

ALCM Conference at Valparaiso

The theme of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians conference at Valparaiso University, *From Generation to Generation*, was quite apt, since our time there was also the final week of the Lutheran Summer Music Academy. We worshiped and shared meals with this group of talented high school students, some of whom will surely go on to be the next generation of church musicians.

Our days there were filled with worship, workshops, group learning sessions, and concerts. Each day began with Morning Prayer and ended with Evening Prayer in the awe-inspiring Chapel of the Resurrection. We started each day by singing *Martin Luther's Morning Prayer*, arranged by Carl Schalk. It was an incredible experience to sing among several hundred very talented singers, in harmony, of course! The Gathering Eucharist was a magnificent celebration, preparing us for the days ahead.

We chose to drive to Valpo on Sunday, in order to take full advantage of Monday's offerings, and we chose wisely. Our first two events were Choral Reading Sessions, where we sang portions of approximately 30 choir anthems in each session (and we got to keep the music). Kathy found a number of promising pieces for our choir.

We attended a number of workshops and group learning sessions, each of us taking a different path through the offerings. All of these were recorded, and we will be given access to watch ones that we didn't have time to attend, or to watch again those of special interest to us. There were a wide variety of choices, from keyboard to handbells, to Renaissance music, to bulletin design, to Lutheran Liturgy 101. There were so many new ideas and learning opportunities that we both will benefit from attending far into the future.

The concerts were outstanding. One was presented by Cantus, a Minneapolis-based group, and the other by Calmus, from Leipzig, Germany. Also featured was the organist Martin Jean. These extraordinary musicians not only presented concerts, they also taught workshop sessions. Debbie had the great pleasure of singing Bach's *Jesu, meine Freude* in a session led by Calmus, then hearing the same work in the concert that evening. Members of Calmus also taught the workshop "Wonderful World of Renaissance Vocal Music."

The most formative experiences were the worship opportunities in which we participated. Each was different, highlighting classical music, contemporary music in a variety of styles, hymns from across the ages and across many cultures. The worship leaders strove for excellence, with careful and prayerful attention paid to every word and every note of music. We left newly rooted in our faith tradition.

We also had the joy of meeting other church musicians. Whenever we sat at a large table in the cafeteria, people from diverse locations and church situations would join us for a shared meal and good conversation. We had the interesting experience of living in a dorm, reminding us that we are no longer nineteen-years-old! Who knew that one needed three extension cords? (Debbie brought one. Kathy brought none.) And the outlets were inconveniently located right behind the mattresses—almost inaccessible. What do you do when the sheets are too small for the bed? Despite the inconveniences, it was a blessing to be living right on campus, close to all our events.

The best word to describe our overall experience is “transformative.” Neither of us will be the same. Both of us are inspired to serve. Neither of us will forget this experience. We thank you for this opportunity.

Kathy Egnor and Debbie Anderson