



The Rev. Dr. Arlene K. Nehring
Pastoral Message
May 2010

Sing a New Song

The author of Psalm 96 exhorted our ancient Israelite ancestors to “Sing a new song unto the Lord.” The hymnist meant that God’s people should literally and figuratively sing a new song, which meant create and perform new music, and prepare and do new things.

No doubt our ancestors needed encouragement to sing a new song, because like most of us, they tended to like the songs that they already knew. They, like us, needed reminders that old favorites were once new, and that the way old favorites achieved their status was the result of the faithful daring to try new songs, practice them, and ultimately commit them to memory.

We have been learning some new songs at Eden from *Sing! Prayer and Praise*. This is the new United Church of Christ song book that was published last summer.

About 75 copies of *Sing!* have been purchased for the choir and congregation using memorial funds and contributions received during Advent and Lent. We don’t yet have enough copies to fill the pews, so the ushers are distributing copies to worshipers before each service, and the congregation is being asked to return their copies to the side tables located at the sanctuary doors when leaving worship.

Our new song book won’t replace *The New Century Hymnal*. It is a supplement. When we have enough copies of *Sing!* for the entire sanctuary, worshippers will find the hymnal, the song book, and a Bible in the hymn racks.

Sing! Prayer and Praise includes some songs that are familiar to us, including music written by our former minister of music, Mark Unbehagen. It also includes songs that we have sung for many years, songs that our youth have learned at church camp, and songs that a few of us have sung in other settings. But most of the music is new to most of us.

Fortunately for those of us who are not expert musicians, we are blessed to have terrific musicians on staff and in our choir who are helping us sing a new song with grace and ease; so that together, we are able to make a joyful noise to God.

Arlene