pay a dime.**

**So thank you, God, for listening
To my troubles and my sorrow.
Good night, God, I love You, too,
And I'll call again tomorrow!**

**P.S. Please bless all my friends
and family too.**



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Strategies for Memorizing Music

Have you ever stressed about memorizing music? Does the very word “memorize” raise your blood pressure? Thankfully, music educators and psychologists know a lot about how memory works. For example, increasing short-term memory is very hard; remember cramming for tests? Long-term memory is different. “Barring disease or brain damage, everyone’s long-term memory capacity is unlimited.” So the question isn’t “*Can I memorize my part?*” but rather “*How do I get my part into long-term memory?*”

1. Forget “muscle memory.” It’s not memory at all. It’s habit—*mindless* repetition. When you rely on habit, you use only a very primitive part of the brain. Even worse, you’re more likely to forget or be thrown off if anything changes.
2. Repetition. Sing along to the CDs regularly. To make this method *more* effective, break the music into short sections, i.e. only as much as you can sing from short-term memory after *one look*. When that’s locked, add another 2-4 measures.
3. Use active recall to engage your brain. Notice how words—or notes—fit together. In “Steal Away,” I could never recall if “He calls me by the lightning” comes before or after “He calls me by the thunder.” Then I realized that during a storm, we SEE the flash of lightning before we HEAR the thunder.
4. “Backward chunking.” Start with learning the last 4 measures of the song. Then work backwards, a chunk at a time. No idea why this works, but it does! J
5. Sleep. Do your “reps” (strategy #2) to get a bit of music into short-term memory then let your sleeping brain move that into long-term memory. Working on small chunks of music for just 10-15 minutes/day is more effective than cramming. And yes, naps count! Learn a few lines, take a nap, then learn a little more.

During rehearsal:

6. Memorize *as you learn* the music, not *after*. Put the paper down early & often.
7. Notice the song’s structure. Maybe your part has 3 phrases that start low and end high, and then it flips. Draw arrows in the music to note this; that’s active learning.
8. Get physical! If a phrase repeats 5 times, tick the repetitions off on your fingers.
9. Identify & engage the emotional energy. “The first three bars are calming, then there’s a powerful section, and last comes the happy bit.”

Resources:

Tracy Cowden , “This and That” *American Music Teacher* Feb/Mar 2014, 52-52.

Jane Ginsborg. “Managing Music Performance Anxiety Memorization Strategies For Instrumental Musicians And Singers.” *American Music Teacher* Feb/Mar 2019, 16-18.

Brian Jenkins, “How to Memorize Music 5 Times Faster,” YourMusicLessons Blog, Oct 24, 2014

<https://yourmusiclessons.com/blog/how-to-memorize-music-5-times-faster/>



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Community Care is Self-Care

Written by **Chris Davies**

And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. - Hebrews 10:24-25

The other week, I hit my limit. With my personal life spinning out, my political engagement seeming overwhelming, and my work load steadily increasing, I started spiraling out. I reached out to another queer doing work of anti-racism and community engagement saying that I didn't know what to do, and I was stuck. "Have you tried coloring?" they asked. "Write out all your stuff!"

So I did. I drew a tiny figure of myself and a big cloud full of all the negative self-talk and overwhelming trauma that surrounds what it means to be attentive to the state of the world, today.

But then, in the middle of coloring, I got a text from another queer in the movement, who is advocating for the transgender community and their right to exist in public spaces, asking for prayers because she was overwhelmed. I stopped what I was doing and wrote out a prayer for her.

My art then shifted into a testimony of survival and the care of my community. I remembered that we can't do this alone and we must ask for help. That care for our communities *is* self-care. We're intimately connected, one to the other, and God is the energetic thread of love that binds us together. We meet each other where we are—sometimes in the shit and the muck and the mire—and love each other into remembering who we are and Whose we are.

Someone was there when I needed help and love and prayers, and I can be there when someone else needs help and love and prayers ... and we are able to roll up our sleeves and get back to work, for the sake of the world we vision with God.

Prayer

God of our ancestors, give us the words to ask for help when we need it. Give us the strength to hold each other in the work. And infuse our relationships with your love that surpasses all things, so that we may together build the world that you imagine for us. In your name, Amen.



Mission Statement: To bridge cultural divides and touch souls through the transformative power of gospel music

Vision Statement: A world where God's love triumphs over that which divides us.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Lunch by</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Thur Apr 25	7pm concert by Lakeland-UWS Chamber Orchestra	First Congregational UCC 310 Bluff Avenue Sheboygan, WI 53081	n/a	Lakeland-UWS chamber orchestra concert "When Toys Come Alive,"
Sat May 11	10am-3pm	Congregational UCC 1511 Nicolet Blvd Neenah, WI 54956	Altos	Rehearsal
Sat Jun 9	10am-3pm 3pm concert?	Olivet UCC 313 W Prairie St, Columbus, WI 53925	men	Rehearsal And Concert?
June 24- July 12	Updates via email	Germany	N/A	Updates via email
Sun Aug 18	9am warmup 10am Service 11:30am Picnic	Folk Song Farm (Faith UCC picnic) 4811 Pioneer Rd., Richfield, WI	Faith UCC	Worship service & family day = invite your family!
Fri Sept 13 - Sat Sept 14	7pm-9pm? 10am-3pm?	Pilgrim Center Spring Grove Rd, Ripon, WI 54971	Pilgrim Center	Rehearsal And Reunion
Sat Oct 12	10am-3pm rehearsal 3pm concert?	First Congregational UCC 1405 State Road 67 Plymouth, WI 53073	sopranos	Rehearsal And Concert?
Sat Nov 9	10am-3pm	Congregational UCC 1511 Nicolet Blvd Neenah, WI 54956	altos	Rehearsal

? = still tentative and could change. Stay tuned! Will be updated at a later date or via email.