

“Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!”

Psalm 150:3-6

We celebrate Christmas once a year, but God’s gift of salvation is for every day. This article reminds us of praising God long past December.

Rend Collective Concert

By Will Van Wyngarden

I have long been a fan of Rend Collective, the praise band from Northern Ireland. From the first time I heard “My Lighthouse” several years ago, I have been hooked on their infectious tunes, joyful singing, inspired lyrics, and eclectic choice of instruments.

I had always wanted to see them live, and the opportunity came recently. On November 3 they were in Des Moines at Grace Church so I had to pack the family in the car to attend their concert.

The energy was palpable from the first song. They had the crowd on their feet, and it was really hard to stay still. The song was new to me, but I caught on quick to “Life is Beautiful”. The lyrics are simple, yet set the theme for the night:

I will not waste this day
You’ve made,
I will be glad.
Rejoice, rejoice.
In the sunshine, in the sorrow,
Oh, my soul, rejoice!



The energy didn’t stop all concert. We were on our feet throughout, singing, jumping, and praising God! What a glorious thing when the joy of a large group of Christians spills out, uncontainable! There was a mix of unfamiliar as well as familiar songs, such as “Rescuer”, “You Will Never Run” (complete with the band in panda heads!), “Counting Every Blessing,” and “Build Your Kingdom Here.”

While there was no shortage of great music and vibrancy, there was also no shortage of the Gospel. The date was a part of their “Good News” tour, and they made it a point to share that good news whenever they could. Lead singer/guitarist/emcee Chris Llewellyn did a great job of interspersing the message in between songs. He and percussionist Gareth Gilkeson also delivered extended “messages,” mixing in some

humor with the plain delivery of the good news they were singing about, that there is a Rescuer who can deliver us from condemnation.

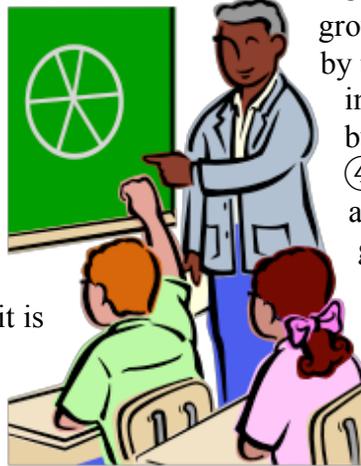
I would be remiss if I didn’t speak a little to their Irish folk band style. I was going to try to keep track of all the instruments I saw, but eventually gave up. At different points during the evening there were

acoustic and electric guitars, bass guitar, piano, standard drum kit, fiddle, an accordion, trash cans, dobro, a “Jingling Johnny” (which you will just have to

Google), some homemade instruments, as well as many others I might have missed in the chaos. Definitely unique!

I missed one instrument in the above list, as well as missing one popular song a few paragraphs above. They closed with “You Will Never Run,” and then left the stage. Of course, the crowd was still on its feet, cheering for an encore. After a few minutes, the once raucous band quietly made their way back on stage, and Llewellyn started playing “My Lighthouse” on the ukulele. It was a really awesome way to end the evening as the band played a subdued back-up to the crowd as we all sang their most famous song together. Truly memorable!

I recommend any of you to take the opportunity to go see this band and experience what it is like for yourself. If they are anywhere close, you will probably see me there too!



Pastor's Pen

By Pastor Paul Bradford

Dear Pella II Congregation,

I want to begin this article by thanking the congregation of Pella II for the love that you have shown to Tammy and me. Over the past 4 ½ months we've received welcome cards, anniversary cards, Christmas cards, gifts, food, cookies, love, practical acts of service, and gratitude. We love our new congregation, and we love our new community. You have made us feel very welcomed, and we are excited about the months and years ahead.

In this and future issues of the *Pella II Newsletter*, I'd like to discuss the five core purposes of the church.

There are an estimated 37 million churches in the world, Pella II is one of those congregations. While each church is unique, we all serve the same Lord, we share one faith, we are members of one eternal family, and we have the same core purposes until Jesus comes again. In brief, we are called

- ① to reach people for Jesus (*evangelism*),
- ② to help believers grow towards maturity in Christ, knowing and being firmly grounded in God's Word, and walking by the Spirit (*discipleship*),
- ③ to be involved in using our gifts to serve and build up the body of Christ (*ministry*),
- ④ to love, encourage, and support one another (*community*), and
- ⑤ to glorify and seek God (*worship*). All of these must be wrapped in *prayer*, for apart from the Lord we can do nothing. None of these are optional in a healthy local congregation. Each purpose, as it is pursued, strengthens every other purpose, and the absence of any one of these weakens all the others.

Let's take a moment to discuss *community*. Speaking of the early church, Acts 2:42 says, “They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” The Greek word translated “fellowship” is *koinonia*. The root of that word, *koinos*, means “common” or “something shared collectively” – it's where we get our word “coin” from – because a coin is a commonly shared currency.

So *koinonia* refers to sharing life together. While *koinonia* includes fellowship time after church and church picnics, it's a whole lot more than that! *Koinonia* is walking side

by side, encouraging one another, uplifting one another, loving one another, and being authentic.

1 John 1:6-9 says, “If we claim to have fellowship (*koinonia*) with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship (*koinonia*) with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

If we hide our struggles and pretend to be without sin, we can’t have true community. True *koinonia* requires opening our hearts and lives to one another so we can encourage, exhort, uphold, and love one another. True community includes meeting in small groups and one on one so that authenticity and encouragement can truly happen. It includes pulling together to serve and help when people have a need. It includes ministering and serving side by side as a team.

Children’s Program



Heavenly Father, we thank you that many have been encouraged and cared for through the community at Pella II. We asked that, more and more, we might be a community known for our authenticity, encouragement, service and love for one another. Amen!

Christmas Worship

On December 16, Pella II had a special day of Christmas worship. The morning service included the children’s Christmas program with our annual candlelight service in the evening.

We thank everyone who participated in these services in various ways. The following pictures provided by Glenda Van Woerkom and Melissa Tukker show some of these times of praise. We thank them for allowing us to remember the celebrations a little longer.

Candlelight Service





Musical



Welcome

Everly Jane Vande Voort
Born November 2 to Will and Taylor



Pella II Newsletter invites your contribution. Drop a note in the mailbox of any one of our editors.

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