

# GRACE TODAY

— Vol. 23 No. 41 —

**October 13, 2019**

**John MacArthur**  
PASTOR-TEACHER

Clayton Erb / Minister of Music

**Welcome** to the Lord's day  
worship service at Grace Church.

We're so glad that you've joined  
us today as we celebrate  
Clayton Erb's fortieth anniversary  
of music ministry at Grace  
Community Church.

A large, bold, red number '40' is the central focus. The '0' is partially overlaid by a grey musical staff with two dots, suggesting a musical note. The background is a light, blurred image of a musical score with various notes and staves.

**40**  
YEARS OF  
PRAISE

**8:30 & 10:30\* am**

**BILL BRANDENSTEIN, DIRECTOR**

*Sonata III: con moto maestoso* • Mendelssohn • Stephen Sturz, Organist

*May Jesus Christ Be Praised* • Barnby/Erb • Worship Choir

**Hymns of Praise** • Congregation

*Amazing Grace* • Trad./Erb • Worship Choir

*Psalm 150* • Franck • Worship Choir

**Hymn 2 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty • Congregation**

*Were You There?* • Trad./Erb-Rice • Jubilant Sykes

MESSAGE: **MUSIC AND WORSHIP**

John MacArthur • Selected Scriptures

**Doxology Hymn** • Congregation

*Grand Triumphal Chorus* • Guilmant • Organ Postlude

**6:00 pm**

*Great Is Thy Faithfulness* • Runyan/Sturz • Organ Prelude

*I Sing the Mighty Power of God* • Trad/Sturz

**Hymn 354 The Church's One Foundation** • Congregation

**Hymn 136 O, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing**

*What Can Separate You?* • Mason-Douglass/Rice • Carmella Jones

*Somewhere Beyond the Moon* • Ahlstrom-O'Brien-Caswell/Rice • Christian Ebner

*Wonderful, Merciful Savior* • Trad/Rodgers-Wyse • John & Lisa Martin, Christian Ebner

**Hymn 180 And Can It Be?** • Congregation

**Doxology** • Frankfurt/Lubbock-Rice • Lisa Martin

MESSAGE: **REFLECTIONS ON 40 YEARS OF MINISTRY TOGETHER**

John MacArthur & Clayton Erb

*Crown Him with Many Crowns* • Elvey/Sturz • Organ Postlude

**Plaza Fellowship**

**Anthem**

*Psalm 150*

Alleluia, Alleluia, O praise the Lord, praise God in His temple.

O praise the Lord in the firmament of His power.

Praise Him for His mighty acts, O praise Him according to His excellent greatness.

Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute and harp.

Praise the Lord with the timbral, Praise the Lord with the dance;

With organ and strings, praise the Lord forevermore.

Praise Him upon the loud cymbals, Praise Him upon the high-sounding cymbals.

Let ev'rything that has breath praise the Lord, Sing praise to the Lord.

O praise the Lord, praise God in His temple,

O praise the Lord in the firmament of his power.

Praise Him for His mighty acts, O praise Him according to His excellent greatness.

Let all that has life and breath praise the Lord!

O praise ye the Lord! Alleluia, Amen!

*Words taken from Psalm 150; music by César Franck (1884)*

**Doxology Hymn**

**Hymn 19 To God Be the Glory**

To God be the glory, great things He hath done;

So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,

Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,

And opened the life-gate that all may go in.

*Refrain*

Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, Let the earth hear His voice!

Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, Let the people rejoice!

O come to the Father through Jesus the Son,

And give Him the glory, great things He hath done!

Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done,

And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;

But purer and higher and greater will be

Our wonder, our vic'try, when Jesus we see.

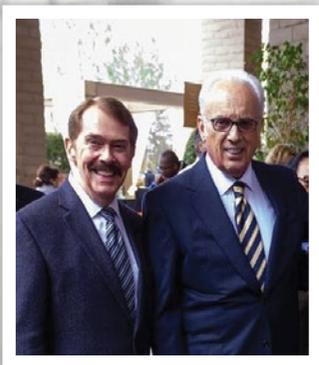
# 40

YEARS OF  
PRAISE

For forty years, our beloved Dr. Clayton Erb has provided God-honoring, Christ-exalting, beautiful, worshipful music at Grace Church. I do not know of anyone like him anywhere in the world. A consummate musician, skilled conductor, and composer, he has achieved something in music ministry

that is likely unparalleled. For essentially 2,000 Sundays, Clayton has pulled together great music, great musicians, arrangements, hymns, and songs to lead our congregation in the finest expressions of worship. Since worship is the believer's priority, this lofty task demands the highest devotion. He has met that expectation in every way.

Clayton has sourced the music for forty Christmas Concerts here at Grace Church, as well as numerous weddings, funerals, banquets, and other special events. Additionally, he has provided music for forty-six Shepherds' Conferences that have had an immense impact on pastors all over the world. In every case, our church's music shows depth and devotion to beauty and excellence—and that is no small task.



Clayton has led our musicians with musical excellence and a pastoral gentleness which has won him their love and loyalty. The Lord has shown unique favor on our beloved church by giving us such a gift as Clayton. As a pastor, I never cease to be thankful for his friendship and our partnership in ministry. I am convinced that Clayton's ministry has been used to preserve God-honoring music in churches around the globe. While trends since 1979 have seen church music descend to a reflection of pop culture, the music at Grace Church has countered that by holding the standard high as to the quality of music and its sound doctrinal content. For forty years, people who have come to Grace Church have heard it and desired to emulate that standard in their own churches.

So Clayton's impact has not only been here, but it has stretched across the world. As the Word has come to dwell richly in us, Clayton has led us with all wisdom, to teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord (Colossians 3:16).

# A HEART OF *Praise*

Bill Brandenstein  
Assistant Minister of Music

“For from Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”

—ROMANS 11:36

When I attempt to describe what makes the music ministry of Grace Church so extraordinarily unique, I’m repeatedly confronted by one unchallengeable fact: only the Lord could have put together such a marvelous combination of gifts in one local body. At the helm of it all is our beloved Clayton Erb, whose remarkable musical and leadership qualities have made him an effective steward of these gifts in the Lord’s pure praises for over four decades. He is an unceasingly conscientious man working alongside our diligent pastors, elders, and staff. Crowd-pleasing, attention-grabbing musicians are common. Clayton’s exceptional giftedness, musical refinement, and (most importantly) singular focus on biblical worship are what sets him apart from all others. A true worshiper approaches the throne of God with a humble heart, and Clayton faithfully does the artistic work of a master craftsman

with servant-heartedness, not seeking the attention for himself. As we commemorate his more than four decades of ministry here at Grace Church, reflect with me on some of the many wonderful reasons why we’re so grateful to the Lord for Clayton’s talents and leadership that aid us in singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

Love for Christ and the Word undergirds everything Clayton does. If you know Clayton, you know how godliness characterizes him, especially in his devotion to the Lord, love for His people, and love for the Word. Starting from his lengthy early morning sessions at his dining room table, poring over the Word of God, as well as enjoying the teaching of our pastors, his musical choices always include lyrics that point us to the Savior.

The fruit of the Spirit is the bedrock of Clayton’s character—kindness, patience, generosity, and integrity in relationships permeate his life and ministry. He’s loyal to his church, elders, staff, pastor, choir members, and instrumentalists, and he helps shepherd those in his part of the flock behind-the-scenes with counsel, prayer, hospital visits, and giving.

The Giver of every good and perfect gift has given a very distinctive musical giftedness to Clayton that he offers back to the Lord in worship. Clayton began his ministry as a piano prodigy who also sang and played the

organ, and is a skilled composer, arranger, and conductor. The sonorities, voicings, and harmonies of his playing and arranging are unique, rich, and sophisticated. Everything from his musical craftsmanship, selection of music, and coaching of vocalists, to his preparation of worship services is carried out with meticulous attention to detail. Clayton's commitment to excellence isn't for his own credit, but always points to the transcendent excellence of our Creator, God.

The leadership Clayton brings to corporate worship reflects his diligence. Whatever needs to get done, he'll get it done, even if it requires personal sacrifice. He takes time to train others, patiently working with everyone from future ministers of music to candidates for choir membership. Clayton plans the services to be most effective and God-honoring, and programs concerts or albums skillfully so the whole flows together well and is greater than the sum of its parts. Instead of setting special goals such as events and tours for his musicians, Clayton keeps the Worship Choir's first priority—the main priority—serving on Sunday mornings and for ministry events such as the Shepherds' Conferences and Christmas Concerts.

One of the things that makes Clayton such an effective leader is his sense of humor. He understands how important it is to rest

in the Lord's sovereignty and kindness, and because of that, he isn't bothered by much. He has a profoundly humble sense of himself, and that spills over as a light-hearted blessing on everyone around him. Clayton would say that humor is essential for longevity in ministry—but in reality, it's the attitude of trust in God and love for others underpinning that humor that has made Clayton an effective leader and a beloved friend to so many.

The remarkable longevity of Clayton's staff and musicians—some of whom have been with him for all four decades—is a testament to his faithful direction and effective leadership. What an extraordinary and unique gift our beloved brother is to this congregation and to the body of Christ. Please join me in giving praise and thanks to the Lord for Clayton's heartfelt ministry of worship here at Grace Community Church for over four decades.



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*Jesus! What a Friend for Sinners* Hymn 206

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Jesus! what a Friend for sinners!  
Jesus! Lover of my soul;  
Friends may fail me, foes assail me,  
He, my Savior, makes me whole.  
Hallelujah! what a Savior!  
Hallelujah! what a Friend!  
Saving, helping, keeping, loving,  
He is with me to the end.

Jesus! what a strength in weakness!  
Let me hide myself in Him;  
Tempted, tried, and sometimes failing,  
He, my strength, my vict'ry wins.  
Hallelujah! what a Savior!  
Hallelujah! what a Friend!  
Saving, helping, keeping, loving,  
He is with me to the end.

Jesus! what a help in sorrow!  
While the billows o'er me roll;  
Even when my heart is breaking  
He, my comfort, helps my soul.  
Hallelujah! what a Savior!  
Hallelujah! what a Friend!  
Saving, helping, keeping, loving,  
He is with me to the end.

Jesus! I do now receive Him,  
More than all in Him I find;  
He hath granted me forgiveness,  
I am His, and He is mine.  
Hallelujah! what a Savior!  
Hallelujah! what a Friend!  
Saving, helping, keeping, loving,  
He is with me to the end.

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*It Is Well with My Soul* Hymn 407

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When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,  
“It is well, it is well with my soul.”  
It is well with my soul,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

And, Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll,  
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,  
“Even so,” it is well with my soul!  
It is well with my soul,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,  
Let this blest assurance control,  
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,  
And has shed His own blood for my soul.  
It is well with my soul,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious thought:  
My sin—not in part, but the whole  
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!  
It is well with my soul,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

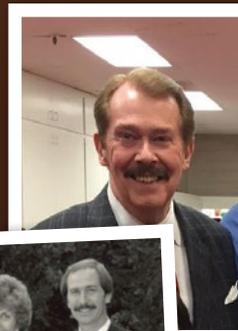


# STAFF NOTES

"My formative years, literally from birth, were filled with wonderful musical sounds and the buoyant personality of my uncle, Clayton Erb. At that time, my father served as a pastor at the same church where Clayton was minister of music, but even when he moved far away to Oregon, the records and tapes of his playing and singing stayed with us and continued to shape my musical aesthetics. In time, I started to understand how amazing his artistry and standards are. Clayton began his music ministry at Grace Church when I was in high school, and soon thereafter, I visited here and saw him in action, at the same time prayerfully seeking the Lord's direction for my life. I could never have imagined that, over the course of decades, the Lord was gradually preparing me to work alongside my beloved uncle, friend, mentor, benefactor, and yes, even matchmaker! All praise be to God, the Master Artist, who weaves our lives together into a tapestry of praise for His glory alone, and for giving Clayton to the Grace Church family for over four decades."

—**Bill Brandenstein**

"I met Clayton when I arrived in Eugene to attend the University of Oregon in 1971. I was just six months old in the Lord, was baptized by Dr. Jack (Pastor John's father) soon thereafter, and began volunteering in First Baptist Church's music ministry. He asked me to sing in the choir and vocal ensembles, perform flute arrangements on recorder, and play guitar in the college department. Clayton has always set a standard of excellence, and in the past forty-eight years, he has consistently focused on choosing, rehearsing, and presenting music that glorifies the Lord, proclaims His Word, and encourages His saints." —**Sharon Devol**





“One of the many things I appreciate about Clayton is his care in selecting music to fit the theme and mood of each service. He chooses songs and hymns with lyrics that are theologically sound and reflect a high view of God and a clear, understandable message so that the congregation’s hearts can be focused on God and His attributes. Clayton’s use of instruments enhances the beauty and majesty of the music, causing us all to reflect on the Creator of beauty. Another of Clayton’s strengths is his attention to detail in rehearsals and in planning the flow of the services. His commitment to excellence is an example to all of us who work with him.” —**Mark Rice**

“Clayton’s philosophy of ministry can be clearly seen in the manner in which he has conducted himself as our leader over the past four decades. He has never failed to exhibit patience, forbearance, humor, gentleness, and restraint when situations might prompt others to show anger. I have often been the beneficiary of his forbearance and am a great admirer of his conduct in dealing with individuals, as well as all the ensembles he has led. Clayton can also be said to have the heart of a shepherd. He is the first to visit ailing choir members and musicians, and often gives of his time and finances to help those who are in need. And to each of his staff, he’s not just our boss; he’s a very generous, faithful friend.”

—**Stephen Sturz**

40  
YEARS OF  
PRAISE

# WORDS of APPRECIATION

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"You cannot separate what is said in the pulpit from what is sung in the pew. Clayton is a model of faithfulness in championing the highest standard of music and poetry to articulate a rich theology. It's an honor to call him a friend and fellow servant to that end." —**Keith Getty**

"Thank you for your immeasurable service—and all for the glory of God. It doesn't seem like forty years! Your extraordinary gifts and talents are remarkable not only as a musician, but equally as a counselor, and most importantly to me, a dear friend. There is no one like you; know you are greatly loved." —**Jubilant Sykes**

"Clayton has demonstrated to me faithfulness to Christ and a commitment to personal excellence, and he has been a role model for me in that respect. His ministry in music has inspired me for forty years as I sit in the pew and listen to the most beautiful and God-honoring music that I have ever heard." —**Christopher Parkening**

"To God be the glory for calling you to faithfully proclaim and assist the body of Christ in worship, Sunday after Sunday. We are grateful for your love for our family and how you have encouraged and ministered to us through all of life. I am humbled and thankful for the many times that God joined us together in music to offer a sacrifice of praise to Him. Thank you for so much."

—**Philip Webb**

"To know Clayton is to know a loyal friend, a faithful shepherd, and a warm-hearted artist with a deep commitment to Christ. To serve with Clayton is to be called to excellence in joyful expressions of the Truth. The imprint of his legacy on the life of our church is a precious gift of God's blessing." —**John Martin**

"My friendship with Clayton spans throughout his forty years at Grace Church, and I am incredibly grateful to the Lord for this extraordinary gift. I'm so thankful for his musical and spiritual mentoring during those early years—along with all the fun in Joyful Sound! It is, and always has been, a joy to come back, year after year, to take part in concerts and other events that are done solely to bring glory to our great God. Thank you, Clayton, for your forty years of stellar commitment to God-honoring music and for your exemplary faithfulness!" —**Diane Brown**

"I'm so grateful for Clayton's faithful service to the Lord these past forty years; what an incredible testimony of perseverance and steadfastness! Over the years, he has provided an example of godly faithfulness and continual service to the body of Christ. We are truly blessed."

—**James Phillipps**

**40**  
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PRAISE



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# GRACE

COMMUNITY CHURCH

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**GRACECHURCH.ORG**

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*Our mission is to glorify God  
and extend His kingdom by  
living and proclaiming  
His truth in the world.*

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