

## How Can Music Ministry Serve Community?

by Rick Jordan, CBFNC Church Resources Coordinator, and Linda Denny, Minister through Music, First, Mount Airy

**Rick:** Linda, tell us about your latest attempt to reach into the community through the music ministry.

**Linda:** Our church was asked to recruit volunteers for an excellent after-school enrichment program at J. J. Jones Intermediate School in Mount Airy (third-fifth grades). Several of our members now volunteer, either assisting teachers in the program or as teachers on a topic on which they have expertise.

In the fall of 2011 associate minister Steve Ayers, Jr., and I, aided by a couple of church volunteers, loaded up Orff instruments (glockenspiels, metallophones, xylophones and percussion) and spent several days with fourth graders. In the spring we did the same for fifth graders. We did not use church music, but involved the children in singing and playing. Teachers in the program were amazed at the level of participation, especially from some very shy or fearful students. At the end of each series, invitations were sent home with students to participate in our choir program at FBC.

In the spring of 2012, nine children from various race/ethnic groups participated in our church choir programs. They rode the school bus to church for choir and dinner, and were picked up by parents. An older men's Sunday School class donated money to pay for meals.

In 2012-2013, only two students participate, though when we have been back at the school and see students from last year, they all talk about how "awesome" it was. We are discussing options to get the children home after dinner to see if that helps participation.

**Rick:** What resistance or barriers, if any, did you need to overcome?

**Linda:** While children may attend choir regularly, they and their families seem to attend worship only when the children sing. Some of them have their own churches and some do not. A barrier for us may be the image of us as the big church where rich people go — how wrong! We work hard to overcome that image in our soup kitchen, which feeds weekly about 150 people from the community. All are made welcome.

**Rick:** What fruit have you seen produced from this ministry?

**Linda:** Children feel loved. They can feel competent at something very special when they don't feel so competent at other areas of school.



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## Young Ministers Series: Hope Beyond Fears

by Danny Russell, Pastor, Chadbourn, Chadbourn



While people seek to find hope beyond their fears, many times the difference between the two is a fine line. Still, there is great hope for the Church and in particular the Baptist church. When we have lost our own hope, our brothers and sisters in Christ share their hope with us. This sharing happens in a local church context and allows people to find their hope again. Our hope is found in Christ as we partner together with so

many people faithfully following Christ.

Living in the hope of Christ can be compared to the edge of a quarter. In *Changing Signs of Truth: A Christian Introduction to Semiotics*, Crystal Downing describes a life lived on the edge through the metaphor of the quarter. She states, "One side [of the quarter] therefore represents tradition while the other side represents change."<sup>1</sup>

Downing develops this perspective through the image of President George Washington on one side representing tradition, while new images of the different states and territories on the other side represent change. She continues, "[Therefore], a position on the edge looks to both past and future, to tradition and change."<sup>2</sup> As Baptists follow Christ, we live on the edge looking to the past and future,

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## A Teaching-Learning Congregation

by Nathan Parrish, Pastor, Peace Haven, Winston-Salem

Peace Haven, Winston-Salem, began a process in 2009 that is changing our congregational life and ministry. Peace Haven chose to convert a traditional associate pastor staff position into part-time ministry roles to be filled by Wake Forest University School of Divinity students. Peace Haven decided to invest in the ministry formation of future leaders and become what some call a “teaching-learning” congregation. What we are discovering is that formation is a two-way street. Peace Haven Baptist is changing and being changed by the presence, leadership, and gifts of divinity student ministers. Peace Haven is realizing that we have as much to learn as teach, that we have as much to receive as offer, that sharing ministry leadership with divinity students strengthens our ministries, and that there is every reason to be hopeful about the future.

*When I interned at Peace Haven Baptist Church, I quickly learned that I was walking in a community of learning and grace. The church created a space for me to discover my gifts and my growing edges without pressuring me to be perfect.*

Kim Sturgill, Minister with Children,  
First Baptist Church, Memphis, TN

to live, lead, and serve in contexts beyond our congregation.

The process for identifying new student ministers has been organic, growing out of relationships with and among divinity students, as well as formal, working with Divinity School Staff and Faculty to determine students of interest. The result of the presence and participation of divinity students has been a stretching experience for our congregation and an opportunity to serve and lead for the divinity students.

As we have called students into staff ministry roles, other divinity students have found ways to connect with our church, fulfill various aspects of their academic journey, and lead within the church without serving in paid ministry roles. Divinity students participate in Sunday morning worship in a variety of ways every week. Other divinity students join us on Wednesday nights for meals, attend/participate in Sunday worship, and participate in a bi-weekly discipleship group for young adults meeting at Peace Haven.

As a congregation, we are investing in the formation of future leaders by inviting them into our life as a church. Along the way, we are gaining life as these students serve with and among us. We are blessed with the gift of proximity to divinity schools and we are seeking to be good stewards of that gift. But all of us, regardless of our location, have the opportunity to explore new ways to share leadership and invite those God is calling into roles of ministry. I am confident that the blessings we are experiencing are transferable and translatable.

*As a current intern at Peace Haven Baptist Church, I am thankful for the opportunity to develop as a minister with a congregation that is welcoming, grace-giving and motivating to divinity students. The church nurtures my growth as a minister with compassion, energy and knowledge.* Abigail Pratt, M.Div. student,  
Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC

*My internship at Peace Haven Baptist Church had a profound impact on who I am as a person, minister and student. I was loved, welcomed and encouraged and I will be grateful for the invaluable experience for the rest of my life.* Jonathan Redding, Ph.D. student, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN

The vision of Peace Haven is to invite student leadership into the life of our church and to provide a context for divinity students to learn about congregational ministry while receiving relational support during their journey. We have embraced this path as a ministry of our church for the formation of divinity students who we believe will continue

*I really believe that Peace Haven Baptist Church is modeling how to call and support divinity students in ministry. The church balances flexibility and expectation; they genuinely care for students and the congregation sets an example for healthy and diverse church life.*

John Carroll, Pastor, First Baptist Church, Danville, VA

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embracing both tradition and change. When living on this edge the hope of Christ is realized and expressed through our lives.

I am hopeful because many churches are faithfully living on this edge as they follow Christ, but I am also fearful because some churches are content to follow Christ by staying on one side of the edge. The only way to live on one side is to do so at the exclusion of the other side. People either look to the past and embrace tradition or look to the future and embrace change. Faithfully following Christ is living in the mystery between these two perspectives. Life on the edge is messy and difficult, and it is the very place we experience Christ in our world and lives.

Finding life on this edge is discovering a renewed sense of the hope that Christ offers. When people idolize the past and hold tight to tradition, they may discover a fear of the future. When people mystify the future and loosely accept change, they can discover a fear of the present. The hope of Christ is the mystery holding the past and future together through an embrace of tradition and change. Hope is found on the edge because life in the twenty-first century requires it. Hope is found on the edge because this is where Christ is.

I am hopeful because many churches are following Christ on this edge in their own communities. Some have become hopeless in the labeling of limiting our lives to one side or the other, but others are energized and empowered to live in the paradox of living between two perspectives. Christ is found through this both/and approach, which welcomes all to Christ's table. Being Baptist is being faithful to this approach.

I am hopeful because the Baptist church equips people to faithfully follow Christ on this edge. Within the Baptist church, people express their faith on both sides of the edge, and we come together to the edge to partner in ministry and service. I find hope in this act of coming together as churches collaborate in their local contexts and in ministries throughout the world. I am hopeful for the Church today as so many are following Christ into the future through Christ's work in the present.

<sup>1</sup> Crystal Downing, *Changing Signs of Truth: A Christian Introduction to Semiotics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), Kindle Location 513.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, Kindle Location 522.