

Devotion – Seventeenth Week after Pentecost

Rev. Jeanne Simpson

Sometimes God just sends an angel. No warning, no big announcements with trumpets, just a quiet showing up of someone who embodies a gift of grace. That's what just happened with our interviews with Heawoon Skilling for Music Director. Greg and I interviewed her via Zoom and then invited her to come meet with the choir. She came to church September 12 and spent some time with the choir afterwards. When Jim Simpson asked her to warm the choir up, she happily obliged. This woman with a very quiet, soft voice, suddenly began to sing. And the strong, clear voice of an angel came out. We were all stunned. We have hired her and she will start on October 3. She will also be here on September 26 to shadow Alisa in Alisa's final choir practice. So thanks to Alisa, another angel God sent us. Her rendering of Blessed Assurance September 12 was another voice from heaven. We wish Alisa well as she and her husband finish out a mountain house they recently bought.

A little bit about Heawoon – her name is pronounced like Hay'-wahn, with the accent on the first syllable. She is married and the mother of a 6 year old daughter and a 4 year old son. She lives in John's Creek, so she's trekking down 400 and I -75 about 45 minutes to get here on Sundays.

Heawoon has a Master's Degree from Manhattan School of Music in vocal performance, and a post graduate artist diploma in organ performance from Montclair State University, NJ. She has won prizes in vocal competitions in Korea, New York, and Italy, and has performed all over the world. Heawoon is a mezzo-soprano and has sung opera as well as classical performances like Beethoven's 9th Symphony, Faure's Requiem, and Handel's Messiah. She has conducted choirs or accompanied them in Korea, Italy, Tacoma, WA, and New York. She recently has filled in at Pleasant Hill Presbyterian, John's Creek Presbyterian, and John's Creek United Methodist Churches.

Heawoon currently teaches private organ, piano, and voice students and sings and plays at a nearby nursing home, where the memory care patients still remember hymns and sing along.

We are indeed blessed to have her join our staff. Please say hello when you meet her. We are in for some wonderful music!

I will be on vacation (the first one since January 2020) and will be out Sept. 26 and Oct 3. Your own Jack Westlund will preach September 26, and Katie Sundermeier will preach October 3, so please make them welcome, as you usually do.

Jim and I will be visiting ancient archeological ruins in Greece, Cyprus, Slovenia, and Croatia. I am most excited about going to Corinth and Mycenae – places where the apostle Paul founded churches. I hope to share some pictures and insights when we return.

Jeanne