

Pastor's Message - June 2019

Written by Pastor Tom Wehrman

Friday, 27 September 2019 21:28 - Last Updated Friday, 27 September 2019 21:42

Fellow Ministers at St. John Lutheran Church, Not long ago, I was listening to a TED Talk about a 1975 concert held in Cologne (Koln), Germany. Vera

Brandes, who was only 17, had convinced Keith Jarrett, a well-known jazz pianist, to perform in her hometown;

and she had convinced the Cologne Opera House to allow the performance to be held there. Just hours before

the performance, Brandes took Jarrett on to the stage for his rehearsal, and they found there the wrong piano.

it was a smaller baby grand rehearsal piano in poor condition. Keys were sticking; pedals did not work; and felt

was worn away making the upper registers sound tinny.

Now Keith Jarrett is famous for being a perfectionist. He is known to distribute lozenges and to lead his

audience in a group cough so he would not to be distracted during his performances. It was a couple of hours

before the performance. 1,400 people were on their way to hear perfection. It was raining. There was not time

to bring in the better piano. Under such conditions, Jarrett said he that would not play, and he left.

Moments later, Brandes found Jarrett in the car ready to drive him away. She pled with him to stay and

perform. He saw her standing in the rain, considered her plight, and said to her, "Only for you."

Jarrett returned and when he took the stage and began to play, it could only be described as "magic." The

audience was "astounded as Jarrett gave what many judge to be his greatest performance. The album made

from that night, The Koln Concert, has come to be the best selling jazz piano album of all time. Keith Jarrett

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took a ramshackle, undersized instrument and created something unforgettable.

This story reminds me of what God did for his redeemed on the Day of Pentecost. Here was a ramshackle

group of impoverished, unlearned folks, in a backwater of the Roman Empire, huddled together, uncertain of

what to do next. But then, the Spirit of God appeared in signs and wonders, with violent wind, tongues of fire.

and the powerful proclamation of God's good news in varied languages. And they were never the same. And

the world was never the same, either.

The story also reminds me of what the Spirit of Christ continues to do among God's people today. Throughout

the church, even in congregations that many may count as ramshackle, too small, and too insignificant, the

overwhelming grace of God is made known and God's people continue to reflect the love of their Father

through acts of care and compassion, encouragement and empowerment.

Let us pray that the Spirit would continue to fill us, and St. John congregation, and all of Christ's church, that

we might live always as God's hands and heart for the world.

Peace be with you,

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