

“Listening with Jesus Ears” Farewell to Keith”

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Psalm 100

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“Oh come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!” Psalm 95.

From Psalm 150: *“Praise him with trumpet with lute and harp! With tambourine and dance; with strings and cymbals...”*. And maybe today we could add ... *with drums, guitars, keyboards, tubas with shaker eggs??*



I've always enjoyed music. It speaks to my soul. I've gone to church most of my life; and later on I ran a very successful Disc Jockey business for well over 30 years. At every party I would sing along with all the songs with great enthusiasm! (But never with the microphone in my hand)

One of God's gifts I'm a little short on is the gift of singing. I can say that I can keep pretty good rhythm, but singing isn't one of my strongest gifts. So I really like the 'make a joyful noise' scripture. I can do that!

When Doug Warren was our student minister in Roebuck and Spencerville... several years back... he started a worship team. This was the beginning of our venturing outside of the hymn books and exploring more contemporary Christian music. Over the years I worked my way into the praise team with guest appearances as the egg shaker. Eventually they just let me shake in all the songs. I was there any way!

I loved being a part of the group. I sang but not so loud that you could hear me. I would often can say I can carry a tune if it's on a large platter, but I prefer to stick mostly to my 'eggs'.

My upbringing in church music, and over 30 years of DJing for every kind of party imaginable, are the foundation of my love of music. Music has also driven and inspired my faith journey.

Pastor Kim often talks about “looking with your Jesus glasses on”... to see situations more clearly. I like to think that we can also “listen with our Jesus ears on” ... to hear the messages he wants to tell us.

It's about 23 years ago that I first found myself in a relationship with Jesus. My friends started taking me to concerts and church conferences as I was hungry and thirsty to learn more about Jesus; especially being a late starter in our relationship.

Most conferences we went to had an extended time of music at the beginning; singing several songs in a block of time; not the one song stand up and sit down thing, like we are mostly used to.

My experience in this type of worship is I become closer to God. It's hard to explain, but these longer times give you a chance to, at first, focus on the words and messages in the song, but eventually you stop thinking so much about the words, and find yourself entering a much sweeter place and encounter with God. That is my personal experience.

I am always totally into the music, but by the time the conference speaker comes on, it's like sleepy time for me. It's not that the speakers aren't very good: but I just want to go back or stay in that sweet place a little longer. Musical worship just does it for me!

In 2000 I entered into the Licensed Lay Worship Leader Course. I wasn't sure why I was doing this as I didn't consider myself an academic but I felt the nudge to do it. With God's help I got through it and am still learning and growing in this role today.

I really believe that God speaking to me through music was a key to my success. Music was how God spoke to me before I even knew I could hear from God.

The very first sermon I ever wrote was based on the old hymn: Trust and Obey.

"Trust and Obey, for there's no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to Trust and Obey."

Trust and Obey wasn't even in our hymn books at the time, but I knew the song. In all of those years growing up in church, somewhere along the way I had heard it enough times that I remembered it. When that song just 'popped' into my thinking; the message of that first sermon came to me. It was how I was learning to trust and obey God and follow the path he was now leading me on.

Later on I discovered how God spoke to me through secular music as well. I remember the time I used the Jim Croce tune: "Time in a Bottle"
"If I could save time in a bottle, the first thing that I'd like to do, is to save every day til eternity passes away just to spend them with you."
That message was about spending time with Jesus.

I could go on for a long time about music and how I have been encouraged and led, by music of all kinds, from all sources.

We are blessed at Wall Street to be able to offer what we call a 'blended' range of music; offering traditional and contemporary songs, all with the same degree of excellence and meaning; and allowing us to offer relevant worship to multiple generations.

Our service today is focused on thanking Dr. Keith Hartshorn-Walton for his time as our Music Director here at Wall Street and the blessing he has been to this church.

When Keith came here about 6 years ago I had the feeling that he didn't have an abundance of experience using more modern praise songs or even using secular songs in worship; at least not to the extent that we enjoyed. If this was the case it didn't take him long to catch up.

All you have to do is tune into Facebook on a Saturday night and you'll likely see Keith jamming with friends somewhere in the Ottawa area; playing keyboard, bass, (guitar or stand up) and his most loved instrument, the tuba. Keith is a very gifted musician.

Because of these gifts in music Keith was always open to try something new. He never shied away from a request from a band member or congregation member. No request would rattle him.

An example being last Sunday. Lynn McCaw had suggested some songs she would like to fit the theme of her service. Lynn and other members of the band remembered the song 'Shout to the North'. Keith said he had never played it in his time here, but 'no' problem; it was all good; and Keith led the song exactly right on as I remembered it. In fact I should have brought my eggs! I could have played too!

Keith your time at Wall Street has been a huge blessing to us. Not only have you broadened our horizons of music, you have led us through this virtual time that none of us knew how to navigate. You became skilled at making music videos and putting the pieces together to make something beautiful. You engaged Melanie and the girls to help too and that was very special to us as well.

And you knew how to use those 'Jesus ears' too. There were so many times when Keith would be given only a few words describing the theme of the service, and it would be awesome to see how he picked the songs that fit the theme perfectly.

We will miss you Keith. We 'kinda' wish you had turned off the 'Jesus ears' when you heard about the opening at Parkdale; but we are excited for your future at Parkdale United and in the wider Ottawa music scene.

You and your family will be a blessing to them as you have been a blessing to all of us.

And we thank you.