

July 2012

Shocco Events

Children's Choirs Summit Leadership Conference

July 6-7

Mix 456 Worship Arts Camp

July 9-13

Adult Choir

Rehearsals Resume

July 11

CBC Kids

Wednesdays

6:00 p.m.

Operation Christmas Child

June – Boys' Clothing

July – Girls' Clothing

Nominating Committee

Stewardship and Budget Committee

Beginning Meetings Now

New Church Year Begins September 1

Dekalb County Schools

And Fort Payne Schools

Begin

Monday, August 20

40/40 Days of Prayer for Our Country

September 26 – November 4

Pray for 40 Days

Or 40 Hours

Deacon Family Ministry Dinners – We very much enjoyed having so many of you in our home for the Deacon Family Dinners. We know it was a sacrifice to give up your time to be with us. Thank you. Our biggest regret? That some of you were not able to be here. John and Gloria

July Volunteers

Flowers – Vanessa Chambers (1<sup>st</sup>), Marty Borntrager (15), Dee Fortner (22),  
Bobbie Jones (29)

Lord's Supper – Clyde and Sandra Killian (8)

*Graduates and Pictures I gave you*  
*Military, nursing home*

**A Light on A Hill**

***175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration***

Saturday, August 11

Informal Sharing Time in Fellowship Hall  
We Provide the Place and Some Refreshments  
You Provide the Memories  
Casual Dress  
1 – 3 P.M.

Sunday, August 12

Worship in the Sanctuary  
10 A.M. – Noon  
Lots of Music, Lots of Remembering, Lots of Worship  
Group Picture at 11

Covered Dish Dinner and More Sharing  
Noon

We Will Provide Ham  
Talk and Eat as Long As You Want to Stay  
No Evening Service

Our anniversary is rapidly approaching. Many of you are working very hard to make the weekend special for all of us. Many of you have been contacting people who you hope will attend. There is much cleaning and work still to do. Be patient with us. Or, better, jump in and help us.

We still need photos and memorabilia from our church's past. Can you check your attic and old scrapbooks for things others would like to see?

COMMENTARY

# Children's Music Matters

A singer-songwriter's call for excellence in the songs we feed our kids.

**Sandra McCracken** [ posted 6/19/2012 ]



*Acclaimed singer-songwriter Sandra McCracken recently joined with a few friends—Ellie Holcomb, Flo Paris, and Katy Bowser—to record an album called Rain for Roots: Big Stories for Little Ones. Putting the words of children's author Sally Lloyd-Jones to music for kids, this stellar new project raises the bar for the genre. We asked McCracken to write an op-ed about the importance of children's music done well.*



Ellie Holcomb, Sandra McCracken, Katy Bowser, and Flo Paris

With two young children, we've made a point of exposing our kids to as much W.A. Mozart, Woody Guthrie, Paul Simon, and the Beatles as we possibly can. We want them to know about good music before they are old enough to pop in the earbuds on their own. We often check out music CDs from the library, and have discovered some great children's music in the style of bluegrass, rockabilly, and of course the family kids' jazz favorite, Coal Train Railroad. But I must confess that, on the whole, I am disheartened with the selection of what is out there, and I cannot stomach most of the packaged children's music "product."

Some friends and I were remembering and laughing about which childhood songs we could remember. We especially remember the Sunday school songs like "Seek

Ye First," the camp/scout tunes like "Rise and Shine," or the hymns our grandmothers sang to us in the rocking chair like "I Love to Tell the Story." This conversation got me thinking about what a significant moment that is in a child's life when he or she can absorb art and beauty by way of these clever little soul vehicles called melodies.

This tender moment in a young life reveals something else about us adults, too. What we believe about a child, and the person who that child is becoming, is significant. As Charlotte Mason says "A child is a person." Children are not just babies becoming people, they are already people. In this way, we hold and relate to them with honor and respect. On one hand, we don't need to idolize them in preciousness. Nor do we need to belittle them for their weakness.

This reality is a great equalizer, and it makes me want to consider that honor even in the hope that the simple songs they sing and memorize should also be great songs. Strong, singable melodies. Rich, meaningful truths. Beauty for its own sake. Joy for its own sake. And by all means, we hold in view that the songs honor the great truth of God that shapes their character as they sing. The same thinking pertains to those of us who write music intended for children, or to those who teach music to kids in schools or churches—the same high standards of excellence still apply. As C. S. Lewis wrote, "A children's story that can only be enjoyed by children is not a good children's story in the slightest." The same is true for music.

It's been a great test of my craft as a songwriter to have two bubbling young critics at my heels all day long in the kitchen. Not only has it forced me to be more efficient when I have a window to write, but children have great, natural instincts for a melody. If I catch one of them singing something I have written, it's an affirmation that I'm on the right track. This has helped me greatly in thinking about melodies of new hymns for the church to sing. And if I set out to specifically write a children's song, I think also about what it might be like for that child to want to sing that same song decades from now. Melodies like "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" (otherwise known in the McCracken home as the "Bye-O-Baby" song) and "Peace Like a River" have survived across several generations in our family already.



The 'Rain for Roots' CD

Making excellent art specifically for children speaks to something of art-making regardless of the intended audience. Because God makes beautiful things, he has made us to make beautiful things. God cares about the chatter of the goldfinches. He cares about the splendor of the lily. Art matters. Music speaks to the deepest places of our spirit and takes root.

The songs we sing are formative. They reinforce what we believe and they spring up out of us in moments of uncertainty or joy or pain. Often, even when people suffer with long illness and/or memory loss, those beloved childhood songs are never forgotten. People can remember and even sing these early songs long after they have lost the ability to recall or retell their own stories.

I hope there are a few songs in my head worth remembering this way. And I hope to find a few good ones for my own children to hold on to as well.

*Sandra McCracken and husband Derek Webb, both singer-songwriters, live in Nashville with their children Rhodes (5) and Carter Marie (3).*

Rain for Roots photo by Wendy Twit.

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