There is an old television show that I like, that is frequently used by church youth programs to explore ethical and spiritual topics, and in one episode, the main character is standing at a gate waiting with a monk for their guest, a Baptist preacher, to arrive. The monk and the preacher are old friends, and they sass each other. The monk complains how loud the preacher's voice is, to which the preacher responds, "But the Good Lord tells us to Make A Joyful Noise!" Themonk retorts, "I've heard you sing and I don't think that's what the Good Lord had in mind when He said, 'A Joyful Noise.'"

Psalm 100 was written as an invocation to worship at the Temple of Jerusalem. The worshipers would sing this as they marched in procession through the gates and courtyards of the Temple. They did as the Psalm says, making a joyful noise in gratitude to God.

So, how do we offer up to God our own joyful noises?

One of the most famous offerings of joyful noise to God is Handel's Messiah. Especially, we all know the concluding "Hallelujah Chorus." I discovered that it was intended to be performed at charity concerts, mostly to benefit hospitals throughout England and Ireland. What a fitting purpose. Such a famous work, with the theme of Jesus Christ, written with the purpose of benefiting those in need.

My father loved this oratorio, and God had gifted him with a voice for singing. He offered this gift to the service of the church choir for his whole life. The Choir had performed parts of it frequently, and as a teenager, I was able to sing it with him a few times. He even participated in the Yale School of Music's summer program in Norfolk, when they performed the whole Messiah. This was his way of offering a joyful noise to God.

I followed my father's example, but with a different piece, Vivaldi's Gloria, written to benefit orphanages in Venice. I went to a college in Reading, Pennsylvania, on a street made famous by the number of schools located on it. One could go all the way from attending pre-school to earning a master's degree, and stay on the same street. While there, I participated in an event called the 13th Street Concert, that was made up of the choirs from all the schools on that one street. The climax of the concert was the Gloria, performed in it's entirety by the combined choirs. This was my way of offering a joyful noise to God.

We all have different gifts that can be used in different ways, and many of them can be used to make joyful noises, not just with singing voices. What's important is that we just make noise and be joyful and thankful towards God. As the song says: All God's creatures got a place in the choir, Some sing high, some sing low, and some sing out loud on the telephone wire, and some just clap their hands. Amen.

Invocation

We gather to lift our praises to the God who gives us voice, we bring the songs and anthems that bring joy to creation. We gather as the children of God, our joy unbroken in God's love. We join in a chorus of praise sung for all creation, raising our rousing chorus of every song, old and new, offered to you, even as we lift the prayer Jesus teaches us to pray...Our Father

Psalm 100

A Psalm of thanksgiving.
1 Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.
2 Worship the Lord with gladness;
   come into his presence with singing.

3 Know that the Lord is God.
   It is he that made us, and we are his;
   we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
   and his courts with praise.
   Give thanks to him, bless his name.

5 For the Lord is good;
   his steadfast love endures for ever,
   and his faithfulness to all generations.

Offertory Prayer

Dearest God, we offer these gifts to be used by Your people in the Wildwood to maintain this place dedicated to singing to Your glory. Bless the givers and those who cannot give. Help us to use these gifts in the best way possible. Amen.

Benediction

May the Light of God guide you and inspire you in all your endeavors this week. Go in Peace.