

September 28, 2025, Morning Worship

It is a joy to be assisted in worship this morning by our Junior Choir, following on the heels of our Youth Chorus in last Sunday's worship of service.

One of the strongest evidences of the spiritual health of our church is its commitment to helping our children and youth grow in Christian maturity. We have a phenomenal children's staff and youth staff that tirelessly pour into our covenant children week in and week out.

Our children's choir directors, Ann Forrest Bowers (Junior Choir), Elizabeth Yoder (Primary Choir) and Jane Nevitt (Cherub Choir) are also firmly committed to teaching and exhibiting the gospel to our children during weekly choir rehearsals, and they do so with love, joy, and excellent musical leadership and understanding. They are supported by a team of exceptional volunteers—Lisa Beerman, Lenora Jeffcoat, and Kathryn Rickert—who selflessly offer their world-class talent and training to train up our children in music in worship.

One goal of the music ministry is to encourage a lifelong love for singing in worship. We hope that with quality and godly instruction, the children's and youth choirs at FPC will help our children and youth develop joy and confidence in praising the Lord in song, as well as to help them mature in their appreciation for the music of the church. It is a heartwarming encouragement to see boys and girls, and young men and women *reading* from the hymnal every Sunday morning and evening, carrying on the tradition of singing hymns—many of which the church has sung for centuries. Not only does this bless us as a congregation, but is also a witness to the world that the core repertoire of evangelical hymnody, from the Reformation through the centuries, continues to be sung and valued by our church. Singing these hymns and choruses helps to reinforce the doctrines that our children and youth learn in worship, Sunday school, and Bible studies.

Daniel L. Block, Professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College addresses this principle of Christian maturity in his thorough examination of Biblical worship, *For the Glory of God: Recovering a Biblical Theology*. Block writes:

Over time, worshipers' musical tastes should mature. While mature Christians celebrate the faith and enthusiasm of younger believers, something is wrong if people who have been believers for ten or twenty years still crave the elementary lyrics and simple tunes they sang when they first came to faith. Just as we need to progress from milk to meat in our understanding of the Scriptures (Heb. 5: 12-13; 1 Peter 2:2), so in musical appreciation and taste the goal should be growth and maturation—the development of appetites for songs that are weightier theologically and more sophisticated musically.

It *is* possible that children can be introduced to material that is beyond them, both musically and theologically. But it is more often the case that the bar isn't raised high enough. It's remarkable what children can learn, and we experience this every week in choir rehearsals. Our goal is to find that right balance in which we encourage involvement, encourage improvement, and encourage maturity, in musical literacy, understanding and execution. It is important to teach children and

youth that they have responsibility for something greater than their own personal tastes, namely a tradition that has wisely been passed on for generations. We certainly don't want pharisaical *traditionalism*. But neither do we want to encourage a proud naivete, that rejects the prayerful considerations and wisdom of generations that have gone before. The former often leads to legalism, the latter often leads to heresy, and both stultify spiritual fervor and growth.

Please pray for the music ministry as we continue our calling to raise up the next generation of young men and women who praise the Lord skillfully (Psalm 33:3).