

A Few Thoughts for the Hunkered Down

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

The Masked Singers!

So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. —Matthew 10:26, 27

I suppose that most of us have heard of the television show “The Masked Singer.” I have never seen more than a few seconds of it as I surf through the channels, but it has been very well advertised and feels like one of those programs that everybody knows, even if they have never watched an episode. The premise of the show is simple. Some celebrity performs several songs, and I gather that these vocalists do what they can to showcase their talent with high notes, forcefulness and all the style they can muster. It is up to the judges to determine just who these disguised singers are. And as this is national television, the show is put together with a maximum of lights, wild costumes and plenty of drama from the judges. The greater drama is to come when the singer is finally revealed, and I am under the impression that each singer goes on for weeks before being revealed. It is all quite “over the top,” glitzy, hysterical and a bit much for my tastes, but it has set me to thinking.

Soon after we began gathering for worship it occurred to me that every Sunday is a session of “The Masked Singer,” right here at St. Luke’s! Like it or not, we are now masked singers, and this honor does not garner quite the excited response that it does on television. Masks are stuffy and uncomfortable for singing! We have greatly curtailed the amount of singing that we do each Sunday, partly out of concern for spreading germs, as singing broadcasts germs much more than normal talking. We have also made sure to limit any hymns to two stanzas, or three very short stanzas at a time, as the stuffiness factor is greatly elevated after the first few verses.

I was, however, thrilled to recently learn of some of the *advantages* of singing with a mask! While these surgical kinds of masks do not completely obscure identities, they do add a certain degree of anonymity which can make singing interesting in some new ways. Is there a hymn you really like but don’t want to embarrass yourself by belting it out too zealously? With a mask you can sing at the top of your lungs and no one will know it is you making all that ruckus, or if they do accuse you, you can always blame it on the next person.

The greatest advantage to masked singing that I was thrilled to hear was that one can sing hymns in the grocery store and not be detected as the source! Not only does one

have the satisfaction of celebrating their faith and delighting their spirit in song, but we can bless, and perhaps thoroughly mystify their fellow shoppers! I am sure that such vocals are much more a blessing to the rest than we realize. This is the masked singer the way it was truly meant to be! Let us start singing (if you haven't already) before the virus clears out and we are masking no more.

The looming post-COVID age raises a question for the anonymous singers of the world. What shall we do when we can no longer keep our vocals a secret? I suppose that many will readily retreat into silence. Will there be many bold enough to keep on singing? Jesus spoke to his disciples, and us, about the day to come when we should be broadcasting his teachings for all to hear. That time has come, and certainly vocals in the *Stop & Shop* will be a great place to start the performances. I have commonly heard people say that their grandmother was the godliest woman that they ever knew and that she was always singing hymns! Songs of faith truly change people, and much for the better. It is time for all of us to start singing!

And on the Last Day, may the Lord not have to pry a mask off of our heads, but may we have shed that cover long ago. These masks may actually be a big help in getting us started singing. Let us not miss this opportunity.

Blessings,

Pastor Jim

*Father, help us to worship you in spirit and in truth,
that our consciences may be quickened by your holiness,
our minds nourished by your truth,
our imagination purified by your beauty,
our hearts opened by our love,
our wills surrendered to your purpose;
and may all this be gathered up in adoration,
as we ascribe glory, praise and honor to you alone,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. —Howard Booth*