

This Is the Sound of One Voice

June 9, 2019

Mike Muscarella, Matthew Nickoloff, and songwriters panel
artisanchurch.com

[Music Intro]

[Male voice] The following is a presentation of Artisan Church in Rochester, New York.

[Voice of Matthew Nickoloff]

Good morning. Welcome to Artisan Church this morning. My name is Matthew. I'm actually the pastor of the South Wedge Mission but today I'm with Mike, and this month I'm really honored to get to share and be a part of the "Decorating Time: Songs of Artisan" series while Pastor Scott is learning to decorate time on his sabbatical making music.

Just a recap of last week and of the overall scope of the "Decorating Time" series. In the past, Artisan has done a mixtape series where every single Sunday they have a different genre of music and we talk about how the different genres of music help us to understand different aspects of the narrative of faith, or the different aspects of the ways we can engage with it, right? To say blues can help us learn about lament, and so forth. One of the goals this time around is to look at the process of how music happens either within us or through the process of creating music in community together. The process of creating music together as a community — like co-creating. Because whether or not we are the musician, whether or not songwriting is something that sounds really fun or just makes you want to go hide in a closet [laughter] the process by which we create can be a helpful analogy or helpful parallel to the ways that we're always asked to be co-creators in whatever your vocation or your place in life is. So you might not say, "Oh, I have this great story from my childhood and I want to turn it into a song," but listening to how maybe a songwriter takes a story from their life or an experience and meditates on and processes and tries to put it into words or into notes to help other people might help us understand how as a parent, or as a lawyer, or as an engineer, or as a janitor we might take the stories in our lives and by contemplating on them and meditating on them and prayerfully digesting them in light of the greater song, how could we also be more creative and more in touch with the resources we have as we create whatever it is that we're making in the world through our vocation. So we hope that the process of songwriting is both valuable and awesome in itself and if you're into that kind of stuff you learn more about music. But if you're not a musician, hopefully listening in on this one type of creative process will also help you to get more in touch with the ways that the creative spirit, God's co-creator spirit

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which is groaning from deep within our hearts, in our beings and in our DNA; it's encoded into who we are — is trying to draw forth the gifts and the voice and the stories in the songs that are within you. So that whatever you're doing, you can also be more mindful, and hopefully be more free and creative in doing that out of the full resources of the gifts that you yourself are. And so today Mike's going to introduce part two. Last week, like I said, we kind of covered more of the meta picture of music, how there's like music in vibrations and frequencies in the cosmos and they're also in our cells and how that's kind of indicative of this idea that the spirit that was once creating is still creating in us. And music is great, but music is also this way that we're connected to our bodies and to reality and to God's creative ongoing work in the universe. So that was kind of the big picture. And what Mike is going to do today is he brought in some songwriters and some musicians who are going to talk about what does that look like specifically for them. Taking that music that is out there and trying to distill it and/or process that through their lives and their voice into specific kind of art — music. And again, whether you're a musician or not, what might that teach you about how you process things for your own practice in your own life. So Mike's going to introduce our artists in today's thing a little bit more.

[Voice of Mike Muscarella] Yes, so we have three high caliber songwriters and music producers in our midst that I thought we would invite up. First is a very dear friend of mine who's been an inspiration for a long time, his name is Jim Drew [applause]. **Jim Drew** is a recording artist in both Nashville and Rochester. He has worked with artists like Randy Stonehill and Phil Keaggy, which is pretty darn amazing. If you're at all into like, Christian nerdery music stuff [laughter] he's like the Allan Holdsworth or Eddie Van Halen of Christian guitar if there's such a thing as Christian guitar [laughter]. So, Jim has been an absolute inspiration to me as I've been figuring out what music looks like in my life.

Another very inspiring voice for me is a young woman named **Melanie Muscarella** [laughter and applause]. You might you might know her from such films as *Violet Mary*, but she's also worked with Scott Austin in the Sisters of Murphy, she is an on-call keyboardist and backup vocalist and here at Artisan we just call her clutch because if you're at all worried about whether or not music is going to work on a given Sunday you just hand it to Mel and there you go.

And then a brand new friend of mine and his name is **Greg Woodsbie** [applause]. Greg is from Boston, Massachusetts and has worked as a church music director and now currently works as a dance accompanist at SUNY Brockport.

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So we have three different unique experiences of songwriting both, from a very introspective, soul searching kind of individualistic way all the way into like collaborative improvisational. So the premise this week is to ask people who are actively writing songs, how does that work? How do you find that muse as the Greeks would call it, or The Song as we were talking about last week. Where do you find it, how do you channel it, where does it go, what do you do with it, what happens when it's gone? Those kind of questions. If you wind up having a question that you would like to ask the panelists [points to phone number on slide above] that is my phone number, you are more than welcome to text me [laughter]. So file it away if you ever need to order pizzas and you want to bill someone else [laughter]. You're more than welcome to text my phone and I will gladly ask the panelists, but understand I will read what you write. So if there are misspellings I will read them as written. Like I have a text here from Matt Nickoloff that says "hey yo anything we can do to help." That was from 9:33. Yes Matt, you're doing a great job. [Matt - laughs] You weren't here!

[Mike] Mel needed an iced tea, shut up.

[Matt] That was for context.

[Crowd laughs]

[Mike] So the first question to our panelists is can you give us a little background as to your songwriting. When did you start songwriting? Was the first thing you wrote what kind of brought you into music in general?

[Greg] Great, yeah I'm really happy to be here today and get to talk with these folks and all of you. I would say that hymnals were my first source of musical knowledge and musical material. When things were tough for me I would sit down and I would play through hymns and I would improvise on hymns and that was always such a rich source. To me, music is a language. Music is this sort of universal language, and if I think about it that way I think about becoming fluent in that language and I think about using that language in a bunch of different ways. I can speak extemporaneously in that language, so improvisation to me whether it's vocally or on piano or rhythms becomes really important. The process of just composing on the spot the way that I am right now as I talk to you. And I think that's the main source of my sort of creativeness is that I'd like to create immediately. Sometimes in the course of my musical life one of those will grab me and say, "This needs to be written down, and this needs to be formed in a slightly more repeatable way." And when those hit me I just kind of feel like it is not coming out of me, that I am absolutely tapping into something and I just have to put some effort into forming that little bit. So my life is a little more haphazard maybe, in a way. I don't sit down every Tuesday morning. I admire songwriters who do, or every morning say, "I'm going to spend an hour today trying to write and just putting some stuff down on paper." To me it's like, "Oh, this thing came

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to me and now I have a four-part choral piece [laughter] or I have an arrangement for this hymn for a jazz quintet, and each of them takes time to do. But I guess that's where I'd start, yeah.

[Mel - in a silly voice] Well it all started when I was 5 [laughter]. Music has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. It really did start when I was pretty much a toddler. My parents noticed that I had an affinity for picking out tunes that I had heard other people singing and playing them on the piano. So when I was in kindergarten our elementary school had a piano teacher on staff and little Miss Sheila Signer was my little first piano teacher, and she taught me a ton. And so I kind of in and out through sixth grade took lessons with her. And then I left elementary school and I didn't have a teacher for a long time but I just kept playing anyway just because it was a joy to me to do that — most of the time when no one was home [laughs] so I never practiced what I should have been practicing but always what I felt like doing. And then my parents are both various levels of musicians, my brother is a musician, so it's just all a part of my life. My first song that I wrote is pretty crappy, so probably no one will ever hear it except for the exactly two people in this room that have and they're married, so hopefully they'll never share with anybody.

[Mike] I have it on cassette.

[Mel] I will leave in shame [laughs]. But over the years as I kind of got a little bit more confident, and then actually as I went through a period of extreme distress I learned to find a different voice and start really growing in my songwriting through that. And now it's really taken a different turn as my life is not really in distress so much anymore as trying to look around me and find inspiration in things that are around me.

[Jim] Kind of similar, I was already in choirs when I was like 3-4 years old because my mom got us involved with that stuff. When I was four I started guitar lessons, never practiced but would show up at the lesson and my guitar teacher (I don't know if people have heard of Stanley Watson) was an amazing, amazing guitarist all over the world. But I wouldn't practice. I'd show up, he'd play something and then I would copy him. So it was definitely ingrained — my great great grandfather used to build violins and stuff and some of them sell today for thousands and thousands of dollars, so it's kind of wild. But my first song wasn't something I wrote. Well I wrote it, but I didn't. I was messing around with a song, "Bad Bad LeRoy Brown," who's "Mad Mad Reverend Brown," [laughter] I just kind of rewrote the lyrics. It was my first song. And then I had a band when I was 12 and I would write a lot of the music for that band at 12 years old with some of my friends. We would obviously do a lot of covers as well. But my writing has changed over the years because originally it was just kind of things I was observing, things I was going through, but it wasn't the in-depth stuff. It was more like stuff I'm reading, whatever. Over time it became journaling for me. You know it's funny, everybody talks about writing things down and I always balked at that. I struggled with writing about life, writing about maybe

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my Biblical understanding of things that I was going through spiritually. I struggled with that personally. A lot of people are great at that, but that wasn't me. But I started to realize, "Oh, it's always coming out in songs. These are the things that I'm struggling with. These are the things that I'm learning, these are the things that I've seen around me that hit me or are connected with me." And then some of the struggles. I went through some very personal struggles as well. A lot of it because my dad was an alcoholic and he had left and I didn't know how that affected me personally. And I remember being in Nashville and about 3 in the morning writing a song that finally hit that, and it's one of the few songs I was debating about doing today so I don't know yet [chuckles]. But oh my gosh, I just woke up started working on this tune and in the morning I was staying with a friend of mine who was a road manager for Phil Keaggy who was also a writer. And he just kind of said, "You know, you've got a ton of words there. Let's bring it down. And he helped me pare it down to this one song. Anyway, that's the journey for me and it's gotten closer and closer to that heart. Sometimes humorous stuff, sometimes serious stuff and everything in between.

[Mike] I've already received a few questions and this one kind of goes to what you were just talking about, Jim. You can pass it to anyone who wants it. This question asks about the difference between writing from personal experience to others' experience. It says, "Is there a difference between creating or writing from personal experience versus outside observations of others?" So probably "is there?" and then "how is it different?"

[Jim] So personal, obviously I just shared some things. When you see somebody going through things, especially if you care, it's going to end up in a song. It's just going to end up in your lyrics because you do care. So that's the difference for me. In some ways there isn't a difference. It's me observing someone else's life and they mean something to me or it's inside of me, something I'm struggling with.

[Mel] Sometimes I actually approach that with a little bit of trepidation because I don't want to project my own thoughts into what someone else may be feeling and expressing that. Many many years ago, someone I knew had experienced a miscarriage and just a long period of depression and difficulty kind of coming through that. And so I've never played it for anybody just because my fear for that was that I experienced that kind of secondhand as I watched her go through it and her describe her experiences, but I never wanted to ever put words in anybody's mouth or anything like that. So it's always been easier to write certainly from my own experience because I know what I'm thinking and I know what I'm trying to say.

[Greg] I love poetry and I try to read a lot of poetry. And in some ways I think personally I respect to the poets too much usually to try it myself, and I sort of fear that part. So I almost

always write using other people's words. There's this great bit of quote from Virginia Woolf that I'm going to paraphrase a little bit where she talks about the emotional rhythm, and she talks about how she'll have all these cloudy ideas in her head and she can't find the words to fit them. And she says that what she has to do is to tap into this rhythm which is more, what is the large flow of it, and what is the specific timing of that rhythm but also the character of that rhythm. And she says that when she taps into that rhythm that then the style, the words just pour out. And so as I am reading someone else's work, I try to have this sort of kinaesthetic empathy which also happens as I work with dancers. I try to feel what that large mystical pulse is that they're in, and I try to synchronize up with them. There's another quote I love from Tolstoy about art that says that, "True art destroys in the mind of the receiver any distance between them and the artist." So as I'm reading their work I try to find what they felt like. And it's going to be imperfect, right? Language always carries different meaning for everybody, but I find the act of trying in a way and the act of believing that I can get as much of their truth as possible to be just deeply selfless, and breaking myself out of ego.

[Mike] Greg, that leads really well into another question I just received because we were talking about inspiration and where the song comes from. Here's the question, and I'm reading verbatim because this is how you people write [laughter]: What is the starting point for most of your songs? Do you start with an idea, or a melody or phrase? Also great development on your calves. [laughter]

[Greg] I start with working on my calves [laughter].

[Mike] Where does the song come from? What is the inspiration? What's the impetus?

[Greg] I think you just have to pay deep attention to life, usually. And then I'm constantly thinking about how do I want to communicate and commune with others. And as something in that process of my life comes up, maybe it's a poem that I read that strikes me beautifully. I've written some stuff with the words of Mechthild of Magdeburg, this early 13th century mystic, just tapping into something like that. I guess I feel, how can I resonate with that. In a sense, paying attention to the things that are kind of vibrating in me and then trying to set that into something a little bit more concrete.

[Mike] As the mic is passed down, there's an additional question on inspiration: To what extent does Scripture (because all three of you have some connection to church things) influence inspiration?

[Mel] So I'll answer the first question (I'm not mentioning your calves, though). So I get ideas from all over, everywhere. I have three songs over the course of the records that we've done about my children, because that's good therapy. Two of them are humorous and one of them is

just like this like, “Oh, you're getting you're getting so old. You're ready to fly the coop!” kind of thing. So I get inspiration from that, I get inspiration from nature. And sometimes what I do is actually probably not advisable to type and drive, but I keep my notes app around (I could probably just dictate) but sometimes I'll see something I think is cool and I'll have this like little metaphor or simile in my head and I'll write it down and save it for later. Then eventually I'll have enough of those that fit together and I'm like, “Can I make them into one song? How can I use these little snippets of things?” And sometimes I use them and sometimes I don't. And you know, lately I've been finding inspiration in being irritated at the state of things. So a lot of my writing has taken that kind of turn, not really in a political sense but maybe a little bit of just being distressed at the way our world is turning. And so I find inspiration really from everywhere. I think there's beauty to be found everywhere, even in things that are really hard. And so sometimes those things that are hard, I try to take and distill it down into something that's beautiful that can be a shared experience. As far as Scripture goes, I guess I don't really set out to use it necessarily so much. I'm trying to go back and my mind. Overarching themes kind of come into play as opposed to like a specific quote from the Bible or anything like that. It's mostly just overarching themes that kind of play themselves in and out. As they play themselves in and out of my life they get written down as part of my experience.

[Jim] I think I spent a lot of time, especially in college and afterwards, writing songs that were almost too Scripture oriented because I grew up with a lot of groups and Christian music that were very teaching oriented, so a lot of their music was too (and I enjoyed it a lot and I still like some of it). But I just kind of was mimicking that and doing a lot of it myself and I remember the day a friend came to me after he'd heard some new newer material back 15 years ago or something. All of a sudden he's like, “Now you're writing songs.” And I had had some good songs that stood out, but at that time he was like, “Now you're writing about life and maybe how God's involved with that. But now you're writing about life.” And I still enjoy writing songs that are “for the purpose of encouraging worship” is the way I would put it, because I don't like to limit worship to just music, but for the purpose of encouraging worship. I still write songs that way. But I had to go the other way and learn to respond to life in a very real way, because if you go out there telling people how to live and you don't know who they are [laughs, crowd joins] basically you're making a mess. And what I had to learn to do was to talk about my life and the things I observed and watch life come into my material. And that's what my friend was starting to tell me is now it's about real stuff, even whether God's involved in the music or not, now it's real stuff. That was a huge step for me, a huge change. Now I look back over the years and I do have a few precious songs that stood out even since college days, but it's been a big change and now it's almost like, well, I'll use Scripture to say it this way: There's a Scripture that talks about rivers of living water flowing out of your belly. Now, it's referring to something else

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but for songwriting that's me; things pour out of me. Even as mentioned, it's not just about songwriting. It's about anything you do, that can happen. What can pour out of you? Your love, your talent, your enjoyment. For me it's songwriting and it's how I express my thoughts.

[Mike] Jim, you said you've had a few favorite or benchmark songs that you've written. This kind of goes to that, I think from another musician in the room: Being that we are often our own worst critics, do you ever find that your favorite or best song written is a measuring stick to the success or failure of newly written songs. Do you find yourself essentially comparing yourself to yourself and how do you get over that?

[Jim] You know what? For me, no [laughs - crowd joins]. Have you ever gotten together in a meeting with a whole bunch of folks and they say, "Let's brainstorm!" but then as soon as you start "brainstorming," people are cutting down every little thought so you never get all that freedom of thought out so that you can actually brainstorm. Everything is censored and cut. I've just learned I can do that, and that allows me to write some really weird — as well as some really serious songs. I just learned and I don't know when, but at some point I said, "I can't do that. I got what's on my heart now."

[Mike] To Mel, I've got a question for you, as written (there's no calves in this one): For the panel: How important is improvisation in the songwriting process for you. Also, hi cookie sheet. [laughter].

[Mel] I mentioned before that I play piano but I also sing. So a lot of the writing that I've been doing lately has been more lyrically-based as opposed to sitting down and composing something that I like on the keyboard and then coming up with or putting the two of them together. So I will have a lyrical idea or a set of lyrics that have been floating around for a little while. And this has happened with Scott's band as well where he'll have, or Mike will have, this great riff and they'll be like, "Oh man, I've got something going on there." And I'm like, "Oh I think I have words that will fit that feeling." So I listen for a little while and I'm like, "Okay, I can kind of jive with what's going on here," and then like I'll go back through my notes that I wrote while I was not driving [laughter] and say I have this idea or I've had this little lyrics just floating around with no home for like six years, but it fits this thing. Then the fun part comes in where the set of lyrics that I wrote maybe six years ago doesn't exactly fit entirely perfectly with what the music is doing, so then there's a fun give-and-take. I really appreciate that process because that actually hones what I'm trying to say down even more concisely sometimes. Or sometimes there's more music than I have lyrics for and I have to really, again, go back into the woodshed and ask what am I really trying to say? What can I add to what I've already said? There is an aspect of that. I'm not always good at doing it on the fly, but certainly as far as a piano

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perspective, I'm learning to improvise a little bit better as I go. I grew up on classical music where there was very little room for that; everything was very prescribed. So the idea of playing a feature used to give me ajita, and I would want to throw up all the time and sometimes I still do. But just from that pure musical aspect, it's kind of exhilarating because you don't really necessarily have in mind a prescribed place that you're going. It really takes you for a ride almost, and you're like, "Oh cool, we ended up someplace cool." Or sometimes we really don't end up anywhere cool at all and I should've just stopped playing like six bars ago [laughs]. So yes, in answer to your question.

[Greg] Bobby McFerrin has a suggestion that if you want to totally have a new relationship with your voice you should put a timer on for (I don't know if he says 10 or 15 minutes) and he says for three weeks you should do this every day and just start singing when that timer starts. And he says anybody can do this because you can just sing on one note [singing] doo doo doo doo vary it once or twice. And he says every fiber of your being is going to tell you to stop singing at some point and you just you just push through that and sing for that 10 minutes straight and if you do that for three weeks you'll have a completely new relationship with your speaking voice as a musician. And that means a lot to me, the idea that music is a language. If you were learning to speak a new language what would you learn how to do first? You learn how to speak extemporaneously, you learn how to listen and talk. You don't learn how to read and recite, which is the way we learn music a lot of times. We spend a bunch of time learning how to look at these black dots that are not music and then turn those in some reciting sort of way, and then eventually maybe you start writing. But I think if you approach it from a language idea and that of course you're not going to like a lot of the stuff that you do for a really long time as a songwriter, then you'll find the 10 percent of material that you really do believe in.

[Mike] Well I have a bunch more questions here but I also asked these songwriters to play for us. Should we listen to some music?

[Crowd agrees]

[Mike] Greg, do you want to play for us one of those pieces where music is like language? And while you're getting set up I'll ask Mel the question: Artisan often uses music because people consider secular music which separates secular from sacred music. What is your philosophy about the purpose or role of sacred and secular music? You have 15 seconds. [laughter]

[Mel] Okay, here goes. I feel like I'm just about to be the micro machine guy. I am of the opinion that all music has a sacred piece to it. I obviously sing music outside of church that doesn't really have anything necessarily to do with church type stuff, and for me that still comes from a place of — I sort of know that at the source, and like any time I sing, I just have this feeling which is just...I wish I could describe it better. I'm a classic wordsmith right here, but just

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something that like you were talking about earlier — like rivers that sort of pour out. Like I go to a different place and sometimes I don't often feel like it's even my voice that's coming out from me, so I feel like it doesn't really matter to me what it is that I'm singing. I still have that place and for me, I feel like that's a place of actual worship. I feel like it's pretty rare for me to come across a song that I will sing that does not feel sort of inherently sacred to me just because of the way that I feel like in playing it. However, I do feel that there are some tunes that create a different space for people. At Artisan we really tow that line. We've played some John Mayer in here before for a very specific reason. But you know, we play secular music in here all the time and it still manages to bridge a gap which is really interesting to me because I feel like you don't necessarily need to be a Christian artist in order to convey messages that are easily spoken to a vast majority of people, and that you can take into your heart and really learn from and grow from. So I think it's all great [laughs] if that makes any sense.

[Greg] This is a piece Except he said. I talk good. I'm going to play moving on. This is a piece entitled "Recount" with words written by a San Francisco based chaplain and poet by the name of Lisa Jeffcoat. She wrote these words about a week after the inauguration in 2017 and I had been working on some music, processing some of my feelings about it and had been trying to write words to this nice groove I could come up with and I was failing. Then I saw this piece of hers and in about two or three days I just sort of became obsessed with this and every line of it I would sort of sing over and over and try to find just the right way to place it. It just really spoke a lot to me. So this is "Recount."

[Music plays as Greg sings]

You're right to be skeptical of your win
No matter how much you execute with your ordering pen
You cannot ban the creative chaos of love from practicing perpetual resurrection.

You might build walls with your words
But you will never be mighty enough to take away our voices
You may try to rename the family of humanity as us and them
But we are not yours to name.

Neither our lives nor our common life belongs to you.
You can riddle us with shots of fear
But fear like a bullet is merely some carry
it isn't something you can make us become

You can chip away and not the bedrock of democracy.

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But democracy is bigger than you
And you will soon find your chipping has sculpted a new generation of citizens
Who will never take our democracy for granted again

You can relentlessly chirp at us
In the hopes that we will be so wooed or worn down by your song.
That we won't trust our own eyes or ears

But we the people see clearly
By the dawn's early light as we have hundreds of years
As we will for hundreds of years after you

Your have the power to use hateful words
But you do not have the power to make us hate
We have the power to vote for love every day

Again and again and again and again
And again and again and again and again
And again and again and again and again
And again and again and again.

You were right. The race has always been rigged.
Love never fails.

[End of song]

[Mike] Thank you, that's so cool. Jim, would you be willing to share a song with us?

[Jim] I'm going to sing a newer one since it's about life writing I think and I think that's kind of what we're going for. It's not just about music making but it's about creating for whole spirit for all of who our lives are. So it's new enough that I don't have the lyrics memorized. In September of 2017 I went in for one of those wonderful things that, when you're over 50, you're supposed to go in for [clears throat, crowd laughs]. And they came out with not so good news. I had cancer of the colon and had to deal with that. And my surgery was scheduled in December of that year and I really wasn't sure how to deal with it. It was weird. It was one of those moments, one of those things you just say, "How do I deal with that?" but then again comes back (I wasn't even trying) and just sat down with my guitar. You were talking about inspiration. And it obviously started from that, but I also dealt with a few other things. I grew up in an extremely poor family. I lived in the projects when I was a kid. And you know, we were

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struggling for a lot. We had popcorn for two weeks because that was all we had. So I had to learn how to handle finances — there's been times when cars have been an issue, and yada yada. So this was the inspiration but it also got me thinking about all the other struggles of life, and the cool thing about this song is that there eventually is this chorus that I think everybody can sing if you want to. I would like that if you would join me in it. It'll make sense as we go through, okay.

[Starts strumming guitar, speaking] This isn't my usual style. I'm more of a rocker, but this just makes sense with the lyrics.

[Singing]

When I'm alone with random thoughts
Trying to claim the moments lost
Lost in doubt, that's my cue
It always comes back to trusting you.

Life has a way of finding me
Pushing walls that I can't see
If there's a chance of breaking through
It always comes back to trusting you.

It always comes back to trusting you.
It always comes back to trusting you.
And when I am tired and paid my dues
It always comes back to trusting you.

A job doesn't fill the empty space
A car doesn't move, there's rent to pay
Plead with the sky to send a clue

It always comes back to trusting you.
It always comes back to trusting you.
And when I am tired and paid my dues
It always comes back to trusting you.

And out on the streets we feel the pain
Shout at the world and stake our claims
Pounding on doors that I hate to choose

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It always comes back to trusting you.
It always comes back to trusting you.
And when I am tired and paid my dues
It always comes back to trusting you.

I don't have to stand on shaky ground
Nor on some hill, my chest to pound
Fall on me knees cuz I know it's true
It always comes back to trusting you

[With congregation]

It always comes back to trusting you.
It always comes back to trusting you.
And when I am tired and paid my dues
It always comes back to trusting you.

[Just congregation]

It always comes back to trusting you.
It always comes back to trusting you.
And when I am tired and paid my dues
It always comes back to trusting you.

[Song ends. Applause]

[Mike] It's like we had some church up in here. So we are going to have Mel play a song or two but she's going to play for communion because we're running a little bit long. I apologize for that, but you guys ask too many questions. What can I say.

Here at Artisan we practice intension as part of communion, which just means you take a piece of the bread and you dip it into the wine or juice, whichever is more appropriate for you and your family. There is gluten free bread available and this table is absolutely and 100 percent open. If you have any inkling within your spirit or soul to be drawn to an invitation from Jesus, even if it was Jesus asking you to go out for a beer. If you would say yes, this table is for you. So you can make your way to the table at your convenience probably up through the middle aisles and out through the side. And Mel will leave us with our last song and then the band can come up and finish out service for us.

2019-06-09 *This Is the Sound of One Voice*

[Mel] While you guys are coming up I'll preface this song. Mike, you talked about at one point what happens when you run out of inspiration. And that is inevitable to happen in every life, not the artist's life but just in life in general, no matter what job you do, no matter what your talents are, whatever. At some point you're going to just be dry. And so I wrote this song out of a place of complete dryness, which is weird because I was completely dry. But I was feeling very upset at the mounting number of unarmed black men being killed at the hands of police. And it's still an ongoing, distressing problem and I felt kind of helpless to really do much about it. So I wasn't really sure what I could do other than to just begin by looking at the people around me and finding that everyone is my family in some way, shape or form. Which, I think I hadn't really necessarily written it with a spiritual place but I think it is a perfect idea to come to the communion table with — to look at the person next door to you, and while we're not blood related we are still part of one human family and it matters that we treat each other as such. I'm getting all emotional now so I'm going to stop talking so that I don't cry in front of you [laughs]. Anyway, this song is called "This Divide."

[Playing piano, singing]

I am uninspired
I'm a dried up river bed
No words are like a salve
Gonna heal these wounds

This divide, this divide
I know we have seen
I know we have lived
I know there have been better days
Better days

All I can do
Is reach out a hand
And find a brother in you
Find a sister in her
I pray these words like a salve
Gonna heal these open wounds

This divide, this divide
I know we have seen
I know we have lived

2019-06-09 *This Is the Sound of One Voice*

I know there have been better days
Better days

I know we have seen
I know we have lived
I know there have been better days
Better days

I know we could see
I know we could live
I know we could make better days
Better days

I know we could make better days
Oh we could make better days
I know we could see better days
Oh we could make better days

[Song ends, applause]

[Male voice] For more information visit us at ArtisanChurch.com