

Marquand Reader

Issue IV: October 23, 2006

A newsletter furthering the educational mission of Ecumenical Daily Worship at YDS.

THIS WEEK IN MARQUAND:

Services begin at 10:30. All are welcome!

Monday, October 23: A service of spirituals, led by Yale Black Seminars and special musical guest Pamela Warrick-Smith.

Tuesday, October 24: Visiting Professor of Church History Guy Erwin, preaching.

Wednesday, October 25: Sung Morning Prayer with traditional texts in contemporary and global settings, led by Daniel Koh and Erin Westmaas.

Thursday, October 26: Graduating student Jonathan Page, preaching.

Friday, October 27: Community Eucharist in the UCC tradition, the Rev. Kaji Spellman '06, preaching and presiding.

Feature Article: The Lectionary

“Christians agree that when we gather to worship the triune God, we read from the Bible...Christians have not agreed, however on which selections from the Bible to read on Sunday or what pattern of Bible reading is best.” As the semester progresses, you may have wondered how texts are chosen for daily chapel in Marquand. In most cases, the texts used are those appointed by the Episcopal Daily Office Lectionary (which you can find at www.satucket.com/lectionary.) But because Marquand is not an Episcopal but an ecumenical chapel, this leaves a number of questions for our community. What are lectionaries, and why are they used?

The most common lectionary used today in the United States is the Revised Common Lectionary. It is an arrangement of biblical texts arranged around the liturgical year in three year-long cycles. It was publicly released by the North American Consultation on Common Texts and the International English Language Liturgical Consultation in 1994, and is approved for use by the Disciples of Christ, the Christian fellowship of the Universalist Unitarian Association, the Episcopal Church in the USA, The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, the Presbyterian Church USA, Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church, and several other Protestant denominations. It differs little from the Roman Catholic lectionary from 1969. The Revised Common Lectionary appoints readings for each Sunday from the Old Testament, a Psalm, a New Testament reading and a Gospel. Denominational Daily lectionaries such as the one we use in Marquand are less common, and differ more noticeably in their use of apocryphal texts, their arrangements of daily morning and evening prayer, and in special observances like saints' days. Lectionaries have had a rich and varied history. In some cases, special books called “lectionaries” have been created which re-arrange the order of the Biblical text to match the yearly calendar. Some

historians have argued that the history of the Bible's arrangement, numerical versification, and canonization were highly influenced by lectionary needs—what texts were appropriate to be read in the assembly, and how could the passages best be chanted or read?

Some have criticized lectionaries for leaving out certain controversial texts like Song of Solomon, or for prioritizing some parts of Scripture over others. Others see the use of a common lectionary as one of the most basic sources of unity which can be claimed across denominations, but which may correlatively be seen by others as an artificial hindrance to choosing texts that are relevant to the immediate needs of the local community on a given day. Because it is calendrically fixed, it often remains difficult to adapt to non-calendrical needs including ordinations, baptisms, funerals, thematic services and other “occasional” services and actions of the church. Whether one uses a lectionary or not, seasoned preachers can potentially fall into routines-- it may seem much easier to pull a pre-written lectionary-based sermon from a file or to repeat a standard favorite parable or story.

In Marquand, as a community which prays, sings, and hears the Word together daily, we need a way to ensure that we will engage a full range of Biblical texts and traditions of choosing them, rather than a few preferred passages. The use of a lectionary may encourage us to engage the more difficult or uncomfortable parts of our common texts that we would otherwise avoid, and stimulate our imagination to draw out the more subtle connections between verses that aren't as immediately consistent with the themes, experiences and needs of this worshipping community at this time. And we use the Episcopal one because it is the only one available free on the internet; with so many people involved in the program, communicating remotely, this online accessibility is vital.

Still, lectionary-appointed readings are not used by every tradition, and are not always appropriate to the needs of the service. While the lectionary is favored, it is not required by Marquand's *Guidelines for Worship*. As sermons and services are prepared, alternative texts may be chosen by the preacher so long as they are communicated to the Marquand Chapel team. Lectionaries and liturgical calendars provide a practical way to guide thematic selection of hymns, anthems, and other music which may need to be prepared and rehearsed some time in advance, so alternative readings, if they are going to be used, need to be selected far enough ahead of time to allow for this preparation, and to ensure that texts and music are not mismatched or overly repeated from day to day.

Some of us are preparing to enter ministry in churches where we will be preaching weekly. Some of us will be in churches which enforce a lectionary, and others of us will be in churches which choose texts thematically or by chapter order or by the inspiration of the Spirit in the moment. As we worship and learn together in Marquand, all of us encounter differing ways of selecting texts, and as a result hear texts we would not have heard if we were worshipping in our own traditions. And even when we hear the same text twice, we rarely hear it the same way twice. The inflection of the reader, whether gentle or timid or forceful or dramatic; the placement of the lectern; the size of the Bible; the interpretation of the preacher; the response in hymn texts, and the juxtaposition of

community participation in sacraments and liturgical actions: all of this variation provide new lenses with which to read the lectionary texts in rich and new ways.¹

Antiphonal Singing

Though antiphonal or alternating psalm-singing practices existed much earlier, The monastic church of the Meghistis Lavra at Mount Athos in Greece first constructed lateral apses or opposing semi-circular niches on the left and right side of the church, which became the standard place for antiphonal choirs in the late 10th century. This arrangement became the prototype for later eastern monasteries and churches. In the West, many early Medieval monasteries and later Medieval cathedrals placed antiphonal choirs in opposing banks of choir stalls located in the chancel. We chose to invoke this arrangement in Marquand last Thursday.

The late liturgical Scholar James White sees church architecture as the arrangement of space which shapes the ethos of worship, such that the community's values are both manifested and informed by the visual and acoustic environment. The community's values and commitments are both financially and symbolically invested in a building meant to support its missions. That much forward-facing church architecture in the United States has not symbolically, acoustically, or visually prioritized congregational song in its architecture may be both a cause and an effect of the general decline in community singing which church musician Brian Wren laments. Speaking of Western monasticism, James White says: "the most important space was the choir stalls (since the whole community was a choir), arranged in two parallel sections so that psalms could be sung antiphonally...for a monastic church, it was a functional arrangement." Of the functional features of church arrangements, Wren agrees that: "seating patterns affect congregational singing. The more we can see other singers in the congregation, the more we are likely to hear each other, as other voices reach us before being absorbed, and visibility enhances our sense of singing together." Of the symbolic features of singing antiphonally, Wren continues: "Even standing mute, letting the community take over when one's voice fails, an individual can have suffering transformed through the hope being proclaimed by others."

Spatial arrangements come and go, and musical styles come and go; they will not all meet the symbolic or functional needs of this community. In fact, some arrangements and styles are outright harmful to communities. Nevertheless, the opportunity to listen, learn, and respond in an assembly through this dialogical model of music and seating can be seen as a microcosm of the life of the greater Church. Wren says that congregational song is ecclesial "when we know that the community sings for us, even when we cannot join in, and that the song joins us with other singers, local and distant, past and present." Remaining in antiphonal dialogue with tradition, the globe, and each other reminds us that we do not always sing in unison but that we need each other to sing the whole song, even when we are diametrically opposed.

¹ For further reading on lectionaries: Ramshaw, Gail. *A Three-Year Banquet: The Lectionary for the Assembly*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2004.

Congregational Song Lecture Series:

Over the next few weeks, several distinguished guests will be leading and presenting in Patrick Evans' *Musical Skills and Vocal Development for Parish Ministry* course. These presentations will be open to the wider public, and your attendance is greatly encouraged. Each session will take place from 4-6 pm. in Marquand Chapel. All YDS/ISM/YSM students, faculty, staff, spouses, guests, and friends are welcome. If you'd like to know the assigned readings for the enrolled students, please email Patrick Evans ahead of time at patrick.evans@yale.edu. The guests and their topics are:

Monday, October 23: Pamela Warrick-Smith

Pamela Warrick-Smith, singer, composer, and recording artist with John Bell, Alice Parker, among others, will lead us in singing and learning about traditional African-American spirituals and work songs.

Monday, October 30: Mark Miller

Our own Mark Miller, Marquand Gospel Choir Director, composer, organist, pianist, faculty member at Drew Theological School and Gospel Choir Director at Manhattan's Marble Collegiate Church, will be presenting on contemporary trends in African-American Gospel music.

Monday, Nov 6: Jorge Lockward

Jorge Lockward, Associate Director of the United Methodist Board of Global Missions' *Global Praise* series of publications and recordings, will lead us in singing and discussing hymnody and liturgical song of Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean.

Monday, Nov 13: Mary Oyer

Mary Oyer, Professor Emerita of Sacred Music at Goshen College, and Visiting Professor at Tainan Theological Seminary in Taiwan, will lead us in African and Asian traditions of ritual song.

The Marquand Reader is edited by the chapel staff and issued every Monday when classes are in session. It both reflects on past services and highlights upcoming services and other special opportunities and events. Additional articles by the Chapel Staff and the faculty in Liturgical Studies will explore historical, liturgical, theological and ecumenical topics, in order to further the educational goals of Marquand Chapel. Contact Prof. Garrigan if you have any suggestions, comments, or questions.

The Marquand Chapel Team:

Siobhán Garrigan, *Dean of Chapel* * Patrick Evans, *Director of Chapel Music*
James Aveni, *Chapel Administrative Assistant* * Emily Scott, *Liturgical Coordinator*
Dan Binder, Kevin Ewing, Mindy Roll, and Matt Haugen, *Chapel Ministers*
Mark Miller, *Gospel Choir Director* * Daniel Koh and Erin Westmaas, *Chapel Choir directors*
Parker Kitterman and Tim Weisman, *Organists*