

***Psalm 96:1. Sing to the Lord a new song: sing to the Lord, all you lands. Sing to the Lord; bless his name.***



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This Scripture was an obvious choice for me. Music has always been significant in my life. It's one of the few early memories I have of my grandma. When I was young, my grandma took me to Mother-Daughter teas at her church once every year. I kept a remembrance of those teas for years – a straw with a rose attached. Part of the program was that we would sing and somehow I always knew all the old songs. Singing was a very big part of that event.

My grandma would come out to our house to stay from time to time. She would come to church with us and sing right out, full voice. She had the most vibrato I've ever heard in anyone's voice in my entire life! Little kids would turn around in the pew and stare at her because she sang with such gusto.

My mom would sing to music on the radio every morning (WFDF with Dan Hunter). During the summers the windows would be open and I could hear my mom singing to music on the radio. That singing has always been positive for me. I always have good feelings when I remember it.

I've been involved in music since about the fifth grade. Maybe not so much after I graduated and went on to nursing school because other things took over. After I got married and the kids came along I was involved in raising them and music got put on the back burner.

There always seemed to be an excuse not to be in the choir, but when my kids were in high school I seemed to have more time. I also realized that I didn't know "me" anymore. I had lost "me" over the years. I was someone's wife, I was someone's daughter. I was also a mom. Sometimes when I had to sign my name at a meeting I would just sign: "Cliff's wife," or something like that. I did it jokingly, but there was something to that, too.

When I found out they were going to have handbells at St. John for youth, I thought I'd like to try that. I'd never been able to play an instrument at school because our family couldn't afford it at that time. So, I kept asking that an adult handbell choir be formed and it finally happened. Finally I found something I could do just for me!

Then Julie Richards [the present director] came along and convinced me to join the Celebration Choir and for a time I was also in the Resurrection Choir. Now I chair the Music Ministries Committee, which plans social events for all of the choirs.

I've found that if I come to choir practice in a bad mood, I leave feeling better. Music lifts me out of a bad mood! There have been other differences, too. I used to be really shy and that has changed a bit. There are still aspects of my life that I pull back on, but I've feel that I've blossomed – maybe kicking and screaming – but I've blossomed none the less! I've been stretched! I've done some things I never thought I would ever do, such as singing a solo.

So besides being a wife, mother and daughter I am also a musician! The Scripture says, "Sing to the Lord all you lands." Since I joined the choir I've had the opportunity to sing in Ireland and Italy. Our choir sang for the Pope in his audience hall. When I was younger, I never thought I would be doing things like that. I never thought I would fly in an airplane! Now I don't think twice about getting on a plane and I have some wonderful memories of singing in other places.

God works through people. I would never have thought that I would experience thousands of people singing in harmony. That's just one of the things that happens at an NPM (National Pastoral Musicians) Convention. It's really unbelievable. It just blows me away! Sometimes I'd rather just stand there and listen because it sounds so good!

Music has expanded my horizons. It's been fun. I've learned to put some things in God's hands and just let go. One time I was doing a solo with another person, who had to leave church suddenly, so I had to sing his part even though I had never rehearsed it. Everything worked out. So, there have been other things in life that I've learned not to stress over, things that I have no control over.

Sometime during Mass one of the readings will have a phrase in it that triggers a memory of something we've sung and I just sing that song for awhile in my head. Sometimes I stick with that song for the entire day. Spoken prayers are important and I know they're beautiful, but that doesn't come easily to me. Sometimes well known prayers are said and we don't think about the words we are saying. When a person sings, they have to think about what they're doing. They have to think about the words.

Songs seem to stay inside my head. I hope that my children will have fond memories of my singing around the house – at least I've had no complaints from our neighbors!

*More information can be learned about St. John Choirs elsewhere on this website, or you may wish to contact Julie Richards at [jrichards@stjohndavison.org](mailto:jrichards@stjohndavison.org) or by phone at 810-658-1135.*