

## **Art in Worship**

This has been a busy week here at FBC, Elfers with “*Summer with the Arts.*” This is the twenty-fifth year this program has been used by Pastor Charlie and Debi Jones to help develop the creative talents of young people. It is a high-energy program involving all forms of artistic expression. You are invited to see for yourself, Sunday evening at 6 p.m. for an exciting program.

It does raise the question of why we use art in all its forms to help us worship. Jennifer Power from St. Paul's Lutheran church in Decatur, Illinois, shares five reasons we need art in worship:

### **God is the ultimate artist, and we are created in His image.**

*When we engage our creativity, we are utilizing an aspect of ourselves which reflects God Himself. He could have made us all exactly the same; He could have made the whole world functional but dull with every area of the world looking exactly like the others, but He created the world with beauty and wonder and awe and spectacle. Now, like all aspects of our humanity, our creativity has been damaged by sin, but when we bring our creativity under the hand of God and ask Him to use it for His glory, it becomes a tangible way for us to participate in the Kingdom of God here on earth.*

### **Art helps people of different learning styles connect with God.**

*There are many who do not learn well by sitting and listening to a person speak. Art creates opportunities for varied learning. Music, poetry, preaching, and personal sharing connects to auditory learners. Physical artwork, photography, drama, dance, and sign connects to visual learners. Those who learn by doing can take active roles in preparing and carrying out art in worship services and through artistic elements which invite worshippers out of their seats to come participate in live art which is completed during the actual service.*

### **Art helps us express our worship to God when words do not suffice.**

*Music certainly helps us express our worship to God, but there are other artistic means of worship as well. A painting, photograph, or a dance can sometimes speak that which we struggle to put into words. Art can speak to us in on an emotional level and help us relate to one another in our pain and struggles.*

### **Art invites vulnerability which leads to stronger community.**

*Meaningful art requires a great deal of vulnerability on the part of the artist and often invites those who experience the work to enter into that vulnerability. Strong community is difficult to accomplish when vulnerability is absent. Tightly knit communities must enter into one another's struggles and into the broken realities of actual life in order to be meaningful. Art can be an effective way to invite each other into vulnerability.*

### **Art allows people with different types of gifts to contribute to corporate worship.**

*So often, corporate worship expressions are limited to gifted speakers and musicians, yet there are so many people with creative gifts and talents which are often underutilized in worship services. The best Christian communities are collaborative with everyone being brought in and contributing their best gifts. When we seek out gifted artists among us and invite them to bring their creativity into worship, the whole congregation is benefited.*

So, whether it is a pipe organ belching out strains from Bach or a drummer in a cage keeping a praise ensemble on beat, we can use music and all of the arts to glorify the One Who gave them to us.

Centuries ago, the church was the center of artistic talents and creative expression. We should strive to lead once again, as Frances Schaeffer famously wrote in *Art and the Bible*, “*The Christian is the one whose imagination should fly beyond the stars.*”

We'll see you this Sunday as Pastor Jim Prose challenges us to be “fully-engaged” in our Christian walk. And don't forget the SWTA program on Sunday night.

Jim West, Teaching Pastor