

# adoramus

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A Newsletter for those who Appreciate and Participate in Worship and the Arts

Fall 2005

## Elaine Nelson ... "For the Love of the Journey"

### *A story about the 2005 Companion of the Worship Arts.*

By: Colleen McGinnis

How does one get here from there? What fortuitous intermeshing of events in our lives conspire to put us on the path where we ultimately belong?

For Elaine Nelson, it began with a Song-flute (a simplified version of a Recorder), in a little country school in Sidney, Montana. She was in grade three. At that time, having a music program and someone qualified to teach it in a rural school was very special. Elaine did not realize what a lucky little girl she was when she picked up the flute for the first time. She didn't realize she had taken the first step on the path that would shape her life. She only realized that the sounds it made were beautiful to her ears, and that she wanted to learn more.

Although her parents recognized and appreciated her talent, music lessons outside the school and a piano were simply out of the question. The cost was too high. But finally, when Elaine was 12, a piano was purchased for \$50.00 and delivered to the farm in the back of a 1/2 ton truck. It came complete with music, for the bench was full of books and sheet music that had belonged to the previous owner. This was a major windfall, but still, there was no money for lessons until Elaine's aunt came to the rescue. She paid for 10 lessons ... \$1.00 each and one hour long. And when Elaine completed those, Aunt Inger paid for 20 more, after which the young pianist was supposed to quit and teach her brothers how to play, only the brothers had other ideas. They never really took to the music, nor the music to them.

In High School, Elaine enrolled in the music class and was given a musical aptitude test by her instructor. He was so impressed with her ability that he borrowed a Marimba for her to play that year. Later on, the school purchased a Glockenspiel and this became Elaine's instrument until the third year when the school acquired a vibraphone for her to play. Although she liked to sing, and had been in church and school choirs since she was eight, it seemed that keyboard accompaniment was most often the role she took on. ▷



After graduation from High School, a small scholarship took her to Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota where she decided to major in Business Education and English. A dream had come true, but there was a problem ... she hated it. If there was something more onerous than Business Education, she couldn't think of it, and dropped the course the following year. Her dad insisted throughout this time that she must continue her piano lessons. He recognized that she needed the emotional release the piano gave her, and with the support of her parents, she decided to minor in music in her second year at Concordia. She was still too unsure of her abilities to make music her major. During this time, her dream began to take shape. She took piano, organ and voice lessons, sang in the ladies and chapel choir, and finally was appointed student director of the choir where she gained valuable experience in conducting. Between her second and third year at college, she took a year off to work and earn more money for school. She was granted a temporary teaching certificate for a school in Montana and at age 19, directed solo, her first choir of teenagers.

But back at school, and expecting to graduate after 3 1/2 years of study, Elaine got a surprise. Paul J. Christensen, her conducting course instructor, refused to allow her to graduate. He convinced her that she should continue her studies and make music her major. More money came willingly from the home front, and it was done. This time, her dream took full flight, and she graduated the following year with a major in Music and English ... and, with her choice of job offers.

A school in Chinook, Montana, was the lucky recipient of Elaine's skills, where she taught vocal music from grades 1 through 12. That summer, she took a position as music director for a few weeks at a bible camp in Epping, North Dakota. A young, handsome, and unmarried Sidney Nelson was the special speaker at the camp, and the rest, as they say, is history! They were engaged on Labour day and married the following February.

Moves to Saskatoon and Lethbridge, Alberta; Joplin, Montana and others followed, but always with Elaine immersing herself in the musical culture each place had to offer. By the time they moved back to Saskatoon, they had 5 children, with one more soon to arrive, and still Elaine found time for music. She

directed more than 50 musicals in her years of teaching, and countless choir performances.

Now retired and living in Medicine Hat, Alberta, Elaine, along with choir and church music duties, continues to explore musical theatre. She is always searching out new ways to explore and expand her talent, and musical theatre allows her to meet an entirely different group of people. She is having fun and living her dream. A loving husband, 6 married children, 12 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild give a warm balance to her life. The journey is grand.

*"May the road rise to meet her and the wind be always at her back." A*

## Recommended Sacred Musicals for Children

by: Elaine Nelson

Here are some children's musical which I recommend. In fact, they can also be done with adults. I have directed most of them, and the others have been recommended by friends who have done them. All of these works are presently in print, and can be ordered through Rideau Music in Calgary (1-800-661-MUSIC) or [www.rideaumusic.com](http://www.rideaumusic.com).

**WISE GUYS.** Based on the Book of Proverbs  
by Joe Cox and Jody W. Lindh  
Choristers Guild Publishers  
choral score and tape available

**100% CHANCE OF RAIN.** A jazz cantata  
by Walter S. Horsley, Choristers Guild Publishers  
choral score, demo cassette, full score, preview kit  
available

**MOSES AND THE FREEDOM FANATICS.**  
A musical drama for young voices about the Exodus  
by Hal Hopson, Choristers Guild Publishers  
choral score, instrumental score, production guide  
available

**RESCUE IN THE NIGHT.**  
The story of Daniel in the lions' den  
by Tom Long & Allen Pote, Hope Publishing Co.  
orchestration, rhythm chart, preview pack, choral  
score, vocal cassette, instrumental cassette, 10 pack  
of listening CDs, preview pack, accompaniment  
cassette and video available *Continued on back page*

# Eulogies at Funerals ... a pastoral perspective

By: Stephen P. Kristenson, Bishop

We have all had experience with eulogies at funerals. Our responses to them vary from inspiration to embarrassment to exhaustion, with almost everything in between. I have often been asked by pastors if they can't simply forbid them. While that is often the most tempting reaction, it may not be the most effective pastoral response to a grieving family.

In reflecting on this challenging topic, it is helpful to remember that a funeral in the Lutheran tradition is a worship service. The Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW) rite is designed to be used within a communion service, so our focus is on God, what God has done for us in Christ to defeat the power of death, and God's invitation to us to experience new life that begins now and continues on into eternity. Rubric #2 in the LBW's Burial of the Dead reminds us that "The ceremonies or tributes of social or fraternal societies have no place within the service of the church." Such ceremonies or tributes may be

conducted outside the church following the service, and, if there is a committal, following that.

Commentary on the Lutheran Book of Worship (Pfatteicher, Augsburg Fortress, p.475) notes that "The Lutheran Book of Worship order is the first North American Lutheran burial rite to take clear notice of the one who has died. ...Prayers that mention the departed may not have been familiar to many Lutherans for several generations, but such prayers are in harmony with Lutheran theology. ...The Apology of the Augsburg Confession declares, "We know that the ancients speak of prayers for the dead which we do not prohibit." Sermons were not included in the earliest funeral rites. Eventually they became part of the service. "The sermons of the 16th century were predominantly biblical and ▶

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christological. In the 17th century a review of the person's life was added, and the eulogy eventually became a main theme." (Commentary, p. 481)

The LBW Minister's Desk Edition, p. 38, notes, "The sermon will usually be a part of the service. The sermon is a proclamation of hope and comfort in Christ, but it may include appropriate recognition of the life of the deceased. It may be appropriate for relatives or associates of the deceased to comment briefly on the meaning of his or her life for them or in the community. This is not understood to contradict the sense of the second rubric in the service."

As part of the ELCA/ELCIC's Renewing Worship, the volume, Life Passages (©2002, ELCA), includes the funeral rite. In this rite, provision is made for remembrances by family or friends after the prayer of the day or before the commendation and farewell.

As pastors plan funeral services with the family, the question of eulogies will almost always arise. Guided by tradition and the suggestions made in the resources cited above, it is important to be sensitive to the needs of the family to express both their grief and their remembrances with thanksgiving, as well as the need to keep the worship service from becoming maudlin or overly focused on the life of the deceased. If there

is a need to express a lot of emotion through the grieving process, a prayer service at the funeral home prior to the funeral, earlier in the day or the evening before, may give opportunity for several people to share their remembrances and voice their grief. The funeral itself may include brief remembrances by family or friends in the appropriate place in the service, but this should not be the focal point of the funeral. It might be helpful for the pastor to offer to review the proposed remembrances to help to keep them focused. Overly emotional presentations can be very uncomfortable for both the presenter and the congregation. Overly long and detailed eulogies tend to distract from the service's purpose of keeping us focused on what God has done in Christ to conquer sin and death.

There is no simple rule that will assure that inappropriate eulogies will never happen, but intentional pastoral care following the death of a loved one and during preparations for the funeral will help the bereaved with their grief, and provide a meaningful funeral that will support and encourage both the bereaved and the congregation. I commend the resources named above, along with the Manual on the Liturgy companion to the LBW, as excellent resources to help plan a meaningful funeral. **A**

## Sacred Musicals for Children ... *Continued*

**THE PUZZLING PARABLES.** Entertaining musical for unison/two part voices and keyboard explores the mysterious parables of Jesus. by Trilby Jordan & Albert Zabel, Choristers Guild Publishers choral score available

**A TECHNICOLOR PROMISE.** Musical drama - unison/two part voices with keyboard which retells the story of Noah and the ark in a new way. by Allen Pote & Carole McCann, Choristers Guild Publishers director's kit, choral score, tape available

**OH, JONAH.** The story of the prophet Jonah is brought to life with music, mime, and merry-making. by Allen Pote & Carole McCann, Choristers Guild Publishers choral score, tape available

**ONCE A UPON A PARABLE.** Energetic storytellers capture the humor and contemporary flavor of the parables, and retell the Jesus story itself. by Tom Long & Allen Pote, Hope Publishing Co. choral score, listening CD, accompaniment CD or cassette, instrumental parts, 10 pack listening CDs, preview pack, video available

**JONAH-MAN JAZZ.** Cantata-musical for narrator, unison voices, piano with guitar chords by Michael Hurd, Novello Publishing. choral score available **A**

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